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## **Washington Charter School Commission Authorizes Renewal of Summit Public Schools: Atlas**

*Public Charter School was approved for renewal for two years with conditions*

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**Olympia, WA** – During its public meeting on March 2, 2022, the Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission) voted to authorize a renewal of Summit Public Schools: Atlas’s (Atlas) charter. Atlas is a charter public school located in Seattle and opened in 2017.

Typically, a renewal of a charter public school in Washington is for five years. Given irregularities concerning incomplete teacher certification in the 2019-20 school year, the Commission elected to approve a shortened renewal term of two-years with specific conditions designed to support Atlas students and families while its Board of Directors makes necessary improvements. The renewal passed by a vote of 6-1, and with one abstention.

The conditions the Commission attached to the Atlas renewal include:

- improvements to the Board of Directors governing Summit Public Schools: Atlas and their oversight function
- increased oversight of the Board of Directors by Commission staff
- robust financial transparency and planning regarding the school’s obligation under a pending agreement with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction concerning the resolution of issues identified by the State Auditor’s Office
- communication of the State Auditor’s findings to parents and relevant certification information to the Commission
- cooperation and compliance with any additional inquiries/investigations by the Commission or other state agencies.

“The Commission’s role is to ensure charter public schools uphold the rigorous requirements in their contracts. Given the seriousness of the findings of incomplete internal processes and governance at Summit Public Schools: Atlas, the Commission approved a two-year renewal contract to ensure stability for students and the Atlas community while allowing leadership time it needs to work to fulfill all of their obligations according to state regulation,” said Commissioner Harium Martin-Morris. “Charter public schools have a layered accountability framework that includes active oversight and participation by each schools’ Board of Directors, the Commission, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Auditor’s Office and others. As we look ahead to the next two years, the Commission stands ready to partner in helping this school’s leadership implement the conditions we have attached to this renewal so Atlas may continue as a public school option for students and families.”

Charter public schools are public schools. Like all public schools, they are open to all students, tuition-free, publicly-funded, staffed by certificated teachers, and held accountable to state and national standards. There are currently 14 charter public schools authorized by the Commission operating in Washington today with two more to open over the next two years.

The criteria for renewal are rigorous. The evaluation process requires thorough analyses of a comprehensive body of quantitative and qualitative data based on annual performance reviews over the charter term; the school’s renewal application; and a site visit. Additional details on the decision to authorize a renewal, with conditions, may be found in the [staff report](#) to the Washington State Charter School Commission.

**About Washington State’s Charter School Commission**

Washington State’s Charter School Commission was formed with the mission of creating a rigorous and comprehensive proposal process and to hold charter public schools accountable to high standards of quality. The Commission is an independent state agency that exists to authorize and oversee high quality public charter schools throughout Washington with an emphasis on schools designed to expand opportunities for at-risk students, providing leadership and oversight that is consistent with national principles and standards of charter school authorizers and the provisions of Washington’s charter school law.

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