



MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 13, 2015 | 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
South Seattle Community College, Georgetown Campus
Colin Educational Hall, Room C122
6737 Corson Avenue S
Seattle, WA 98108

Attendance:

Trish Millines Dziko, Kevin Jacka, Margit McGuire, Raymond Navarro, Dave Quall, Steve Sundquist, and Larry Wright (telephonic)

Absent: Cindi Williams

Leadership Team: Joshua Halsey, Executive Director; Cathy Fromme, Deputy Director; Aileen Miller, Assistant Attorney General; Colin Pippin-Timco, Executive Assistant

Call To Order

Roll Call

Chair Sundquist called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. Attendance was taken. The following Commissioners were present: Trish Millines Dziko, Kevin Jacka, Margit McGuire, Raymond Navarro, Dave Quall, Steve Sundquist, and Larry Wright (telephonic). It was determined a quorum was present to proceed with the meeting.

Commissioner Wright departed at 10:17 a.m.

Approval of the June 18 Special Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes for the June 18, 2015 Commission meeting were reviewed and approved – Commissioner Dziko moved, and Commissioner Quall seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session

Chair Sundquist adjourned open session at 10:20 a.m. An executive session was held pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i).

Chair Sundquist reconvened the Commission from executive session at 10:31 a.m.

Action from Executive Session

There was no action from the executive session.

Public Comment

Melissa Westbrook, Blogger for Seattle Schools Community Forum, asked for the attrition rate for freshman to senior students at Summit network schools. This was in regards to the Charter Management Organization's (CMO) claim that 99% of its graduating class was accepted to a four-year college. Ms. Westbrook encouraged the Commission to hold Summit to this college-acceptance statistic.

Conflict of Interest Discussion

No conflicts of interest between Commissioners and the two applications under review were raised.

Charter School Application Resolutions: Willow Public School

Executive Director Recommendation and Remarks

Mr. Halsey reported that Willow Public School (Willow) was recommended for approval. The Project Based Learning (PBL) middle school was proposed to open in Walla Walla in Fall 2016 with 140 students, growing to 255 students at capacity.

Commission Questions for Applicant

Commissioner Dziko asked Willow representatives if facility renovations had been budgeted and whether the proposed budget could handle overages due to renovations.

Joe Cooke, Board President of Willow, responded that the proposed budget had the capacity to roll renovation costs into the facility lease.

Commissioner Jacka asked why the Willow representatives had decided to hire a full-time business manager rather than contract the position out.

Mr. Cooke responded that the Willow team desired to keep the operations of the school local. Daniel Calzaretta, Executive Director of Willow, added that from a systems standpoint he desired that the business manager be physically at Willow.

Chair Sundquist asked the Willow representatives to detail their fundraising to date.

Mr. Cooke noted that Willow had applied for a \$150K NewSchools Venture Fund grant, and would be applying for a separate \$200K launch grant. The school to date had received its first \$1000 donation, and Mr. Cooke was confident in the board's fundraising abilities.

Commissioner McGuire asked how the school would conduct teacher recruitment.

Mr. Calzaretta responded that Willow had received numerous contacts from interested parties, and immediately after authorization Willow intended to engage local colleges such as Whitman College to establish a teacher pipeline.

Commission Discussion and Resolution

Commissioner Wright joined telephonically at 11:12 a.m.

Commissioner Jacka moved to adopt Resolution 15-01A, which approved the charter school application of Willow Public School; Commissioner Quall seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Wright departed at 11:18 a.m.

Chair Report – Steve Sundquist

Chair Sundquist encouraged Commissioners interested in attending the 2015 National Association of Charter School Authorizers' (NACSA) annual conference to notify the Commission's leadership team.

Chair Sundquist reported that he continued to work with representatives from Governor Inslee's office to fill the open seat on the Commission.

Chair Sundquist noted that he and Commissioners Quall and Wright all had terms expiring in March 2016, and that these Commissioners should begin to think about reappointment.

Executive Director Report – Joshua Halsey

OSPI Rulemaking Activity

Mr. Halsey reported that, on August 6th, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) held a public hearing regarding a number of proposed rules that pertain to charter school finance. This hearing was a follow up to a hearing that was held on May 26th. After careful review, it was determined that the proposed rules were designed to facilitate appropriate and accurate apportionment to charter schools. Mr. Halsey reported that he did submit a letter of support on behalf of the Commission regarding the proposed rules.

Authorized School Updates

Mr. Halsey reported that he and Dr. Fromme had conducted pre-opening site visits for all schools scheduled to open Fall 2015.



Mr. Halsey reported that SOAR Academy had a number of incomplete or partially complete preopening conditions that could prevent their opening on Monday, August 17, 2015.¹

Annual Commission Reports: Commission-Centric & Collaborations

Mr. Halsey indicated that the Commission would be working to complete the annual report due to the State Board of Education (SBE) this fall. Additionally, he would work with SBE to develop a report to the legislature regarding the state of charter schools in Washington.

Mr. Halsey noted that the Commission would also be crafting its own public report regarding its authorized schools.

Mr. Halsey noted that it would be wise to reconvene the Legislative Advocacy Committee ahead of the 2016 legislative session. Chair Sundquist noted that he and Commissioners Wright and Williams had participated in the committee in the past, and that other Commissioners were welcome to join if interested.

Draft Commission Annual Calendar

Mr. Halsey presented a draft Commission-centric annual calendar for 2015-16, and noted that the calendar included dates for Commissioner professional development.

Mr. Halsey noted that the Commission would establish dates for its 2016 public meeting calendar at the September 2015 meeting.

Commission Leadership Team Addition: School Quality and Accountability Director

Mr. Halsey announced that Ebonee Jackson had been hired as the Commission's School Quality and Accountability Director (SQA). Ms. Jackson's first day at Commission headquarters is August 27.

Standing Committee Share Outs

Finance Committee

Chair Sundquist reported that First Place Scholars' (FPS) financial reports submitted in response to sanctions imposed by the Commission at its June 2015 meeting were received on time and complete. Chair Sundquist noted that a concern still remained, as FPS' 2015-16 enrollment was still under the 120 students projected.

Mr. Halsey noted that he had met with Dr. Linda Whitehead, School Leader of FPS, and was confident that FPS would be able to mitigate the financial challenges should its enrollment remain below the 120 students projected.²

¹ After this meeting, SOAR Academy completed all preopening conditions necessary to open on Monday, August 17, 2015.

Chair Sundquist reported that the Commission received just over \$1.5M in the 2015-17 biennium budget. Chair Sundquist noted that it would be important to monitor the Commission's spending closely, as the agency added more employees, and the oversight fee collected from Commission-authorized schools was held in an appropriated account.

Chair Sundquist noted that the Commission should be aware that, because of state apportionment schedules, Commission-authorized schools would receive fewer dollars during certain months. Schools should be aware of this as they budgeted.

Performance Committee

Commissioner Dziko reported that FPS Special Education (SPED) reports submitted in response to sanctions imposed by the Commission at its June 2015 meeting were received on time and complete.

Commissioner Dziko reported that Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC) data was projected to be available mid-August. This data will be used for target setting for the Commission's Performance Framework.

Commissioner Dziko reported that Commission-authorized schools continue to upload information to Charter Tools, the Commission's online reporting portal.

Authorization Committee

Commissioner McGuire reported that there had been significant interest in the 2015 RFP evaluation process, and that the Leadership Team was currently working on ways to capitalize on this interest.

Commissioner McGuire moved to adopt the following dates in regards to the Commission's 2016 RFP:

2016 RFP Released

February 12, 2016

Proposal Deadline

May 13, 2016

Commission Resolution Meeting

August 2016

Commissioner Dziko seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

² At the time of this meeting, FPS reported 90 students enrolled.

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Charter School Application Resolutions: Summit Public School: Seattle #2

Executive Director Recommendation and Remarks

Mr. Halsey reported that Summit Public School: Seattle #2 (Summit) was recommended for approval. The middle/high school was proposed to open in South Seattle in Fall 2016 with 321 students, growing to 733 students at capacity.

Commission Questions for Applicant

Chair Sundquist asked Summit Representatives for clarification on grades to be served upon opening.

Jen Wickens, Regional Director of Summit Public Schools Washington, responded that the school would serve grades 6 and 9 during its opening year.

Commissioner McGuire asked for the reasoning behind this startup model.

Ms. Wickens responded that opening with a beginning middle and high school grade allowed the school to integrate a mentorship model from the beginning.

Chair Sundquist asked to better understand the school's blended learning model.

Ms. Wickens responded that the school's utilization of an online platform allowed teaching staff to track student performance daily. Kristen McCaw, Chief Regional Officer for Summit, added that Summit students would consistently participate in hands on projects. Ms. Wickens added that each student would be assigned a laptop, but would only use the laptop for about 45 minutes a day.

Chair Sundquist asked for clarification regarding the entities overseeing Summit, as well as the size of the Washington-based board.

Ms. Wickens responded that accountability for Summit would rest with the Washington-based board. Michael Orbino, Board Member for Summit Public Schools Washington, added that though the Washington board was small, it had plans to grow. Ms. Wickens added that the Washington board intended to begin nomination of future board members Monday, August 17.

Commissioner Navarro asked for clarification as to the amount of control Summit Public School California had over the Washington-based board.

Mr. Orbino responded that the relationship was synergistic and one of collaboration.

Commissioner Navarro asked for clarification as to how Washington-based board members would make decisions, and who the Commission would hold accountable for the success of the school.

Mr. Orbino responded that the California board would hold the Washington board accountable for staying true to the design of Summit Public Schools; the Washington board would be held responsible for student performance. Ms. Wickens added that the Washington board would approve all policies and contracts.

Commissioner Dziko expressed concern that there appeared to be a lack of autonomy for the Washington board.

Ms. McCaw responded that the boards would work in collaboration and that unilateral decisions would not be made. Mr. Orbino noted, in the traditional public schools sense, these same questions could be raised of the school principal and district board.

Commissioner Dziko noted that the school would be located on the border of the Highline and Seattle school districts, and asked from which district the school intended to draw levy dollars from.

Ms. Wickens responded that the school would set a precedent if approved, and Summit would work to develop relationships with both districts.

Commissioner Navarro asked what the board relationship would look like with its stakeholders.

Ms. Wickens responded that relationships with local stakeholders would be autonomous to the Washington-based board.

Commissioner McGuire asked how Summit intended to track student progress in regards to project based learning.

Ms. Wickens responded that Summit had created a cognitive skills rubric to track student progress.

Commissioner McGuire asked what Summit's attrition rate was from 9-12 grades.

Ms. Wickens responded that the Summit's retention rate was 93%.

Commissioner Jacka asked what Summit's average graduating class size was.

Ms. Wickens responded that Summit's average graduating class size was 100 students.

Commission Discussion and Resolution

Commissioner Dziko moved to adopt Resolution 15-02A, which approved the charter school application of Summit Public School: Seattle #2.

Commissioner Wright joined telephonically at 1:13 p.m.

Commissioner Dziko, at first, indicated a desire for conditions on the approval regarding board governance. After discussion with fellow Commissioners and counsel, Commissioner Dziko indicated she would move to adopt Resolution 15-02A without such conditions. Commissioner Quall seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Wright departed at 1:25 p.m.

The Commission took lunch at 1:26 p.m.

Commissioner Navarro announced that Commissioner McGuire had received the Distinguished Alumnus Award for the Yakima Valley Community College Alumni Association. Commissioners congratulated Commissioner McGuire on the award.

The Commission returned from lunch at 2:00 p.m.

Authorized School Contract Updates

Mission Specific Goals Approval

Mr. Halsey noted that annually the Commission must approve mission specific goals for each of the schools it has authorized. Each school was asked to utilize the Commission template to set 1-3 academic and 1-3 operational goals. These goals are incorporated by means of amendment into the charter contract.

Commissioner Dziko moved to adopt Excel Public Charter School's mission specific goals. Commissioner McGuire seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner McGuire moved to adopt Green Dot Destiny Middle School's mission specific goals. Commissioner Quall seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Navarro moved to adopt Rainier Prep's mission specific goals. Commissioner Jacka seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner McGuire moved to adopt SOAR Academy's mission specific goals. Commissioner Quall seconded. The motion passed unanimously.



Commissioner Jacka moved to adopt Summit Olympus and Sierra’s mission specific goals. Commissioner Dziko seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Authorized Schools Levy Access Discussion

Chair Sundquist noted that the Commission had a policy decision to make in regards to Commission-authorized schools’ levy access.

Mr. Halsey noted that the current discussion regarding levy access was initiated over a year ago by Excel Public Charter School. The Commission at that point provided a response to Excel in the form of a letter detailing the Commission’s interpretation of charter school access to levies under the Charter School Act. Mr. Halsey added that OSPI would like to see a formal Attorney General (ATG) opinion on the matter. However, the request for guidance in the matter was immediate.

Ms. Miller added that a formal ATG opinion would carry more weight than an opinion developed by the Commission, but that the ATG opinion could take anywhere from 3-9 months. If the Commission wished to request the ATG Opinion, Chair Sundquist would have to make the request.

Commissioner Jacka departed at 2:40 p.m.

Executive Session

Chair Sundquist adjourned open session at 2:40 p.m. An executive session was held pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i).

Chair Sundquist reconvened the Commission from executive session at 3:26 p.m.

Action from Executive Session

There was no action from the executive session.

Commissioner McGuire moved to:

- Interpret the start date of a charter school as the date that school’s contract is signed
- Interpret the date a charter school can start receiving levy dollars as the first day that school serves children
- Empower the Executive Director to draft a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) response regarding levy access with Commission counsel

Commissioner Dziko seconded.

Chair Sundquist moved to amend Commissioner McGuire’s motion by adding the following items:

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- Empower the Chair to seek a formal ATG opinion on the matter
- Include contingency planning in case of adverse ruling in FAQ
- Develop a draft FAQ regarding the matter for the Commission's September 2015 meeting

Commissioner McGuire seconded the amendment. The amendment passed unanimously.

The amended motion passed unanimously.

First Place Scholars (FPS) Sanctions Update

Mr. Halsey reported that FPS had worked diligently to complete those sanction action items due since the Commission's June 2015 meeting. Mr. Halsey noted that he had a meeting on August 14 with FPS, Puget Sound Educational Service District, and OSPI representatives to discuss the recapture of an overpayment to FPS for the 2014-15 school year.

Mr. Halsey reported that he was also making efforts to bring FPS over to the Commission's updated contract. This process would extend the due date of FPS sanctions regarding its educational program to September 11.

Dawn Mason, Board President of FPS, thanked the Commission for working to bring FPS over to the updated contract.

Commission Biennium & Annual Budget Review

Mr. Halsey presented a report detailing the Commission's annual budget. Mr. Halsey noted that the Commission had maintained a small surplus in 2014 and 2015, but that this would not likely happen in coming years due to the Commission staffing up and having additional oversight responsibilities. Mr. Halsey noted that the Commission's oversight fee was held in an appropriated account, and that he would work with the legislative committee to address this in the coming legislative session.

Commission Bylaws Review

Standing Committee Appointments

Commissioner Sundquist noted that, per its bylaws, the Commission should pass resolutions regarding the rosters of standing committees.

Chair Sundquist moved to adopt the following roster for the Finance Committee:

- Commissioner Jacka
- Commissioner Sundquist
- Commissioner Wright

Commissioner McGuire seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner McGuire moved to adopt the following roster for the Performance Committee:

- Commissioner Dziko
- Commissioner McGuire
- Commissioner Navarro

Commissioner Dziko seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Dziko moved to adopt the following roster for the Authorization Committee:

- Commissioner McGuire
- Commissioner Quall
- Commissioner Wright

Commissioner Navarro seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Initiate Executive Director Yearly Evaluation

Chair Sundquist noted that he would initiate the Executive Director annual evaluation, with a goal to conclude the evaluation in October.

Mr. Halsey asked Commissioners for suggestions regarding the format for his self-evaluation. Commissioner Dziko suggested a video. Commissioner McGuire encouraged Mr. Halsey to make his self-evaluation brief and authentic.

Next Steps

The following next steps were identified:

1. Develop advocacy plan for legislative session
2. Set targets for Academic Performance Framework
3. Continue to Monitor FPS' Progress in regards to sanctions
4. Onboard new Commissioner
5. Monitor OSPI charter school finance rule changes
6. Continue outreach to Governor's office for appointment of next Commissioner
7. Develop attendance list and travel arrangements for NACSA Leadership Conference
8. Develop FAQ in regards to charter school levy access
9. Initiate Executive Director annual review
10. Engage SBE to develop public and legislative yearly reports

- 11.** Engage in lessons learned from 2015 oversight responsibilities
- 12.** Engage in further development of charter school applicant public forums
- 13.** Develop Commission 2016 public meetings calendar
- 14.** Execute contracts with recently authorized schools

The Commission adjourned at 4:19 p.m.