



CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 18, 2017 | 10:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

ESD 113: Capital Event Center (Pacific Room)
6005 Tyee Drive SW, Tumwater, WA 98512

Attendance:

Elizabeth (Betsy) Cohen, Jessica Garcia, Dan Grimm, Kaaren Heikes, Dr. Margit McGuire, Dr. Gil Mendoza, Raymond Navarro, Steve Sundquist, and Cindi Williams.

Leadership Team: Joshua Halsey, Executive Director; Cathy Fromme, New School Application Director; Paula Kitzke, Special Education Program Review Supervisor; Nadja Michel-Herf, Director of School Quality and Accountability; Krystal Starwich, CSP Grant Manager; Aileen Miller, Assistant Attorney General; Amanda Martinez, Executive Assistant

Guests are Ronn Robinson, consultant for PSESD and Mitch Price from WaCharters

Call To Order:

Roll Call

Chair Sundquist called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. The following Commissioners were present: Betsy Cohen, Jessica Garcia, Dan Grimm, Kaaren Heikes, Dr. Margit McGuire, Dr. Gil Mendoza, Steve Sundquist, and Cindi Williams. It was determined that a quorum was present to proceed with the meeting. Cindi Williams attended the meeting via conference call. Kaaren Heikes will be leaving the meeting at 2:00 p.m., Raymond Navarro arrived at 10:39 a.m.

Consideration of the April 20, 2017 Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Minutes for the April 20, 2017 Commission Meeting were reviewed and approved. Steve Sundquist moved to approve the minutes as written. Betsy Cohen seconded. Motion carried unanimously, with no opposes, no abstentions.

Public Comment

There was no public comment provided.

Chair Report

Chair Sundquist provided updates regarding the Commissioner appointment process. Commissioners were directed to Executive Director Joshua Halsey for any questions they have regarding their term length.

Chair Sundquist also provided an update regarding Executive Director Halsey's compensation. Chair Sundquist continues to work with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Attorney General's Office (AGO) regarding Executive Director Halsey's compensation.

Chair Sundquist expressed his gratitude to the Washington State Charter Schools Association for the annual conference that was held last week.

Executive Director Report

General Updates

Executive Director Halsey stated that he has initiated a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to identify an external consultant/organization to facilitate a Strategic Assessment for the Commission as the Commission embarks on the development of a Strategic Plan. Proposals are due May 22, with the Strategic Assessment beginning in June and ending in September. The results of the Strategic Assessment will be shared at a future Commission meeting with the intent that the assessment results guide the development of the Commission's 3-year Strategic Plan.

Executive Director Halsey introduced Krystal Starwich, State Education Agency (SEA) Charter School Program (CSP) Grant Coordinator, and explained that her position is split between the Commission and OSPI: 75% of her time will be dedicated to administering the CSP Grant and 25% on oversight for the Commission. She is housed at the Commission.

Legislative regular session ended on April 23 and a special session was called on April 24, which could last for 30 days. The legislature has not passed a supplemental or biennium budget and the Commission will be contingency planning in the event of a government shutdown. The government may shut down on June 30, 2017 if a new biennium budget is not passed before this date.

Executive Director Halsey gave a Commission staffing update. There are currently two interagency agreements (IAG) with OSPI. One of those governs the CSP Grant Coordinator, Krystal Starwich, and the other regards Paula Kitzke's position. Paula's role was designed to create capacity and oversight for Special Education and serve as a liaison between OSPI and the Commission. As the workload for the Commission is high right now, OSPI has agreed to suspend the IAG and allow Paula to work for the Commission full time. Joshua is hoping to have a conversation with new Assistant Superintendent of Special Education, Glenna Gallo, to resurrect the IAG for the Special Education liaison in the coming months.

Attached to the Executive Director Report is a budget report through March 31. Executive Director Halsey is anticipating about an \$88k surplus for this fiscal year ending in June. This has allowed the Commission to bring Paula and Krystal on staff, with any additional monies being saved for ongoing litigation with the Charter School lawsuit. When the state is sued in regards to the charter school act, this comes out of the Commission's budget.

Charter School Updates

Commission staff continue to provide support and monitor pre-opening conditions for schools slated to open this August. Dan Calzaretta, Executive Director at Willow Public Schools, has requested an additional planning year due to facility challenges. Willow is working with Walla Walla Community College for a site to open on their vacant land, with the college's President being very open to the idea of the school having a permanent facility at this site. Executive Director Halsey has granted the request for an additional planning year resulting in Willow planning to open in August 2018.

Two-day site visits are being conducted for all currently authorized and operational charter schools. The Commission's Organizational Performance Framework (OPF) is used as the primary guide for the site visits. In addition to the OPF, Commission staff review the school's educational program terms, financial statements and interview staff, students, parents, administrators, and board members. The site visits have yielded a great amount of interesting and insightful data. Excel, Green Dot and Rainier Prep's site visits will be happening in June.

Executive Director Halsey shared his plans regarding quarterly 'goodwill' tours of the schools next school year. These 'goodwill' tours will be designed to facilitate Commissioners' deepening their understanding of the charter schools the Commission has authorized. The tours will begin next fall. Joshua is open to suggestions around this plan and welcomes feedback.

Executive Director Halsey provided an update regarding the quarterly charter school board observations that his staff conducts. These observations are a component of the ongoing monitoring and oversight that the Commission conducts.

The Commission is looking at the frequency that charter schools are being audited. Schools are audited by a schedule that the State Auditor's Office will establish. There are two types of audits in the first and second year of operations: a financial statement audit and an accountability audit. The financial statement audit is looking at the finances of the schools and the apportionment revenues they receive. The accountability audit will look at compliance with the open public meetings act, staffing, staffing credentials and compliance to the charter contract. The Commission continues to have ongoing conversations with SAO to work through auditing questions and requirements. The other audit, a performance audit, is required of charter schools in their first operating year, and every three years afterwards. There are currently no funds appropriated for the SAO to perform this audit, which would

be in excess of \$100,000 per school if schools had to incur the cost independently. Commissioner Grimm suggests we try to change the law making the audit contingent on fund availability and will work with Joshua on how to move forward with that.

There are no updates on the lawsuit beyond what was reported at last month's Commission meeting.

Charter Contract Transfer Updates and Considerations

Excel Public Charter School's Contract and Green Dot

The contract between Excel and Green Dot has been finalized and executed. This contract will be effective on July 1, 2017 with pre-opening conditions that will need to be met.

Spokane International Academy Charter Contract Consideration

The dialogue continues between Spokane International Academy (SIA) and Spokane Public Schools (SPS) with the anticipation of there being a recommendation at June meeting. Joshua gave a high level summary of the timeline and happenings with SIA to date regarding the request for a contract transfer.

Executive Session

An Executive Session was begun at 11:16 am pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30.110(1)) to discuss with legal counsel representing the agency litigation or potential litigation to which the agency, the governing body, or a member acting in an official capacity is, or is likely to become, a party, when public knowledge regarding the discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the agency. The Executive Session was planned to end at 11:30 am. A short extension was announced at 11:30 am.

Open Session

At 11:44 am, Chair Sundquist resumed open session stating that no final action had been taken during the Executive Session.

Spokane International Academy Charter Contract Consideration (continued)

Chair Sundquist stated that the Commission is not a party to a dispute, and remains committed to being a good faith partner once the parties have resolved their issues, assuming that course remains appropriate at that time.

Academic Performance Framework (APF) Consideration

APF

Lyria Boost, from Public Impact, joined the Commission meeting via teleconference for the Academic Performance Framework consideration. Public Impact is an organization that has done work with the Commission and others developing specific accountability measures and running trials, trial runs and research support and management to organizations. The recommendation set forth is to move away from

the stepped tiered system to a weighted system in regards to academic performance. Stakeholders took a deep dive into this subject in January and the Commission has taken into consideration the feedback and how they will address these concerns. Some questions raised by commissioners included: data availability on growth, numerical inconsistencies, ESSA data, looking at universal indicators and chronic absenteeism, discipline data, and using climate or culture surveys.

A motion to adopt the APF framework and accompanying business rules within the Commission's portfolio by Chair Sundquist. Betsy Cohen seconded. Motion carried unanimously, with no opposes, no abstentions.

New School Application Updates

Dr. Cathy Fromme presented the New School Application process. The authorization process has been designed to adhere to the Commission mission and state statute emphasizing high quality public charter schools. Public Forums were also discussed. Finally, Dr. Fromme shared the New School Application timeline and reminded Commissioners that the Executive Director's Recommendation Reports will be completed and sent to Commissioners and posted to the Commission website on June 16, about two (2) weeks prior to the June 29 Commission Meeting.

Commission Regulatory Function Discussion

Executive Director Halsey continued the conversation on the Conflict of Interest Policy that reflects current statute.

Motion to adopt the Conflict of Interest Policy. Margit McGuire moved to adopt the policy. Dan Grimm seconded. Motion carried unanimously, with no opposes, no abstentions.

Executive Director Halsey and Aileen Miller, assistant Attorney General, also presented a draft of a Principles of Service Policy. One request that is noted among new Commissioners during onboarding is a desire to better understand the role of a commissioner, and how this policy is designed to be a value add. The general consensus is that this is a wanted and needed document for the Commission. Commissioners brought up ideas pertaining to the Communication Policy and an appointed spokesperson for the media and public, a social media component and in general a governance model for the Commission. Any feedback or input is greatly appreciated and solicited by Joshua to move this document forward.

Executive Session

There was no further executive session needed.

Next Steps

The following next steps were identified:

1. Resolving the need for, and potentially moving forward regarding the appointment process of the open Commissioner seat with the Governor
2. SIA Charter contract transfer
3. Principles of Service document
4. Compensation action for Executive Director Joshua Halsey
5. June 29 Commission Resolution Meeting

Meeting Adjournment

Chair Sundquist adjourned the meeting at 2:38 pm.