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Spokane International Academy Expands to K-12

Five-year track record of success in K-8 empowering expansion that will serve more students

Spokane International Academy was previously announced in 2021 as one of four charter public schools earning renewal by the Washington State Charter School Commission

Spokane, WA – The Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission) is pleased to announce approval for Spokane International Academy to expand to grades 9-12 beginning in the 2021-22 school year. A charter public school, Spokane International Academy is one of four schools that recently earned a renewed charter based on student outcomes as evaluated by the Commission. Every charter public school must develop and execute well-organized plans that uphold student-centered, academically rigorous, fiscally sound schools. Spokane International Academy’s approval for expansion into high school is based on its track record of operational, financial and academic success in providing a tuition-free public school choice that is accountable for the outcomes of its students.

“Charter public schools are best positioned to succeed when the communities they serve are directly engaged in the school,” said **Dr. Heather Lechner, chair of the Washington State Charter School Commission**. “That’s why we are not only excited to expand the opportunities that Spokane International Academy may offer students based on its performance, but we are proud to be a partner with the families at all levels of this charter public school who have asked for the expansion into high school grades. We applaud the students, teachers, administrators and broader Spokane International Academy family for their commitment to building the charter public school that works so well for their students and their community.”

"We first want to thank the Washington State Charter School Commission for their support of our expansion to serve students in grades 9-12. SIA's original vision of a K-8 will be strengthened by the ability to now ensure our students and families have access to our program from kindergarten through college," said Travis Franklin, Chief Executive Officer at SIA. "The dedication of all SIA staff, board members, volunteers, students, and families has led to our ability to add this final piece to our program. This new high school program will allow all of our students the opportunity to leave high school with a 2-year college degree or a trade certification, both which will give students a solid footing for their post-secondary pursuits."

As stated in their application for expansion, the charter public school’s “Upper Academy (9-12) program is designed as the launching stage in the development of global citizens ready to pursue college and career options to gain the experience and knowledge necessary to transform their communities. This program will focus students towards the ‘what’s next’ after they leave the K-12 system.” Spokane International Academy intends to serve students who want a high school experience that is focused beyond graduation day to choosing a pathway: college or career.

For 9th and 10th grade students Spokane International Academy will provide a globally focused, college-prep program on campus with a traditional daily schedule. All students will be enrolled in English, math, history, Spanish and science ensuring that they complete all of the prerequisites necessary for participation in the Running Start program in 11th and 12th grade. Prior to students’ 11th grade year students will choose their desired pathway – college or career. For those on the college pathway, the expectation will be full-time enrollment in Running Start at either Spokane Falls Community College or Eastern Washington University. Running Start is a state-funded program that allows high-school students to earn both high school and college credit simultaneously. For Spokane International Students on the college pathway who qualify for Free or Reduced Priced Lunch, focused access to the Running Start program is a significant benefit as they look to their futures.

Students interested in the “career” pathway will remain enrolled part-time at Spokane International Academy for English and math but will also be enrolled at the NewTech Skills Center. The skill center is a regional career and technical education provider that provides 11th and 12th graders an opportunity to work towards a trade certification or eventual job placement in fields such as automotive repair, medical, dental, or veterinary assisting, or graphic design (amongst others).

Continuing the charter public schools global focus, all students in the Upper Academy will participate in a Social Entrepreneurship Program – building from the five themes of society, geography, environment, economy, and politics first introduced in the middle school. To support greater overall student success, the school is also hiring to expand its counseling services.

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 charters 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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