

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

Tuesday, September 23, 2014 – 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

South Seattle Community College
Georgetown Campus
Building C: Room C122
6737 Corson Ave S
Seattle, WA 98108

Attendance:

Trish Millines Dziko, Kevin Jacka, Raymond Navarro, Dave Quall, Steve Sundquist, Cindi Williams, and Larry Wright

Absent: Dr. Margit McGuire and Dr. Roberta Johnson Wilburn

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 10:02a.m. Attendance was taken. The following Commissioners were present: Trish Millines Dziko, Kevin Jacka, Raymond Navarro, Dave Quall, Steve Sundquist, Cindi Williams, and Larry Wright. It was determined a quorum was present to proceed with the meeting.

Approval of the August 19 Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes for the August 19 Commission meeting were reviewed and approved – Commissioner Williams moved, and Commissioner Jacka seconded. The motion passed with one abstention, Commissioner Dziko.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mitch Price of the Washington State Charter Schools Association (WACHarters) gave testimony regarding Commission-approved charter schools' leasing of facilities owned by religious organizations. Mr. Price encouraged the Commission to engage in conversations with the charter schools before creating policy that would affect the charter schools' leasing of such facilities.

Dr. Thelma Jackson, Board Chair of SOAR Academy, gave testimony regarding SOAR's leasing of facilities owned by religious organizations. Dr. Jackson informed the Commission that SOAR had been open and transparent in the school's initial application to the Commission in regards to its plans to lease a facility owned by a religious organization, and expressed concern should the Commission choose to create policy that would affect SOAR's leasing of such a facility.

Elizabeth Collins, speaking as an individual, urged the Commission to evaluate the quality of translation services offered at Commission Public Forums; Mrs. Collins proposed the commission add time to the individual and group public comment time in the event of a lack of synchronous translation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Open session was suspended at 10:18 a.m. The Commission went into executive session pursuant to RCW 42.30.110.

Commissioner Dziko departed at 11:07 a.m.

ACTION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Open session was reconvened at 11:42 a.m. Chair Sundquist reported that the Commission would gather further information before it created a policy affecting Commission-approved charter schools' use of religious facilities.

CHAIR REPORT

Chair Sundquist reported that Charter Board Partners had hired Libuse Binder as its Washington State Team Executive Director.

Chair Sundquist noted that the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' (NACSA) Annual Conference was scheduled to occur October 20-23 in Miami, FL. Chair Sundquist and Commissioner Wilburn have made arrangements to attend, and Executive Director Halsey will be sitting on two panels at the conference as a final obligation of the NACSA Leaders Program, which Mr. Halsey has participated in for the past several months.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

General Updates

Mr. Halsey reported that the Commission had settled on dates for the Commission's 2015 open public meeting schedule at the August 19 Commission meeting; staff would be providing locations at the November 13 Commission meeting.

Mr. Halsey noted that staff had submitted the Commission 2015-17 Operating Budget Request to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) on September 19. The Budget Request contained four decision packages, posted on the Commission's website.

Mr. Halsey noted that he had appeared on TVW's Impact with Anita Kisse on September 10 for a discussion regarding Commission-approved charter school First Place and the future of charter schools in Washington State.

Mr. Halsey noted that he had attended the Governor's Board and Commission Director/Administrator Training on September 15. Mr. Halsey shared that the that the Governor has instituted a policy allowing his appointments to boards and commissions to serve only two terms, or ten years; Mr. Halsey encouraged the Commission to reach out to the Governor's office in regards to reappointment.

Mr. Halsey alerted the Commission that on September 25 Commissioners Sundquist and Dziko, as well as himself, would be attending an open public meeting with the Tacoma Public Schools Board to discuss charter schools and the boards legal responsibilities concerning charter schools located within the district's boundaries.

Authorized Charter Schools Update

Mr. Halsey gave an overview of Commission-approved charter school activity since the August 19 Commission meeting:

- Commissioners Sundquist and Dziko, as well as Mr. Halsey, attended a ribbon cutting ceremony for First Place Scholars on September 2. Mr. Halsey will attend the charter school's board meeting on September 30.
- SOAR academy is in the process of contracting with individuals to support community outreach and project management.
- Rainier Prep is close to acquiring a facility in Seattle.
- Green Dot, Washington State, hired Bree Dusseault as Executive Director, and the charter school has executed a lease to occupy the former John R. Rogers Elementary in Tacoma. Green Dot's board of directors are seeking to add three members, as well.
- Mr. Halsey and Commission Contractor, Dr. Catherine Fromme, traveled to Summit Public Schools in California for a day of learning on September 9.
- Commission Executive Assistant, Colin Pippin-Timco contacted the school leaders of Rainier Prep, SOAR, and Summit Public Schools in regards to the various facility challenges the schools were experiencing. Mr. Pippin-Timco created a summary of these conversations for the Commission.

Mr. Halsey noted that, per the action from the executive session, he was retracting his recommendation that the Commission pass a motion concerning Commission-approved charter schools occupying facilities owned by religious organizations.

Compliance Monitoring System Development Update

Mr. Halsey noted that staff continued to explore various online management tools to support the Commission's monitoring and oversight of approved charter schools.

Legislative Engagement Strategy Update

Mr. Halsey reported that on September 17 he and Chair Sundquist had met with a group of charter school supporters to discuss the Commission's legislative agenda.

Mr. Halsey informed the Commission that he had met with several State Senators who serve on the Senate Education Committee or who have charter schools opening within their district.

Mr. Halsey encouraged the Commission to review the Washington State School Directors' Association's (WSSDA) Legislative Assembly Proposal Guide for proposals that may affect the Commission and charter schools.

The Commission broke for lunch at 12:10 p.m., and returned at 12:42 p.m.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FINAL APPROVAL

Dr. Fromme presented the Commission’s Strategic Plan for Commission approval. The following elements were amended prior to approval:

What	9.23 final	Recommended and approved change
Strategy 1- First bullet, third deliverable Page 4	Deliverable: Increased head count/FTE for WSCSC from 2.2FTE to 6.0FTE (Fall 2018)	Change 6.0 FTE to 5.0 FTE
Strategy 2 - Third bullet - second deliverable Page 6	Deliverable: Fall election outcomes demonstrate major political figures in support of charters	Delete entire deliverable
Strategy 2 - Fourth bullet - first deliverable Page 6	Deliverable: Demonstrated evidence of proactive relationship building, increased partners, supportive elected officials	Change "supportive" to "and informed" Now reads as: Demonstrated evidence of proactive relationship building, increased partners, and informed elected officials.
Stakeholder feedback Last page	Correct spelling of names; Marta Reyes Lisa McFarland Jana Carlise Jeanette Vaughn	Now reads as: Marta Reyes-Newberry Lisa MacFarlane Jana Carlisle Jeannette Vaughn

Chair Sundquist moved to accept the Commission’s Strategic plan as amended , and Commissioner Quall seconded: the motion passed unanimously.

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Financial and Organizational Framework Stakeholder feedback and Development Team Recommendations

Mr. Halsey and Dr. Fromme were joined by Mr. William Haft of NACSA for a presentation to the Commission regarding the Financial and Organization Performance Frameworks. Dr. Fromme presented stakeholder feedback for both frameworks in the form of general feedback themes:

- Financial Performance Framework feedback themes:
 - Concerns regarding how newly established charter schools will meet the standards.
 - Concerns regarding the number of measures, their usefulness and impact on workload for both the schools and the Commission.

- Gratitude regarding preliminary rating system, yet concern regarding the process of moving from preliminary to final, as well as making the preliminary rating public.
- Organizational Performance Framework feedback themes
 - Concerns in regard to the alignment of the framework's alignment to charter school contracts.
 - Desires to reformat the framework to improve readability and understanding on the part of the charter school operator and public.

Mr. Haft noted that the feedback represented an incomplete and developing understanding of the frameworks. Mr. Haft posited that the need for the Financial Performance Framework's multiple measures was developed in an effort to provide a more holistic picture of the charter school's financial viability. Chair Sundquist noted that it was likely that a start-up charter school or a school that had made a large purchase directly before an audit could appear to be in poor financial shape. Mr. Haft in turn noted that this appearance would be corrected with follow-up reporting.

Conversation turned towards the Organizational Performance Framework, and the alignment of the framework to the charter schools' contract and the redundancy therein. Mr. Halsey noted that this would be a philosophical conversation that the Commission would need to address, and Dr. Fromme furthered this sentiment by noting that, for the charter schools, compliance should be a necessity but not a driver.

Chair Sundquist questioned whether the Performance Framework as a whole was on schedule, and Mr. Halsey replied that the Performance Framework was on track for approval at the Commission's December 11 meeting, but that there were delays in obtaining data from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) pertaining to the Academic Performance Framework.

2014 RFP UPDATES AND OCTOBER 9 PLANNING

Public Forum Updates

Mr. Halsey reported that the 2014 Charter School Applicants' Public Forums had concluded, with an estimated total of 280 individuals attending the four forums as a whole. The Commission had received draft recommendation reports for all four applicants, as well, and these reports would be posted top the Commission's website.

Commissioner Dziko returned at 2:14 p.m.

Commissioner and Applicant Conflict of Interest Discussion

Mr. Halsey presented Conflict of Interest disclosure forms to each of the Commissioners. Chair Sundquist noted that it was in the Commission's best interest that Commissioners disclose all potential conflicts of interest with the 2014 Charter School Applicants, even if those conflicts were only perceived.

Mr. Halsey presented a protocol for the October 9 Commission resolutions to approve or deny 2014 Charter School Applicants. The following Commissioners volunteered to lead the discussions and resolutions of the following applicants:

- Commissioner Wright: Bilingual Charter Academy
- Commissioner Jacka: Charter Schools of Sunnyside, Sunnyside Charter Academy
- Commissioner Williams: The Ducere Group, The Village Academy

- Chair Sundquist: Green Dot Public Schools, Washington State: Seattle Charter School

Communications Plan for October 9

Mr. Halsey alerted Commissioners that they would likely be contacted by the press in advance of the October 9 meeting, and that the communications team and staff would work to provide talking points for such inquiries. The communications team and staff were in the process of creating a draft press release as well.

COMMISSION BYLAWS AND POLICY DISCUSSION

Issuing Letters of Support to Agencies and Organizations

Mr. Halsey presented a draft policy regarding the Commission's issuance of letters of support to agencies and organizations. The Commission discussed adding more direct language to the draft policy, as well as its impact on personal endorsements made by Commissioners not acting on behalf of the Commission. Mr. Halsey will bring an edited version of the draft to a future meeting for approval and adoption.

The Commission discussed its existing bylaws more broadly, and the need to develop new standing committees to better align with its strategic plan. These committees would serve as work teams, aiding in the Commission's financial, authorization, and school performance monitoring capacity.

UPDATE ON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR YEARLY EVALUATION PROCESS

Chair Sundquist presented the Commission's executive director evaluation process:

1. Mr. Halsey will submit to the Commission a self-evaluation based upon goals previously established by the Executive Director and the Commission.
2. Chair Sundquist will submit to the Commission evaluation forms for Mr. Halsey based upon goals previously established by the Executive Director and the Commission.
3. The Commission will invite outside organizations who have engaged with Mr. Halsey to submit observations on their professional interactions with the Executive Director.
4. The key elements of the full evaluation will be organized by the Executive Committee.
5. The full evaluation will be presented to the Commission and the Executive Director in executive session, and memorialized in a summarizing memo.

NEXT STEPS

The Commission has identified the following next steps:

1. Continue to work with the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) to establish the Commission's independent website.
2. Continue to engage in the Commission's current legislative strategy/priorities.
3. Continue work on the Performance Framework.
4. Evaluate and amend Commission bylaws, to include guidance for citizen testimony to the Commission.
5. Develop and implement a communications plan for the October 9 Commission meeting
6. Evaluate the Executive Director
7. Establish a plan for Commissioner appointments ahead of the 2015 Legislative Session.

The Commission adjourned at 3:30 p.m.