



## CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, June 21, 2018 | 10:00 a.m. to 4:40 p.m.

South Seattle College | Georgetown Campus (Colin Educational Hall, C122)  
6737 Corson Avenue S, Seattle, Washington

---

### Attendance:

Betsy Cohen, Jessica Garcia, Dan Grimm, Kaaren Heikes, Dr. Kristina Mayer, Dr. Margit McGuire, Dr. Gil Mendoza, Steve Sundquist and Cindi Williams.

Leadership Team: Joshua Halsey, Executive Director; Paula Kitzke, Deputy Director; Dr. Cathy Fromme, New School Application Director; Alyce McNeil, Communications Director; Krystal Starwich, CSP Grant Manager; Aileen Miller, Assistant Attorney General and Amanda Martinez, Executive Assistant.

### Call To Order

#### Roll Call

Chair Sundquist called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m. The following Commissioners were present: Betsy Cohen, Jessica Garcia, Dan Grimm, Dr. Kristina Mayer, Dr. Margit McGuire, Dr. Gil Mendoza, Steve Sundquist and Cindi Williams. It was determined that a quorum was present to proceed with the meeting. Commissioner Heikes arrived at 11:20 a.m.

### Consideration of the May 24, 2018 Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Minutes for the May 24, 2018 Commission Meeting were reviewed. Commissioner McGuire moved to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Cohen seconded. Motion carried, with no opposes; no abstentions.

### Public Comment

No public comment was provided.

### Conflict of Interest Discussion

The Commission discussed one potential conflict of interest between Commissioners and the application under review. Commissioner Mendoza knew Dr. Debra Sullivan 25 years ago when they were both students in the same doctoral program cohort. Chair Sundquist moved that Commissioner Mendoza's potential conflict NOT be considered a conflict, real or perceived. Commissioner Williams seconded. Motion carried, with no opposes; Commissioner Mendoza abstained. The Commission found that no conflicts of interest exist between Commissioners and the application under review.

## Resolution Process Overview

Chair Sundquist reviewed the new school application resolution process.

## Charter School Application Resolutions: Ashé Preparatory Academy

### Executive Director Recommendation and Remarks

Executive Director Halsey gave a brief overview of Ashé Preparatory Academy (Ashé Prep), as outlined in the Recommendation Report published on June 8, 2018. He reported that Ashé Prep was recommended for approval. The proposed K-8 school, if approved, would open in the fall of 2020 with 150 students, growing to 486 students at capacity.

Commissioners asked the following questions of Executive Director Halsey and New School Application Director, Dr. Cathy Fromme:

Commissioner Williams asked how the population of students with special needs would be served by Ashé Prep.

Dr. Fromme responded that these students would be in the classroom with the regular education students. The Application responded to all of the 'child find' questions and defined these services well. Ashé Prep's application was thorough in this area. The notion of belonging and the way they are planning to structure their educational program around the community and learning shows that a student with an IEP would have more personalized attention than they would have at a traditional public school.

Chair Sundquist asked if there have been concerns raised about the sharing of student information with the community based organizations that they develop relationships and partnerships with.

Dr. Fromme responded that this was not discussed, nor did it come up in the applications. There could potentially be wrap-around services designed down the road, but the school data sharing would need to comply with The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) rules and regulations.

Commissioner Mendoza inquired about the timeline for a school finding a facility, specifically as Ashé Prep does not have a facility identified.

Executive Director Halsey responded that the process for the applicant is generally that they do not have a facility identified, as it is very difficult to confirm a facility without a charter contract. The New School Application has the applicants show the extent of the outreach and research that has been done on locating a facility based on their student population and proposed student enrollment. Ashé Prep has

done their due diligence, and they will have a pre-opening condition and a timeline associated that will include finding a facility prior to their contract becoming effective.

New School Application Director, Dr. Cathy Fromme, gave a brief overview of the evaluators and evaluation team that provide the basis for the Executive Director's Recommendation Report. For this application cycle, the application team was composed of three evaluators external to the Commission, one evaluator from Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction (OSPI) and one Commission staff member.

### **Commission Questions for Applicant**

Executive Director Halsey welcomed Dr. Debra Sullivan, Monique Manuel and Casey Castello from Ashé Prep's Board of Directors and Start-up Team Members.

Commissioner Garcia thanked the Ashé Prep team for their Public Forum and wanted clarification around the statement made at the forum around wanting to have activist teachers and activist members on the elder boards, regarding if the school planned on recruiting for strengths in advocacy or true activists?

Dr. Debra Sullivan responded that they are focused on Ashé Prep and designing a school considering the activists and advocates who have been seeking and speaking on behalf of and working toward more equitable education. They are looking for people who take action to make things change and who are strong in their advocacy, the ones who make sure their voices are heard.

Commissioner Garcia commented that it seems the student recruiting methods rely heavily on the Skyway West Hill Action Plan (SWAP) programs, but do not specifically call out Hispanic populations. She asked how heavily the recruitment methods rely on this, taken into consideration the demographics that were outlined in the application. She wants to ensure that there is outreach to all communities so that they know that Ashé Prep is an option.

Dr. Debra Sullivan responded that they have used the SWAP as a foundation or a baseline for what is happening in the broader community in education and found this as a useful resource for gathering information on what the community is looking for. The Ashé Prep founding team has also attended meetings with other local organizations including Youth Services, YMCA's, the neighborhood organizations, school district, The Boys and Girls Club, and other local entities. Information sessions moving forward will be located throughout the community in various ways, and will be reaching out to all aspects of the communities. The foundation and educational practices for Ashé Prep are practices that have been found to be effective for a multitude of populations of students; including low-income, Montessori, highly capable as well as students of African descent. Nothing in the model is designed only for black students; it is a model that can serve a broad diversity of students.

Commissioner Mayer asked for clarification on the intended demographics (of 60% being anticipated as African American) and how this aligns with the as-yet poorly defined English Language Learners (ELL) program.

Ms. Manuel responded that she currently has connections with the Somali community and their parent group and has experience in her current principal role with the students Ashé Prep intends to serve. Ms.

Manuel has experience with implementing an inclusion model and would plan on recruiting for teachers that have ELL as a second certification, instructional aids with both special education and ELL. She also has experience working with a large Hispanic population and there is a plan to serve all of the communities.

Commissioner Mayer asked for clarification on the plan for resources and budget in the future.

Dr. Debra Sullivan responded that Ashé Prep's budget plan was intended to allow them to be sustainable with only the public funding estimates. The school plans on being conservative with their public funding dollars to maintain this structure. For philanthropic and long-term fundraising solutions, the team does have connections and has plans to fund-raise. There is a two-pronged fundraising strategy. One involves families and the community where Ashé Prep plans on engaging 1,000 families for a \$100 commitment for 10 years to build a million dollar endowment. There are also channels through individuals and foundation grants including the Gates Foundation, WA Charters, The New School Venture Fund, etc. Ashé Prep also has a grant writer and will learn from the best practices of other charter schools including Rainier Prep.

Commissioner Mayer asked for clarification of activities around community engagement done by Ashé Prep in the active neighborhood of Skyway that is full of elementary schools, schools of improvement and public housing.

Dr. Debra Sullivan responded that Ashé Prep's team has met with the Superintendent of Renton School District and Renton Innovation Zone Coordinator and have three former students in teacher prep who are working in these schools currently and that the goal is to be collaborative with the school district. They feel it is very important for the adults involved to work together and they have plans to do some collaborative things around teacher professional development, family engagement and involvement, parent leadership development and empowerment. Currently, they have ties with Urban Families, Somali Youth and Family Club and are working with the lead manager of the public housing complex to bring parent empowerment, education, leadership and educational options for the students there. Ashé Prep plans to be a key player in the neighborhood for children and families from birth thru 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Commissioner Mendoza followed up on a question regarding collaboration and interdependence of other community organizations and inquired about Ashé Prep's interaction with the Road Map Project.

Dr. Debra Sullivan responded that she has been involved in different events, projects and activities with the Road Map Project, managed by the Community Center for Education Reform (CCER), for many years, but it is sometimes difficult for Skyway to be isolated in research findings because it is unincorporated and the demographic information gets folded into the larger geographical areas. They are trying to isolate, locate and focus on things specific to Skyway and working with CCER to disaggregate the data further.

Commissioner McGuire commended Ashé Prep on their civic and community engagement work done to date and asked for further clarification on what personalized learning looks like at Ashé Prep, as personalized and project-based learning is complex to do well.

Dr. Debra Sullivan responded that Ashé Prep is using "personalized" as a very broad term, as it can be thinking about all different learning styles and how they will ensure all of these learning styles are being met. As students will enter Ashé Prep in all different stages, how do they take the students where they

are to mastery level, as far as they can go and beyond. Ashé Prep plans on having the students bring their own lived experiences into their projects and studies and their own influence into the learning environment. This concept will focus on asking what do we need to do to make sure that every student has what they need to get to that mastery level.

Ms. Castello added that each student will get the support and recognition needed to bring their best and their own person, like at the Genius Fair. This will help all (student, student peers, teacher, parent or community adult) see how to support each student and how to create the space to have a personalized solution to show their genius.

Commissioner McGuire followed up on the previous questioning by asking how teachers will be supported for personalized learning.

Ms. Manuel responded that Ashé Prep will be collecting data, developing forms and systems and using technology to enable teachers to record and easily access each individual child's genius and knowing their strengths.

Ms. Costello added that Ashé Prep will leverage the aspects of personalization using best practices, including extensive professional development in August with several weeks before school begins for teachers and staff. Teachers will experience personalized learning like their students with extensive planning time, opportunities for support and being attentive to their learning and growth.

Commissioner McGuire expressed concern over research on paying teachers on a merit basis.

Dr. Debra Sullivan responded that merit based involves thinking about what it is that we expect of our students. Make sure that our educational environment is clear on how we are interpreting these things. No one should come into the job fearful, then it means there isn't support necessary, where it is okay to try, persist and keep going and she would not want anyone to be afraid of anything that is merit based.

Commissioner Garcia wanted clarification on the number of students at full capacity.

Dr. Debra Sullivan clarified that there will be 450 students at capacity, with two classes at each grade. Ashé Prep's goal is to be sustainable for this student count and will talk about any need to expand out, expand up or expand backwards if there is demand in the future.

Commissioner Mendoza asked for further clarification on student leadership development.

Dr. Debra Sullivan responded that students will be engaged in their own development during their entire tenure at Ashé Prep and that much of the leadership and educational models will be based on relationship building. Ashé Prep intends to intentionally build a community where parents belong too; that will encourage their voice to be heard.

Commissioner Williams asked for further clarification on the academic goals set up for students, and how Ashé Prep plans to measure themselves on these goals.

Ms. Manuel responded that Ashé Prep will look at growth on their goals, knowing that they will be designing a program around growth goals. They believe their goals, as stated in the application, are high, but they have a high expectation at Ashé Prep of helping students reach these goals.

Commissioner Williams commented that the curriculum plan for Ashé Prep is amazing.

Commissioner Grimm asked for clarification from the comment by Dr. Sullivan indicated that Ashé Prep is not for everyone and asked who the school would not be for.

Dr. Sullivan responded that the school would be for people who choose it, as not everyone is going to want to attend Ashé Prep, but everyone who wants to attend will be able to (subject to capacity constraints) .

Commissioner Mayer wanted clarification of Dr. Sullivan's, Ms. Manuel and Ms. Castello's role in the school.

Dr. Sullivan responded that she is the board chair, Ms. Castello is a proposed board member and that Ms. Manuel is Instructional Lead for the application.

### **Commission Discussion and Resolution**

Chair Sundquist moves to adopt resolution 18-01A which approves the charter school application of Ashé Preparatory Academy. Commissioner Mendoza seconded.

Commissioners voted as follows: Betsy Cohen, aye; Jessica Garcia, aye; Dan Grimm, aye; Kaaren Heikes, aye; Kristina Mayer, aye; Margit McGuire, aye; Gil Mendoza, aye; Steve Sundquist, aye and Cindi Williams, aye. The vote was 9-0. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Educational Equity Engagement**

Melia LaCour, Executive Director, Equity in Education at the Puget Sound Educational Service District, continued the discussion with Commissioners and staff regarding educational equity and moving toward drafting an educational equity policy for the Commission, with a focus on Adaptive Leadership.

## **Chair Report**

### **Upcoming Executive Committee Elections**

Chair Sundquist gave a brief overview of the upcoming Executive Committee elections at the August monthly Commission meeting. The board elections establish an Executive Committee tasked with providing support to Executive Director Halsey and the Commission staff between meetings.

### **Possible Changes to By-laws**

Chair Sundquist provided a brief overview of a potential change to the by-laws to include a four member Executive Committee, instead of the current three. This change would allow the most recent chair to sit on the Executive Committee for guidance of the new leadership. Any possible changes will be brought to the August Commission Meeting.

### **Commissioner Appointment Updates**

Chair Sundquist reported that there is no additional update on the open Commissioner position and the process will begin again. Commissioner Dziko has indicated her intent to resign, and has also identified

someone interested in the Commission. Chair Sundquist will continue to work with the appropriate policy-makers to support the appointment process.

## **Executive Director Report**

### **General Updates**

Executive Director Halsey provided an update on the New School Application. Next steps include collective reflections and learnings where the staff will gather information from the evaluation team, applicants, stakeholders and Commissioners through a survey. The survey results will be used to make adjustments and improvements for the next application cycle. The 2019-20 New School Application is slated for release in late September.

Executive Director Halsey provided an update regarding the School Evaluation Analyst position. A successful offer has been made to Daniel Nyachuba, and he will start his role at the Commission on July 2, 2018.

Grant Coordinator, Krystal Starwich, provided updates on the State Education Agency (SEA) Charter School Program (CSP) Grant. The draft monitoring report by WestEd was received and overall was positive, with a few areas receiving a “Partially Meets the Indicator” rating and no areas receiving a “Does Not Meet the Indicator” rating. Ms. Starwich will work on a plan to remedy any findings, including minor updates to the application or coordination with other internal Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) programs.

### **Lawsuit Challenging Constitutionality of Charter Schools**

Executive Director Halsey gave a brief update on the status of the lawsuit. There are no updates beyond last month. Typically, there is an anticipated time of up to a year for the Supreme Court Justices to render their decision if the decision is not unanimous, and between 90 and 180 days for a unanimous decision.

## **Recognizing Dr. Catherine Fromme**

Executive Director Halsey recognized New School Application Director, Dr. Catherine Fromme, for her service to the students of Washington state and to the Commission as an agency.

## **Communications Update**

Communications Director, Alyce McNeil, presented the Commission’s legislative priorities for 2018-2019. Feedback from Commissioners on these priorities include:

- Proceed with caution regarding actively advocating for changes to Special Education funding changes
- Reframe Legislative Priority 4 regarding the Commission and its Executive Director to be about the Commission as a state agency and to leave out the comparison to the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) and State Board of Education (SBE).

Chair Sundquist moved to approve legislative strategies 1 – 3 as priorities with strategy 4 reframed as an agency requirement. Commissioner Williams seconded. Motion carried, with no opposes; Commissioners Heikes, Mayer and McGuire abstained.

## **Standing Committee Updates**

### **Charter School Authorization Committee**

Executive Director Halsey provided a brief overview of the Charter School Authorization Committee meeting on June 14, 2018. The Authorization Committee has been exploring the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' (NACSA) Quality Practices Projects, the New School Application and the continuous learning process, and the six month plan for this committee moving forward.

### **Charter School Performance Committee**

Executive Director Halsey provided a brief overview of the Charter School Performance Committee meeting on June 14, 2018. The Performance Committee has been discussing autonomy vs. accountability and charter school performance data that is available, including the overview of the Organizational Framework Performance Report.

## **Executive Session**

No Executive Session was needed.

## **Next Steps**

The following next steps were identified:

1. Complete Open Commissioner Appointments
2. Public Disclosure Commission's Annual F-1 Filing for 2018 by all Commissioners
3. Finalize Legislative Priorities
4. Strategic Planning
5. Self-assessment for Commissioners
6. Racial Equity Professional Development and Policy Development
7. 2018 New Charter School Application Survey and Lessons Learned
8. Executive Committee Elections

## **Meeting Adjournment**

Chair Sundquist adjourned the meeting at 3:22 p.m.