

WASHINGTON STATE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

# CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL OVERSIGHT ECOSYSTEM



WASHINGTON STATE  
*Charter School Commission*  
STUDENTS • INNOVATION • TRANSPARENCY

# THE WASHINGTON STATE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION



## **Established by Public Vote**

- In 2012, Washington voters approved Initiative Measure No. 1240 (I-1240) which established charter schools in Washington and today, is known as the Charter School Act.

## **Codified in State Law**

- The Charter School Act outlines the powers and parameters of charter public schools in Washington.
- The Charter School Act grants certain authority to authorized districts and a state authorizer (the Commission) to authorize and oversee charter public schools.

## **A State Regulatory Agency**

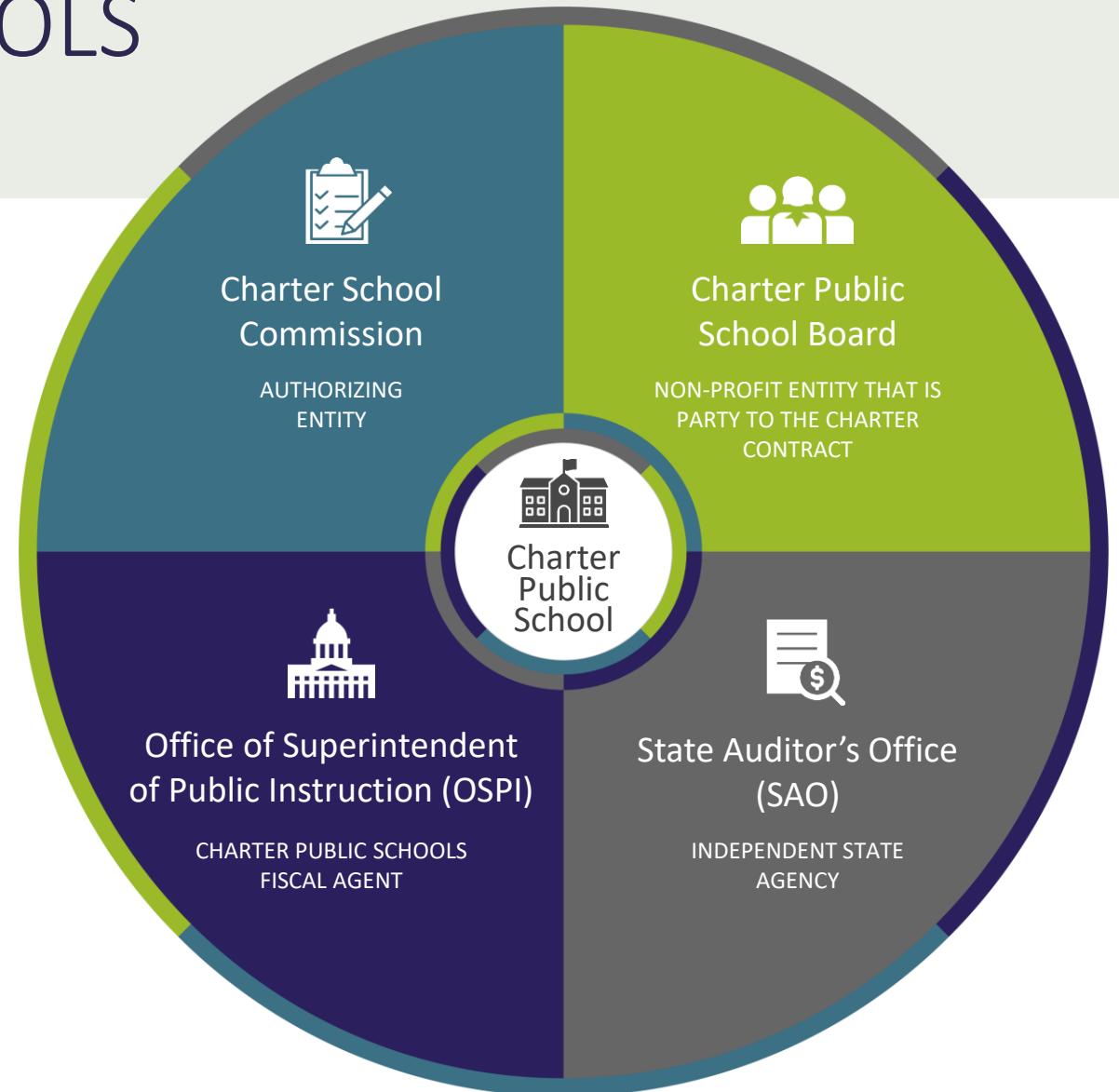
- The Washington State Charter School Commission was established in April 2013.
- The Commission is an independent state agency that is part of a layered system of oversight including the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the State Auditor's office (SAO) and the Board of Directors of each charter public school.

# CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN WASHINGTON ARE...

- **Public Schools.** Like all public schools, they are open to all students, tuition-free, publicly-funded, staffed by certified teachers, and held accountable to state and national standards.
- **Non-religious and non-sectarian** in their practices.
- **Committed to meeting specific academic goals** set by the Commission but are free to take their own decisions about how to achieve those goals. If the goals are not met, the charter may be revoked, and the school closed.
- **Contracted to follow an approved performance framework**, which codifies the expectations of the Commission and is monitored for compliance with state and federal laws as well as other state agencies such as the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

# CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS SYSTEM OF OVERSIGHT

- Intentionally designed to ensure multiple layers of accountability work together to verify compliance with charter contract and applicable laws and regulations
- Made up of four primary entities – each with distinct and complementary oversight responsibilities
- Charter public schools are given more autonomy but held to higher standards of accountability



Charter public schools are publicly-funded, non-profit schools of choice overseen by a board of directors. Each charter school operates independently according to the terms of a charter contract between the authorizer (Commission) and the charter public school board.



### CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

The authorizing entity that ensures charter public schools are complying with the charter contract and applicable rules and laws.

Evaluates and reports on charter public school performance.



### CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD

Non-profit entity that is party to the charter contract.

Responsible for the governance of the school.

First level of charter school oversight.



### STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE (SAO)

Independent state agency charged with ensuring that public entities are in compliance with applicable rules and laws.

Ensures public funds are being spent appropriately.



### OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (OSPI)

Oversees all public K-12 schools in Washington State.

Fiscal agent of charter public schools.

Ensures that schools are providing a program of basic education.

# CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS SYSTEM OF OVERSIGHT



OFFICE OF  
SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION  
(OSPI)

## Monitoring & Oversight

- Consolidated Program Review
  - Title Programs
  - Student and School Safety
  - Civil Rights
  - Highly Capable
  - System and School Improvement
  - Fiscal Cross-Cutting
  - Students in Foster Care or Experiencing Homelessness
- Special Education and Section 504
- School Report Card
- Student, Staff, and Financial Reporting

# CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS SYSTEM OF OVERSIGHT



## STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE (SAO)

### **Monitoring & Oversight**

Annual (or Semi-Annual) Accountability Audit – which includes, but is not limited to:

- Payroll
- Student Enrollment
- Restricted Funds
- Open Public Meetings Act Compliance
- Accounts Payable
- Compliance with Supplemental Contracts
- Banking
- Fundraising activities

# CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS SYSTEM OF OVERSIGHT



## CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

### Monitoring & Oversight

- Charter Contract
- Pre-Opening Conditions
- The Academic Performance Framework
- The Organizational Performance Framework
- Financial Performance Framework
- Site Visits
- Quality School Reviews
- Board Observations
- Annual Compliance Calendar



# CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMISSION

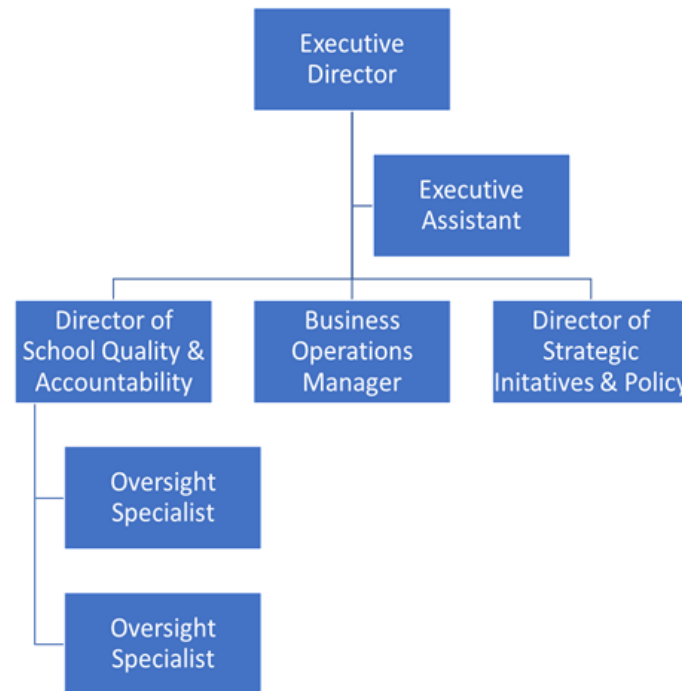


## Structure of the Commission

There are 11 Commissioners appointed to staggered, four-year terms, for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

- Three members appointed by the Governor
- Three members appointed by the Senate
- Three members appointed by the House of Representatives
- One member is Superintendent of Public Instruction's designee
- One member is State Board of Education's designee

Charter School Commission Staff org chart  
Total of 7 employees



## Q: Who is a candidate to be a Commissioner?

Members appointed to the commission shall collectively possess strong experience and expertise in public and nonprofit governance; management and finance; public school leadership, assessment, curriculum, and instruction; and public education law. All appointed members shall have demonstrated an understanding of and commitment to charter schooling as a strategy for strengthening public education.

# CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMISSION



- Washington State's Charter School Commission is an independent state agency charged with creating a rigorous and comprehensive proposal process for qualified non-profits who wish to open a charter public school.
- The Commission works to ensure that charter public schools are respecting rights of students, staff, and families within the schools as well as the interests of the general public while meeting the legal requirements and obligations of state and federal government.
- The Commission is committed to closing opportunity gaps between the state's most and least privileged groups of students within the educational system.
- The agency also monitors and provides oversight holding schools accountable to high standards of quality.

# CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS SYSTEM OF OVERSIGHT



## CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD

### Monitoring & Oversight

- Policies and Procedures
- Monthly OPMA-Compliant Board Meetings
- Approval of Expenditures
- School Leader Evaluation and Supervision
- Arbitrator of Complaints
- Approve Curriculum
- Approves and Monitors School's Budget
- Monitors Contracts

# CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN WASHINGTON



- In Washington state, charter public schools are operated by non-profit, public benefit boards.
- Each charter public school operates independently according to the terms of a performance contract or “charter.”
- A charter contract is a fixed term, renewable contract between a qualified non-profit organization board and the Commission that outlines the roles, powers, responsibilities and performance expectations for each party of the contract.

**Q:**  
**Who pays for a charter public school?**

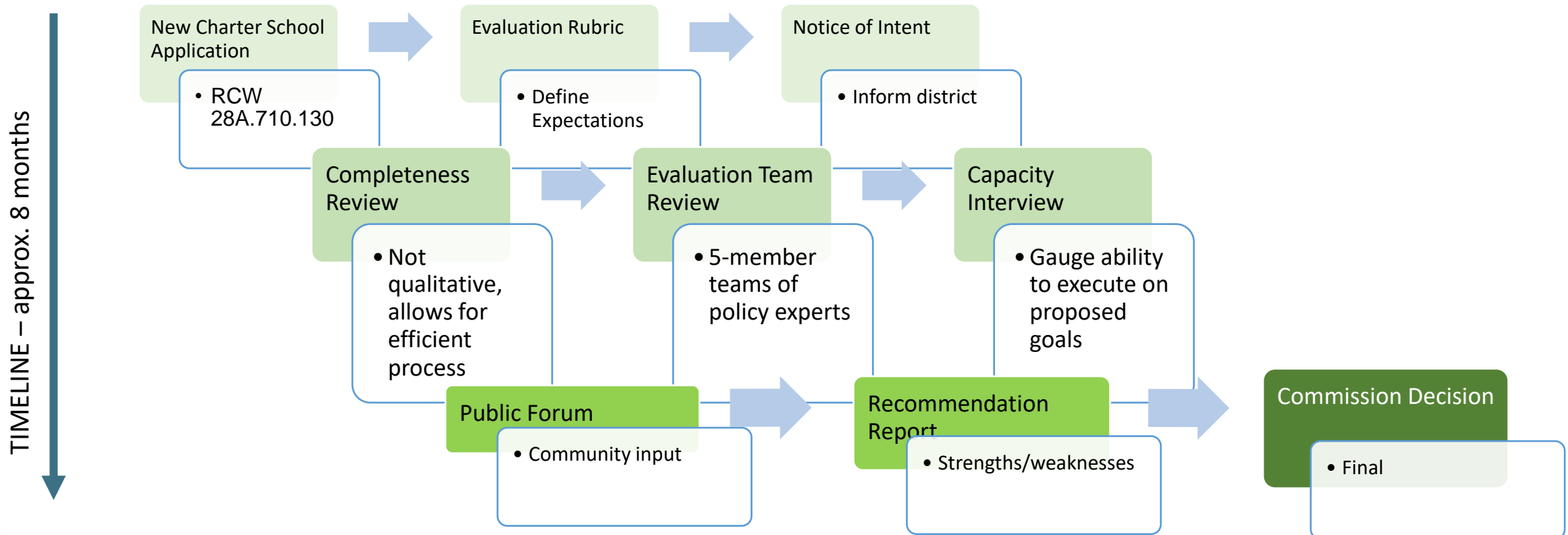
Charter public schools are tuition-free, public schools open to all students in the state of Washington. Charter public schools receive state apportionment funding and categorical funding such as Learning Assistance, Transitional Bilingual Education, Special Education, Highly Capable, and Transportation. Unlike traditional public schools, charter schools do not receive funding from voter-approved local levies. There is no state funding source for school construction or modernization.

# CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN WASHINGTON

Authorization, Evaluation, Monitoring, Performance



## New School Application Process



# CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN WASHINGTON

Authorization, Evaluation, Monitoring, Performance



## Overview of renewal process

### 1. Performance Report & Determination of Eligibility for Renewal

- a. Authorizer staff meets with each charter school to discuss the school’s charter contract renewal, including the school’s performance in comparison to the expectations established in the authorizer’s performance frameworks
- b. Authorizer issues performance report and contract renewal application guidance to charter school and posts performance report to its website **OR** Authorizer notifies charter school that it is ineligible for renewal based on reason(s) outlined in WAC 108-40-090; school may appeal this decision within 20 days of notice issuance; a public proceeding and authorizer action (per WAC 108-40-100) would replace the remainder of this timeline.
- c. Charter school may submit a response to the performance report

### 2. Public Comment (3-4 months)

### 3. Notice of Intent to Apply for Renewal or Cease Operations

- a. Charter school notifies authorizer of intent to apply (NOI) for renewal of charter contract or cease operations at the expiration of charter contract term

### 4. Renewal Inspection

- a. Authorizer and charter school staff meet and develop renewal inspection priorities
- b. Authorizer issues renewal inspection report
- c. Charter School may submit to the authorizer a written response to the renewal inspection report

### 5. Authorizer Renewal Recommendation Report

- a. Authorizer staff recommendation reports released to authorizing body (CSC or district board)
- b. Charter school request to respond to recommendation report deadline

### 6. Authorizer Resolution to Renew (if approved)

### 7. Renewal Contract Ratification

- a. Establish the terms for the next charter contract
- b. Authorizing board and charter board both vote in public meetings to ratify new contract

Renewal Process Timeline		
Date	Timeframe	Activity
March - May of School's 4 <sup>th</sup> Year of Operation (2021)	March - May	Authorizer staff meets with each charter school to discuss the school's charter contract renewal, including the school's performance in comparison to the expectations established in the authorizer's performance frameworks
May 21	May 21 of charter school's 4 <sup>th</sup> year of operation	Authorizer issues performance report and contract renewal application guidance to charter school and posts performance report to authorizer's website <b>OR</b> Authorizer notifies charter school that it is ineligible for renewal based on reason(s) outlined in WAC 108-40-090; school may appeal this decision within 20 days of notice issuance; a public proceeding and authorizer action (per WAC 108-40-100) would replace the remainder of this timeline.
June 21	Within 30 days <sup>1</sup> of receipt of authorizer issued performance report	Charter school may submit a response to the performance report
July 12	July 12 - November 30	Public comment period opens
July 12	June 12 of charter school's 4 <sup>th</sup> year of operation	Charter school deadline to notify authorizer of intent to apply (NOI) for renewal of charter contract or cease operations at the expiration of charter contract term
August 6	August 6	Charter school renewal application deadline
September 3	August 16-September 3	Authorizer and charter school staff meet and develop renewal inspection priorities
October 15	October 15	Charter school renewal inspection deadline
November 1	Within 14 days of renewal inspection	Authorizer issues renewal inspection report
November 15	Within 10 days of receipt of renewal inspection report	Charter School may submit to the authorizer a written response to the renewal inspection report
November 30	November 30	Public comment deadline
November 19	November 19	Authorizer staff recommendation reports released to authorizing body (CSC or district board)
December 10	Within 20 Days of receipt of recommendation report	Charter school request to respond to recommendation report deadline
December 16	December authorizer meeting	Authorizer resolution meeting
June 30, 2022	December 17 – June 30	Establish the terms for the next charter contract; authorizing board and charter board both vote in public meetings to ratify new contract

*Actual renewal process timeline for 2021*

# CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN WASHINGTON

Authorization, Evaluation, Monitoring, Performance



- a. The Commission holds charter schools accountable through:
  - i. The Charter Contract
  - ii. The Academic Performance Framework
  - iii. The Operational Performance Framework
  - iv. The Financial Performance Framework
  - v. Pre-Opening Conditions
  - vi. Site Visits
  - vii. Quality School Reviews
  - viii. Board Observations
  - ix. The Compliance Calendar

**Q:**

**How do we know whether or not charter public schools are following the commitments of their contracts?**

Charter public schools are required to submit monthly compliance documents to the Commission, as well as participate in quality school reviews and site visits. Every year, the Commission issues three performance reports for each school on their academic, financial and organizational performance.

# CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN WASHINGTON

Authorization, Evaluation, Monitoring, Performance



## **Every Charter Public School must meet the expectations as defined within a Performance Framework.**

- b. The Performance Framework is designed to support charter public schools in upholding a well-organized, student-centered, academically rigorous, fiscally sound school.
- c. The Performance Framework is the most important tool that the Commission and charter public schools use to provide guidelines for planning, implementation, self-evaluation, authorizer monitoring, and continuing improvement.
  - i. Commission staff monitor performance through site visits, Quarterly School Reviews, quarterly Board observations, and a compliance calendar detailing dozens of specific documents that schools must submit to the Commission throughout the year.
  - ii. In a school's first year of operation, the Commission conducts an in-depth, 2 to 2.5 day site visit, and issues a site visit report detailing strengths and opportunities for improvement.
  - iii. In subsequent years of operation, the Commission issues three reports for each school on each area of performance (Academic, Financial, and Organizational).



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Authorization, Evaluation, Monitoring, Performance



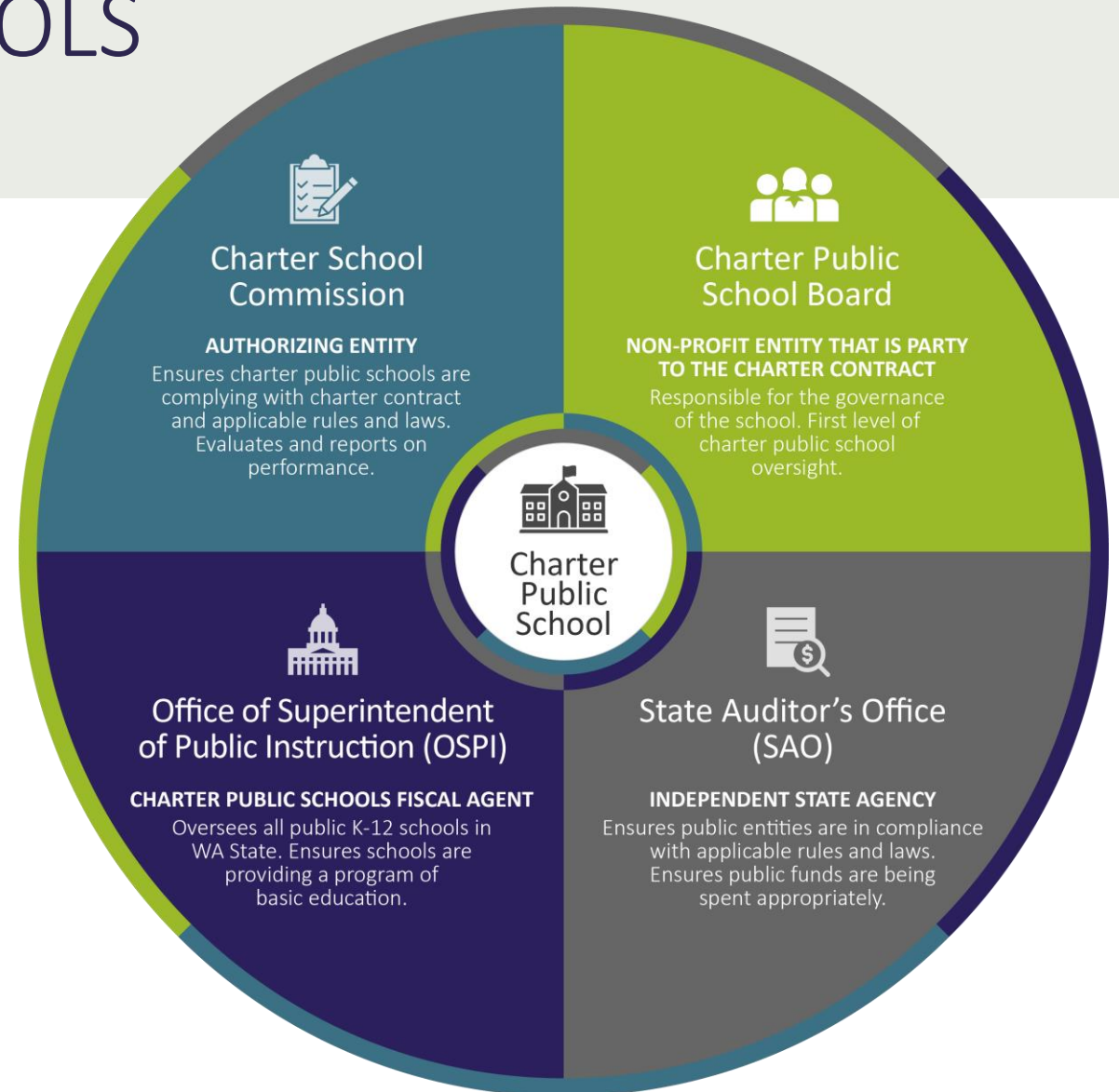
**At charter public schools, on-site oversight is much more intensive than that provided to traditional public schools by a state agency.**

Overview of site visits:

1. 2 to 2.5 days
2. Observation of multiple classrooms.
3. Review of compliance documents.
4. Interview teachers, administrators, students, families, Board members, specialists, staff developers, coordinators (i.e., Assessment Coordinator, Civil Rights Coordinator, Community Engagement Coordinator, Highly Capable Coordinator, English Language Learner Coordinator, Special Education Coordinator, Homeless/Foster Children Coordinator), operations personnel and other out-of-classroom staff.

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