

**STATE OF WASHINGTON  
CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, August 19, 2014 – 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

Star Center  
Discovery Space  
3873 South 66<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tacoma, WA 98409

**Attendance:**

Kevin Jacka, Dr. Margit McGuire, Dave Quall, Steve Sundquist, Roberta Johnson Wilburn, and Larry Wright.  
Absent: Trish Millines Dziko, Raymond Navarro, and Cindi Williams  
Staff: Joshua Halsey, Executive Director; Dr. Catherine Fromme, Commission Contractor; Aileen Miller, Assistant Attorney General; Colin Pippin-Timco, Executive Assistant

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Roll Call**

Chair Sundquist called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. Attendance was taken. The following Commissioners were present: Kevin Jacka, Dr. Margit McGuire, Dave Quall, Steve Sundquist, Roberta Johnson Wilburn, and Larry Wright. It was determined a quorum was present to proceed with the meeting.

**Approval of the July 29 Commission Meeting Minutes**

Meeting minutes for the July 29 Commission meeting were reviewed and approved – Commissioner Wright moved, and Commissioner Wilburn seconded. The motion passed with one abstention, Commissioner Jacka.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Melissa Westbrook of Seattle Schools Community Forum reminded the Commissioners that Judge Jean Rietschel's decision in *League of Women Voters et al v. Washington State* had been appealed to the Washington State Supreme Court by both parties, with arguments set for October or November, 2014, and gave a brief overview of the case to date. Ms. Westbrook also commended the Commission for their high standards for charter school approval.

Thomas Franta, CEO of Washington State Charter Schools Association (WACHarters), introduced himself to the Commission. Mr. Franta detailed his extensive experience with traditional school districts and public charter schools, and presented WACHarters' expanded 'Leaders' professional development program for charter school leaders.

**CHAIR REPORT – STEVE SUNDQUIST**

Chair Sundquist informed the Commission that the American Institute for Research (AIR) had approached the Commission in regards to participating in a study of charter school authorizers. Chair Sundquist noted that the Executive Committee had opted to commit to a ninety-minute interview every year for three years in regards to the study.

Chair Sundquist informed the Commission that the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) had approached the Commission to request a letter of support for NACSA's application to the federal Charter School Program grant competition. Chair Sundquist noted that a letter of support had already been drafted,

and awaited a Commission approved signature. The Commission reviewed the draft letter of support and discussed the action, and Commissioner Wright moved to empower Executive Director Halsey to sign the letter of support; Commissioner Jacka seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Sundquist informed the Commission that WACHarters had approached the Commission to request a letter of support for WACHarters' Strong Start program. Chair Sundquist noted that a letter of support had already been drafted. The Commission reviewed the draft letter of support, and discussed the action of supporting the development of the program. Commissioner McGuire moved to not submit a letter of support of the program; Commissioner Wright seconded. The motion passed 5 to 1: Chair Sundquist opposed.

The Commission further discussed the development of policy to guide future requests for letters of support. Commissioner McGuire moved to empower Mr. Halsey to research and recommend draft policy for requests for letters of support to the Commission; Chair Sundquist seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Halsey disclosed that, prior to the August 19, 2014 meeting he had been approached by a number of Commission approved charter schools for letters of support for those schools' application to the federal Charter School Program grant competitions. He noted that he had already signed letters of support for the charter schools, as he viewed the Commission's approval of the schools and the school's good standing with the Commission as reasons why a letter of support was warranted.

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – JOSHUA HALSEY**

##### **Legislative Engagement Strategy Update**

Mr. Halsey informed the Commission that he continues to engage state legislators in preparation for the 2015 legislative session. He noted that the legislators he had already met with expressed surprise at the amount of work the Commission had before it and the lack of staff it had at its disposal to carry out this work.

Mr. Halsey informed the Commission that staff in coordination with the Office of the Code Reviser had drafted legislation allowing for the Commission to receive and disburse gifts and grants. He noted that the bill would be introduced in the 2015 legislative session.

Mr. Halsey informed the Commission that staff had established a meeting with key Washington-based charter school and education reform advocates to discuss our proposed legislative agenda.

##### **2015 RFP Update**

Mr. Halsey informed the Commission that, after careful thought and conversation, staff would not be moving forward with the implementation of a tiered application for the 2015 Request for Proposals (RFP). He noted that Commission staff intended to continue research on such an application, with the hope of implementation in the 2016 RFP.

##### **Authorized Charter Schools Update**

Mr. Halsey informed the Commission that Commission approved charter school First Place Scholars continued to meet preopening conditions, and was on track to open on September 3, 2014.

Mr. Halsey presented an amendment (Amendment No. 2) to two provisions 4.15.1(e)(1)(a) and 4.15.1(e)(2) of the contract of Commission approved charter schools Excel, Green Dot, Rainier Prep, SOAR, and Summit Sierra and Olympus. The first removes the Commission as the beneficiary of fidelity bonding secured by the schools, and instead names the Commission as the loss payee in such bonding; the second allows the schools to

annually renew a Payment and Performance Bond, rather than maintaining one bond for the full term of their contract.

Chair Sundquist moved to accept Amendment No. 2 to the contract between the Commission and Excel, Green Dot, Rainier Prep, SOAR, and Summit Sierra and Olympus; Commissioner McGuire seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Compliance and Monitoring System Development Update**

Mr. Halsey informed the Commission that Dr. Catherine Fromme, Commission Contractor, and he intended to travel to Colorado to meet with representatives of Denver Public Schools and the Charter School Institute to gain further insight into both entities’ compliance and monitoring systems. The Commission will only pay for the Executive Director’s travel, not Dr. Fromme’s.

Mr. Halsey informed the Commission that staff continued to correspond with the National Charter Schools Institute concerning EpiCenter, the company’s compliance and monitoring software.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Dr. Fromme informed the Commission that the Commission’s draft strategic plan had been sent to stakeholders, and all had been complimentary of the plan. The Commission discussed the draft mission statement’s alignment with statute to ascertain an order of precedence for Commission actions. After further discussion, the following changes were made to the draft strategic plan:

What	8.19 DRAFT	Recommended change
Strategy 3- Third bullet, first deliverable	Research and explore options for incorporating community engagement practices into charter application (i.e. Chicago Neighborhood Advisory Council, Tennessee Community engagement).	Delete "into charter application". Now reads as, Research and explore options for incorporating community engagement practices (i.e. Chicago Neighborhood Advisory Council, Tennessee Community engagement).
Strategy 4 - Third bullet and second deliverable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a strong understanding of Charter District <b>Compacts</b> and develop a plan for Washington Charter District compacts               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Deliverable: Develop and implement a plan for Washington Charter District <b>compacts</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Replace "compacts" with "relationships". Now reads as. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a strong understanding of Charter District <b>Compacts</b> and develop a plan for Washington Charter/<b>District collaborative relationships</b>.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Deliverable: Develop and implement a plan for increased Washington <b>Charter/District relationships</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Timeline Strategy 2	On Board Commission staff	Change to: Establish & build capacity in communication staff.

Dr. Fromme presented a draft logic model that corresponded to the strategic plan. The Commission discussed the deliberate language of the model’s impact: “Every student has access to and thrives in a high quality school.”

The Commission broke for lunch at 11:40 a.m.

The Commission returned from lunch at 12:10 p.m.

## **PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK**

### **Academic Framework Overview**

Whitney Spalding Spencer of NACSA presented the draft Academic Performance Framework that the Commission will eventually utilize to evaluate approved schools. The Academic Performance Framework will evaluate the following indicators: state and federal academic accountability, student achievement, student progress, post-secondary readiness, and optional mission-specific academic goals. The allowable ratings for these indicators will be exceeds, meets, does not meet, and falls far below standard.

Ms. Spencer noted that the Academic Performance Framework was scheduled for a trial run at the beginning of the 2014 school year, after which stakeholder input and revisions as well as the results of the trial run would be integrated into the Academic Performance Framework with Commission approval scheduled for December 2014.

The Commission discussed an alternative framework for alternative schools, and Ms. Spencer provided insight as to adjustments the Commission could make to the various measures within the Academic Performance Framework.

Based on the currently available metrics, The Commission discussed a means by which it could realize its statutory responsibility in RCW 28A.710.200(2): 'A charter contract may not be renewed if, at the time of the renewal application, the charter school's performance falls in the bottom quartile of schools on the accountability index developed by the state board of education under RCW 28A.657.110 unless the charter school demonstrates exceptional circumstances that the authorizer finds justifiable.'

## **COMMISSION BIENNIUM BUDGET APPROVAL**

Mr. Halsey presented the Commission's biennium budget for approval. The budget showed revenues of \$1.64M from a combination of state general funds and charter school oversight fees, expenditures of \$1.58M with the addition of 2FTE by 2016, and a reserve of \$61K. Commissioner Wright moved to adopt the budget; Commissioner Jacka seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## **OPEN PUBLIC MEETING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Aileen Miller, Assistant Attorney General, provided the Commission with professional development pursuant to ESB 5964 'The Open Government Trainings Act'

Commissioner Wright departed at 3:05 p.m.

## **PUBLIC FORUM PROTOCOLS AND LOGISTICS**

Mr. Halsey presented protocols and logistics for charter school applicant public forums scheduled for early-to-mid September 2014. Mr. Halsey noted that an optional applicant rebuttal period had been added to the protocol. Commissioner McGuire moved to allow up to five (5) minutes of optional applicant rebuttal to the protocol; Commissioner Jack seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## **2015 COMMISSION MEETING CALENDARING**

The Commission discussed tentative dates for public meetings for the 2015 calendar year:

Jan 14  
Feb 12  
March 19  
April 16  
May 21  
June 18  
July 16  
August 13  
September 17  
October 15  
November 9  
December 10

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCUSSION AND CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICANTS**

Mr. Halsey presented Conflict of Interest Disclosures to the Commission. He asked the commission to review the founding teams of each 2014 applicant, and return the signed disclosures at the September 2014 public meeting.

Mr. Halsey presented research conducted by Ms. Miller and he in regards to a modification to the 2014 Request for Proposals for charter school applicants concerning charter management organizations and their success in Washington and other states. He encouraged the commission not to modify the 2014 RFP. The Commission discussed re-visiting the conversation in regards to the modification before the 2015 RFP.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The Commission has identified the following next steps

1. Approve Commission Strategic Plan
2. Receive Performance Framework stakeholder feedback and trial run
3. Review Commission bylaws regarding citizen testimony
4. Commissioners to review and sign Conflict of Interest Disclosures
5. Establish communication plan for 2014 charter school resolution approval/denial
6. Evaluate Executive Directors year-one performance

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Open session was suspended at 4:13 p.m. The Commission went into executive session along with Assistant Attorney General Aileen Miller to discuss potential measures for the Executive Director's year-one performance evaluation and current litigation regarding *League of Women Voters et al v. Washington State*

### **RECONVENTION AND ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Sundquist reconvened the Commission from executive session at 4:45 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.