



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

# 2019 NEW SCHOOL APPLICATION RECOMMENDATION REPORT FOR: CATALYST: BREMERTON

May 16, 2019

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# INTRODUCTION

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The Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission) was created in 2013, after the approval of Initiative 1240 and subsequent passage of Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 6194, to serve as a statewide charter school authorizer. The eleven-member Commission is tasked with running a process to approve new charter schools, and effectively monitoring the schools it authorizes through ongoing oversight.

## Mission

To authorize high quality public charter schools and provide effective oversight and transparent accountability to improve educational outcomes for at-risk students.

## Values

Accountability/Responsibility  
Transparency  
Innovation  
High Expectations

## Vision

Foster innovation and ensure excellence so that every student has access to and thrives in a high-quality public school.

The Commission is committed to being culturally responsive. To that end, the Commission has adopted cultural competence definitions to support this commitment.

## Cultural Inclusion

Inclusion is widely thought of as a practice of ensuring that people in organizations feel they belong, are engaged and are connected through their work to the goals and objectives of the organization. Miller and Katz (2002) present a common definition: "Inclusion is a sense of belonging; feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best work." Inclusion is a shift in organization culture. The process of inclusion engages each individual and makes each feel valued and essential to the success of the organization.

Individuals function at full capacity, feel more valued and are included in the organization's mission. This culture shift

creates higher-performing organizations where motivation and morale soar.<sup>1</sup>

## Culturally Responsive Education Systems

Culturally responsive educational systems are grounded in the beliefs that all culturally and linguistically diverse students can excel in academic endeavors when their culture, language, heritage, and experiences are valued and used to facilitate their learning and development, and they are provided access to high quality teachers, programs, and resources.<sup>2</sup>

## Cultural Competency

Cultural competence provides a set of skills that professionals need in order to improve practice to serve all students and communicate effectively with their families. These skills enable the educator to build on the cultural and language qualities that young people bring to the classroom rather than viewing those qualities as deficits.

Cultural competence allows educators to ask questions about their practice in order to successfully teach students who come from different cultural backgrounds. Developing skills in cultural competence is like learning a language, a sport or an instrument.

The learner must learn, relearn, continuously practice, and develop in an environment of constant change. Cultures and individuals are dynamic – they constantly adapt and evolve.

Cultural competence is:

- Knowing the community where the school is located
- Understanding all people have a unique world view
- Using curriculum and implementing an educational program that is respectful of and relevant to the cultures represented in its student body
- Being alert to the ways that culture affects who we are
- Places the focus of responsibility on the professional and the institution
- The examination of systems, structures, policies and practices for their impact on all students and families viewing those systems as deficits.

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<sup>1</sup> Puget Sound Educational Service District. (2014). Racial Equity Policy. (p. 7) Seattle, WA: Blanford, S.

<sup>2</sup> Leadscape, National Institute for Urban School Improvement. (2010) Culturally Responsive Coaching for Inclusive Schools. (p. 4) Tempe, AZ: Mulligan, E. M., Kozleski, E. M.

### Focus on Quality

The New School Application solicitation and the resulting evaluation process are rigorous and demanding. The process is designed to ensure that charter school operators possess the capacity to implement sound strategies, practices, and methodologies. Successful applicants will clearly demonstrate high levels of expertise and capacity in the areas of education, charter school finance, administration, and management, as well as high expectations for excellence in professional standards and student achievement.

### Autonomy and Accountability

Charter schools have broad autonomy, but not without strong accountability. Charter schools will be accountable to the Commission for meeting academic, financial, and organizational performance standards. The three areas of performance covered by the evaluation policy correspond directly with the three components of a strong charter school application and the three key areas of responsibility outlined in charter contracts.

#### Accountability

Evaluation of charter school performance is guided by three fundamental questions:

- Is the educational program a success?
- Is the school financially viable?
- Is the organization effective and well-run?

The answers to each of these three questions are essential to a comprehensive evaluation of charter school performance.

Charter schools are evaluated annually against standards in the following categories:

*Academic Performance* – Charter schools are required to make demonstrable improvements in student performance over the term of the charter. Schools are required to administer all state standardized tests and to adhere to academic standards.

*Organizational Performance* – A nonprofit corporation holds the charter school contract and is responsible for complying with both the terms in the contract and all applicable laws. This charter school board of directors is a public body and is required to adhere to public meeting and public records laws.

*Financial Performance* – Schools must demonstrate the proper use of public funds, as evidenced by annual balanced budgets, sound audit reports, and conforming to generally accepted accounting practices.

Approved charter schools will be granted a five-year charter contract. Schools unable to demonstrate academic progress or unable to comply with legal/ contractual or financial requirements may face corrective action, non-renewal, or charter revocation.

#### Autonomy

In exchange for rigorous accountability, charter school operators experience substantially greater authority to make decisions related to the following:

- Personnel
- School management and operations
- Finances
- Curriculum
- School day and calendar
- Education Service Provider (ESP) agreements

### Application Process

Commission staff manage the application process and evaluation teams that include national and local experience and expertise on the operation of successful charter schools. Commission staff leads these teams throughout the evaluation process to produce a merit-based recommendation report to approve or deny each proposal. This report from the evaluation team is the culmination of three stages of review:

#### Proposal Evaluation

The evaluation team conducted individual and group assessments of the merits of the proposal based on the complete submission. In the case of experienced operators, the Commission supplemented the evaluation team's work with due diligence to verify claims made in the proposals.

#### Capacity Interview

After reviewing the application and discussing the findings of their individual reviews, the evaluation team conducted an in-person assessment of the applicant team's capacity.

#### Evaluation Team Ratings

The evaluation team members each produced independent, ratings and comments regarding whether to recommend the proposal for approval or denial.

Commission staff collated the team ratings into an overall recommendation report to approve or deny each application based on its merits as outlined in the rubric. The authority and responsibility to decide whether to approve or deny each application rests with the members of the Commission.

### Public Forum

An opportunity for the public to provide official comment on the proposed application. While there is no formal assessment of the public forum, it often confirms the evidence of community engagement provided in the application.

### Recommendation Report Contents

This recommendation report includes the following:

#### Proposal Overview

Basic information about the proposed school as presented in the application.

#### Recommendation

An overall rating regarding whether the proposal meets the criteria for approval.

#### Evaluation

Analysis of the proposal based on four primary areas of plan development and the capacity of the applicant team to execute the plan as presented:

##### *Educational Program Design and Capacity*

- Family and community involvement
- Program overview
- Curriculum and instructional design
- Student performance standards
- High School graduation requirements (if applicable)
- School calendar and schedule
- School culture
- Supplemental programming
- Special populations and at-risk students
- Student recruitment and enrollment
- Discipline policy and plan
- Educational program capacity.

##### *Operations Plan and Capacity*

- Legal status and governing documents
- Organization structure and relationships
- Governing board
- Advisory bodies
- Grievance/complaint process
- District partnerships
- Education service providers (ESP) and other partnerships
- Staffing plans, hiring, management, and evaluation
- Professional development
- Performance framework

- Facilities
- Start-up and ongoing operations
- Operations

##### *Financial Plan and Capacity*

- Financial plan
  - Budgets
  - Cash flow projections
  - Related assumptions
  - Financial protocols
  - Fundraising plan
- Financial management capacity

##### *Existing Operators (if applicable)*

- Track record of academic success
- Organizational soundness
- Plans for network growth

### Rating Characteristics

Evaluation teams assess each application against the published evaluation rubric. In general, the following definitions guide evaluator ratings:

#### Exceeds

The response surpasses all key performance expectations/goals found under meets expectations. It exhibits high overall performance in all categories and routinely goes beyond what is expected and is fully aligned with the strategic mission of the Commission.

#### Meets

The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively.

#### Partially Meets

The response meets the criteria in many respects, but lacks detail or specificity and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.

#### Does Not Meet

The response meets the criteria in some respects but has substantial gaps in a number of areas or the response is wholly undeveloped or significantly incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.

# PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

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## Applicant Names

Amanda Gardner and Tatiana Epanchin

## Proposed School Name

Catalyst: Bremerton

## Mission

Catalyst: Bremerton supports our diverse scholars to live full lives and to succeed in college, career, and life. Scholars will find their purpose and passion so that they can cultivate the critical hope, optimism, and leadership essential to be catalysts in their community and world.

## Board Members

Julie Kennedy – Board President/Chair  
Amy Kiyota – Board Vice-President/Vice Chair  
Katie Singh  
TyKera Williams

## Proposed School Leaders

Amanda Gardner and Tatiana Epanchin

## Proposed Location

Bremerton, WA

## Enrollment Projections

Academic Year	Planned Enrollment	Maximum Enrollment	Grades Served
2020/2021	224	224	K, 1, 5, 6
2021/2022	336	336	K, 1, 2, 5, 6, 7
2022/2023	448	448	K – 8
2023/2024	504	504	K – 8
2024/2025	504	504	K – 8

# SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Catalyst: Bremerton

APPROVE

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## Summary Analysis

Catalyst Public Schools (CPS) proposes to operate a kindergarten through eighth grade charter public school in Bremerton, Washington. At capacity, Catalyst: Bremerton will serve 504 students. The school plans to accelerate the trajectory of underserved scholars (students) so that they may “be catalysts for change in their own community and world” by:

- Placing diversity, equity, and inclusion at the center of all they do;
- Providing rigorous academics and dynamic supports for all scholars;
- Supporting students to find their purpose and passion in life; and
- Providing world class staff development to continuously improve practice (pg. 7).

Catalyst: Bremerton would be the first charter public school option in Bremerton, a city that houses the United States’ third largest naval base. Ideally, the school will locate in West Bremerton, a community where 26% of residents have less than a high school degree and 38% live below the poverty level.

While the co-founders, Amanda Gardner and Tatiana Epanchin, acknowledge that they are not longtime Northwest residents, the Public Forum demonstrated that both have made efforts to engage and be of service to the community.

The co-founders have both lead high-performing charter schools in other states and desire to bring their strategies for student success to the Bremerton community. The leaders understand that a strong school culture built upon a foundation of comprehensive social-emotional support, asset-based beliefs, and high expectations, is key to student achievement. Their vision and leadership combined with the varied expertise of the community-centric board of directors demonstrate the team’s capacity to operate and sustain a high-quality charter public school in Kitsap County.



## Summary of Section Ratings

Opening and maintaining a successful, high-performing charter school depends on having a complete, coherent plan and identifying highly capable individuals to execute that plan. It is not an endeavor for which strengths in some areas can compensate for material weaknesses in others.

*Therefore, to receive a recommendation for approval, the application must maintain a “Meets” rating in all areas.*

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>Educational Program Design and Capacity</b>
<b>MEETS</b>	<b>MEETS</b>
<b>Operations Plan and Capacity</b>	<b>Financial Plan and Capacity</b>
<b>MEETS</b>	<b>MEETS</b>
<b>Existing Operators</b>	
<b>MEETS</b>	

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Catalyst: Bremerton

MEETS

## Summary

Catalyst: Bremerton is the proposed flagship school of CPS. The school will serve kindergarten, first, fifth, and sixth grades in its first year of operation, growing to K-8 by the fourth year. The applicant has chosen their growth model in response to families requesting both an elementary and middle school option. Additionally, the applicant cites research from Stanford University’s Center for Research on Education Outcomes stating that a “mixed-start” model correlates to higher academic performance, especially in middle school.

The applicant team has identified West Bremerton as the ideal community for the school as it is the most ethnically diverse in the county, and the readiness and proficiency data presented demonstrates a need for a high-quality, innovative K-8 option. However, the applicant acknowledges that the exact location will ultimately be determined by the availability of an appropriate and financially feasible facility.

<p><b>Mission:</b></p> <p>Catalyst: Bremerton supports our diverse scholars to live full lives and to succeed in college, career, and life. Scholars will find their purpose and passion so that they can cultivate the critical hope, optimism, and leadership essential to be catalysts in their community and world.</p>
<p><b>Vision:</b></p> <p>Catalyst: Bremerton’s graduates build a strong understanding of themselves, envision the world in which they want to live, and develop the agency to access the future of their dreams.</p>
<p><b>Core Values:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Equity</li> <li>▪ Leadership</li> <li>▪ Joy</li> <li>▪ Courage</li> <li>▪ Achievement</li> <li>▪ Wellness</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Catalyst will attract and retain diverse, mission-aligned, high-quality staff who will remain at the school for three or more years.</li> <li>▪ Catalyst will build an effective board where 80% of membership fulfill their terms and/or renew memberships, and where at least 50% identify as people of color and/or are from Bremerton or Kitsap County.</li> <li>▪ Catalyst will ensure the academic growth and performance of its scholars and will perform within the top tier of the Washington School Improvement Framework.</li> </ul>

The applicant clearly outlined the proposed student population and provided substantial evidence to

support the selection of grades served, the educational need of the community, and the rationale for the location of the school.

## Executive Summary: Analysis and Evaluator Comments

RUBRIC OUTCOME	MEETS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The comprehensive middle school in Bremerton is currently identified by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) as a Support Tier III: Comprehensive School. The only other public middle school option in the district is identified as a Support Tier II school because of outcomes for several sub-groups including students with disabilities, English learners, African American students, and Hispanic/Latinx students. Similar data trends exist for neighboring school districts (pg. 8).</li> <li>▪ The founders are targeting a location in West Bremerton with these resident characteristics: 26% have less than a high school degree, with 7% of residents holding college degrees; 38% live under the poverty level (pgs. 7, 10).</li> <li>▪ The applicant provides solid evidence of the educational need with specific comparative demographics indicating that gaps persist amongst traditionally underserved student populations in Bremerton. Specific student populations are identified, along with data indicating their kindergarten readiness (WaKIDS) or proficiency along grade levels and subject matter (literacy/ELA/Math) (pg. 8).</li> <li>▪ The applicant identifies other families within Bremerton, including those having been involved with the criminal justice system, recent immigrants, those with intensive mental health needs, those engaged in military service and those experiencing homelessness, whose students may also benefit from the dynamic supports provided at Catalyst even though they don't fall within the explicit "at-risk" definition in the law (pg. 9).</li> <li>▪ The mission speaks to success in college and life but is not focused on high school preparation (pg. 11).</li> <li>▪ Two of the three goals relate to adult-focused (staff, board, etc.) rather than student-focused (pg. 12).</li> <li>▪ The applicant acknowledges the non-academic challenges facing the school. These challenges include school facility acquisition, student enrollment, staffing, political climate and financial stability of the school. Each challenge has been identified with a clear plan to mitigate it (pg. 10).</li> <li>▪ The applicant provided the rationale for selecting the school's location and the student body. The applicant aligns the evidence of the educational need, community/parent demand and anticipated student population, as well as challenges with specific population data points, and absence of various public-school options for the community (pg. 10-11).</li> <li>▪ The applicant anticipates using an enrollment preference for low-income students if a lottery becomes necessary (pg. 11).</li> </ul>

# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN AND CAPACITY

Catalyst: Bremerton

MEETS

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## Summary

Catalyst co-founders “participated in a countywide listening tour with families and community leaders who share a passion [for] educational equity” beginning in January of 2018 (pg. 13). According to the application, “[f]amilies, especially those with middle school students, have stressed the importance of a school’s culture [and] climate...they crave student-centered schools that prioritize social-emotional wellness as well as academic supports” (pg. 13). Though the evidence provided in Attachment 2: Evidence of Family & Community Engagement was substantial, it was challenging to assess whether the participant sign-in sheets included parents who would send their children to the school.

The applicant intends to formally partner with several local community organizations who share similar positive youth-development missions. These organizations provide mentoring services as well as recreation and wellness opportunities for students and their families.

Catalyst: Bremerton will implement the following educational program terms to support scholars in meeting their full potential:

1. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Framework of Practice
2. Data-Driven Instruction and Dynamic Supports
3. Transformational Leadership Development
4. World Class Staff Development

Catalyst: Bremerton intends to offer a social-emotional learning (SEL) program that blends the “science of hope with best practices around positive youth development [to] ensure that scholars thrive” (pg. 17). The SEL program will be interwoven throughout the school day. Holding high expectations of all students, and maintaining those expectations are core tenants of Catalyst: Bremerton’s program.

The applicant has set ambitious, but attainable, goals for student performance that encompass both growth and proficiency. The school will also internally develop “power standards’ for the purposes of grade level promotion and/or retention... Proficiency on power standards is determined by analyzing multiple points of data including formative and summative assessments, teacher observation, and scholar work” (pg. 33).

The applicant provided a robust curriculum selection process and intends to use several frameworks to guide curriculum development/adoption and instructional design. To support the school’s commitment to DEI, Catalyst: Bremerton will adopt the following strategies drawn from Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum’s framework for inclusivity and cultural responsiveness, which includes the following elements:

- Affirmation of identity
- Building of community
- Cultivation of leadership

Catalyst: Bremerton will incorporate the following essential design elements, all of which align wholly or in part to Tatum’s inclusion framework. These include:

<b>Deeper Learning Blocks and Academic Rotations</b>	<i>The delivery of core content through a variety of direct instruction, small-group and/or collaborative work, and individual practice time with technological supports</i>
<b>Dynamic Supports</b>	<i>Academic and emotional supports for all students, as needed</i>
<b>Inclusive Co-teaching</b>	<i>Each K-4 classroom will have a lead teacher and small-group instructor (SGI). Grades 5-8 will have one SGI dedicated to each grade.</i>
<b>Looping</b>	<i>Students will stay with the same teacher for two years in grades one through four</i>
<b>Multi-age Grouping</b>	<i>Takes place in Change-Maker Space and during enrichment courses to build community and strengthen relationships</i>
<b>Sunrise and Sunset Huddles</b>	<i>Intended for goal-setting and community building</i>
<b>Positive Youth Development, Leadership, and SEL</b>	<i>Integrated throughout the school day and evolves as students move from elementary to middle school</i>
<b>Enrichment Courses</b>	<i>Focused on student interests and lead by teachers or community members</i>
<b>Change-Maker Space and Passion Projects</b>	<i>Projects designed by scholars to solve community problems.</i>
<b>Dream Team</b>	<i>Each scholar will have a group of supporters as part of twice a year student-led conferences</i>

Additionally, the school “will use Zaretta Hammond’s Ready for Rigor Framework to guide unit and lesson planning and to leverage responsive instructional strategies” (pg. 27). The framework summarized below “incorporates four distinct practices which, when implemented in concert, create the conditions for students to grow into independent learners”:

- Awareness: Awareness of social privilege and interruption of inequity in all parts of the school.
- Learning Partnerships: Adult-scholar relationships built upon trust to create a culture of safety in order to promote learning and growth.
- Information Processing: Faculty understand the variety of ways that culture influences learning and adjusts their teaching methods accordingly.
- Community Building: Create a school culture and environment is safe and inclusive so that scholars are encouraged to take academic risks (pg. 28).

Understanding that Catalyst: Bremerton’s students may come to the school below grade level; the school will offer five additional school days and 210 additional hours beyond the state requirements of 180 days and 1,000 hours. Students will receive 900 instructional minutes per week for core subjects including English Language Arts (ELA), history, math, and STEM/Science. The school will release early on Wednesdays (aligns to district early release) to allow for teacher planning time and school-wide professional development.

In addition to the core values, the school strives to develop and maintain a positive and inclusive school culture (including student discipline practices), for all students through the following:

- Trauma-informed practices
- Culturally responsive practices
- Knowing scholars as individuals
- A focus on inclusiveness, collectivism, and identity development
- Schoolwide structures, systems, and routines that build and environment focused on teaching and learning
- High expectations and an assets-based belief in the potential of all scholars

The leaders of Catalyst: Bremerton view the educational program terms and above frameworks as the foundation for specific programs to serve a variety of student populations within the school. The school will provide sheltered instruction within general education classrooms to support English language learner students.

Catalyst: Bremerton plans to develop its special education program using the framework published by Innovate Public Schools (Attachment 4: Curriculum Development Plan). The application included vague language regarding the transfer of student Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); however, the applicant addressed it appropriately in the Capacity Interview and will revise the language prior to submitting their policies and procedures to OSPI.

As stated above, the co-leaders bring with them significant experience leading charter schools in other states. In order to focus on the academic and instructional needs of the school, the first staff hired will include a Community Engagement Manager, Office Manager, and a Director of Finance and Operations.

Overall, the applicant team provided a clear description of Catalyst: Bremerton’s educational program. The co-leaders engaged the local community in the design of the school and plan to establish a school culture that is responsive, rooted in DEI, holds high expectations of all scholars, and provides a set of dynamic supports intended to meet the needs of all students.

The school will lean heavily on multiple frameworks to promote equity, academic rigor, high-quality instructional practices, and tight alignment to learning standards. Student performance standards are appropriately ambitious for the proposed student population. Both co-leaders have a proven track record of student success and have a sophisticated understanding of what it takes to operate a high-quality charter school.



Educational Program Design and Capacity: Analysis and Evaluator Comments	
RUBRIC OUTCOME	MEETS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Catalyst: Bremerton model integrated feedback from Bremerton residents including the importance of a school’s culture, climate, and its attention to bullying; student leadership; equity for all; and English as a Second Language classes for families and community members (pg. 13).</li> <li>▪ There are no letters of support from local politicians or potential school attendees – evidence of parent demand is lacking. However, the mayor of Bremerton did attend the Public Forum. (Attachment 2: Evidence of Family and Community Engagement).</li> <li>▪ Unlike the vague mission statement, specific and aggressive outcomes are listed by subject and grade band (elementary and middle school). For example, by grade 5 and grade 8, 80% of students will be proficient in ELA and math on SBA (pgs. 26-27).</li> <li>▪ The school has a robust and detailed process for selecting and developing curricula (Attachment 4: Curriculum Development Plan).</li> <li>▪ Sufficient time is built into the day for interventions, including the four weekly focus periods (Attachment 6: School Calendar and Schedule).</li> <li>▪ The special education program is more than just a series of required steps; there are tenets and a philosophy undergirding the program (pg. 49 and Attachment 4: Curriculum Development Plan).</li> <li>▪ The application is explicit in its reference to the use and analysis of data to recognize potential unconscious biases in discipline enforcement (pg. 62).</li> <li>▪ The applicant provides the design elements of the Catalyst model, including looping, multi-age learning opportunities, co-taught classrooms and a variety of academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports (pgs. 21-24)</li> <li>▪ The applicant states that staff will develop “Power Standards” for the purpose of grade level promotion and/or retention. Multiple points of data will be used to determine whether scholars have reached at least 80% proficiency on standards (pg. 33).</li> <li>▪ Families will receive communication regarding their students’ progress through bi-weekly communication and twice-yearly conferences so that concerns are addressed quickly and neither students nor families are caught off guard if students are not making academic progress (pg. 33).</li> <li>▪ The applicant has provided a description of each block of time from start to completion of school day. The calendar has SEL and small group intervention weaved throughout the school day, which speaks to the school’s desire to provide dynamic supports for all students. The schedule also includes goal setting and monitoring via advisory periods in the form of “huddles” (pgs. 21-24, Attachment 6: School Calendar and Schedule).</li> <li>▪ There is an early release day for teachers to engage in professional development. The applicant team has stated that they will work with parents to find alternative childcare situations in the community (pg. 35 and Capacity Interview).</li> <li>▪ The proposed school leaders have significant experience leading charter schools and additional leadership experience as superintendents/home office staff. Both have served in schools with high percentages (or majority) of students of color and have demonstrated impressive student</li> </ul>

gains and achievement (pg. 68).

- The application provides a list of potential advisors who can be called upon to volunteer their experience in a variety of areas (pgs. 67-68).

# OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

Catalyst: Bremerton

MEETS

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## Summary

CPS plans to open Catalyst: Bremerton as its first charter school with the hope to establish itself as a charter management organization (CMO). CPS's growth plan includes two schools in Kitsap County with possibly expansion to Mason, Pierce and/or King County. More information regarding the CMO plan can be found later in this report.

The co-leaders will serve as head of the middle school and elementary school respectively for the first two years then will transition to the CMO level at the beginning of the school's third year. The applicant did not provide evidence to support the leaders' transition from the school level to the CMO level in year three of operations as a best practice.

The founding board consists of four members (five as of the Capacity Interview), in addition to the proposed school leaders, all of whom bring either community connectedness/context, traditional/charter public education/operations experience (or both). Though the current board possesses no gender balance, it is meeting a stated goal that "at least 50% [of board members] identify as people of color and/or are from Bremerton or Kitsap County" (pg. 12). To achieve gender balance and to fill identified knowledge/skills gaps (facilities acquisition, legal), the board plans to recruit additional members.

The application identified three advisory bodies, the Catalyst Design Team (CDT) (planning year), the Catalyst Community Council (CCC), and the Catalyst Scholar Council (CSC) that will allow for a diversity of voices in the planning and operation of the school, which aligns with the school's commitment to DEI and co-creation of the school model. However, the descriptions lack specificity regarding composition, roles/duties, and or reporting structure.

In addition to the community partnerships already discussed, Catalyst: Bremerton will use the Seneca Family of Agencies and True Measure Collaborative for a variety of special education and student support services. These agencies have experience serving Washington's charter public schools. Additionally, Catalyst: Bremerton will be the first charter school to partner with the Olympic Educational Service District (OESD) for back office support. Over time, Catalyst: Bremerton plans to build internal capacity with the goal of moving some special education services and back office functions in-house to either the school or CMO.

The Catalyst founders indicated that they have met with officials from the Bremerton and Central Kitsap school districts and plan for additional meetings in the future. Additionally, the Superintendent from OESD attended the Public Forum and pledged the organization's support for back office services.

One of Catalyst: Bremerton's educational program terms is world-class staff development. The application

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proposes approximately 325 hours of professional development (PD) for teachers. During the Capacity Interview, the co-founders stressed that all PD will include real-time practice so that teachers can use newly acquired knowledge and skills immediately. Additionally, each teacher will have a Professional Growth Plan to “name goals and track the progress teachers make over the course of the year” (pg. 89). The applicant provided strong principal and teacher evaluation rubrics.

The school proposed three Specific, Measurable, Action oriented, Realistic/Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) mission-specific goals in accordance with the application criteria:

1. Scholars at Catalyst will make one or more years of growth on the Northwest Evaluation Association’s Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth assessment in both reading and math each year they attend the school.
2. At least 90% of staff will report being satisfied or highly satisfied on measures of staff engagement, and there will be no significant gaps in satisfaction along lines of race and/or ethnicity.
3. Instructional staff at Catalyst will report being satisfied/highly satisfied with the coaching and instructional support provided by their manager and will make significant growth in their classroom effectiveness as measured by professional growth plan goals and/or the teacher effectiveness rubric(s).

The proposed data collection method for the two operational goals are surveys. While this method is not inherently problematic, more information regarding the specifics of the survey are required to assess its efficacy and reliability.

Teachers are expected to monitor student academic programs through a variety of methods and assessments. The collected data is then used to “develop, execute, and adjust personal learning plans for every scholar” (pg. 96). Data Meetings will take place at least every other week and provide a forum to perform deeper analysis of student performance data. The school’s co-leaders will present academic progress data to the board monthly.

As mentioned earlier, ideally the school will be in West Bremerton in order to attract the desired student population. The documentation provided in the application identified a viable facility outside of the preferred location. Washington Charter School Development and Raza Development Fund provided support letters in the application stating their intent to assist Catalyst: Bremerton in finding adequate facility options to meet both their short term and long-term needs.

The founding team provided a clear understanding of the current needs and presented a plan to recruit, develop, and retain additional members of the board and leadership team as well as faculty and support staff. There is alignment between both short and long-term goals related to PD and DEI with significant time and resources dedicated to both. The board of directors alongside the co-founders have demonstrated the necessary operational capacity to design and implement a high-quality charter public school.

Operations Plan and Capacity: Analysis and Evaluator Comments	
RUBRIC OUTCOME	MEETS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The co-founders have experience overseeing or launching large numbers of charter schools: Ms. Epanchin was the Superintendent for Aspire Public Schools: Bay Area, where she oversaw 11 schools; and Ms. Gardner supported the launch of 16 new and redesigned schools and supported the expansion and replication of several high-performing charter management organizations (pg. 71).</li> <li>▪ Two of the board members have extensive experience in education including Managing Director with Uncommon Schools in Brooklyn, NY and Director of Leadership Development with the Urban Schools Human Capital Academy (USHCA), a national nonprofit committed to improving human capital management in K-12 education (500). Such backgrounds in academics and human resources should serve Catalyst well as it attempts to open additional schools (Attachment 14: Board Member Documents).</li> <li>▪ Description of the governance roles and responsibilities is clear about governance vs. management, and the key points of board responsibilities with staffing, budgeting, and board development. Board Officer roles and responsibilities are well-defined. Goal-setting and tracking, 360-degree reviews from stakeholders, and annual and mid-year evaluations are planned. The board shows commitment to transparency and reflection with their plans to annually self-evaluate, will follow Open Public Meetings Act, provide board meeting documents online, and offer options for remote participation. Applicant has seven 2019 board trainings planned that will cover board legal and functional responsibilities, ethics and diversity, and hiring and evaluation. Applicant shows not only an understanding of board governance, but also a commitment to serving students and families ethically and responsibly (pgs. 74-79).</li> <li>▪ Parents will have a direct line of communication with school leaders and the board through the Community Advisory Council (pg. 73).</li> <li>▪ Description of the advisory bodies is provided, but authority and duties are unclear. Groups of intended participants are named, but there is no indication of number of participants, proportional make-up of groups, or reporting structure (pg. 80).</li> <li>▪ The principal evaluation rubric contains many measurable indicators for what constitutes effectiveness of principal feedback to teachers. For example, 90% of teachers effectively implement weekly action steps (Attachment 20: Principal Evaluation Tool).</li> <li>▪ The applicant provides a core knowledge principle of teacher retention by identifying the New Teacher Project study of teacher retention to address non-compensatory actions to address retention. The applicant identifies the following steps and resources for retaining and evaluating teachers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time for collaboration;</li> <li>• Data analysis;</li> <li>• Robust and fair evaluation system; and</li> <li>• Satisfaction survey (pgs. 85-86).</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The applicant provides an approach that specifically highlights priorities for hiring staff:</li> </ul>

- Those with proven track record of success in educating scholars of color, scholars with special needs and scholars from low-income families.
  - Those certified from a program with a deep focus on DEI.
  - Those who either reflect student demographics and/or demonstrate deep competence in their ability to connect with scholars and families across lines of difference including race, gender, socioeconomic background and age (pg. 86).
- Staff satisfaction will be assessed based on a survey, and professional development goal relies in part on a staff survey. Applicant has not described the intended format of the surveys, nor how they will be evaluated or by whom (Attachment 23: Mission Specific Goals).
  - The team has indicated that everyone will monitor progress of scholars. The applicant has specified that the data will develop, execute, and adjust personal learning plans for every scholar. They specify that quarterly interim assessments will allow them to monitor student progress towards achieving grade level standards and outcomes (pg. 96).
  - The team will use data meetings to analyze data regarding a particular assessment or piece of evidence. The data analysis will support re-teaching plans (pg. 96).

# FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

Catalyst: Bremerton

MEETS

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## Summary

The plan includes appropriate fiscal oversight roles and responsibilities for staff, board members, and OESD who will provide back office services. While the majority of the financial systems and sample policies and procedures align to Washington's public-school financial reporting requirements, the policies and procedures suggest that the school will follow Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) rules and regulations, when in reality schools must follow Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) rules and regulations.

Both co-leaders have significant experience managing multi-million-dollar budgets. Additionally, both co-leaders have experience fundraising. Several board members have financial management experience, particularly Amy Kiyota who is currently the Director of Finance and operations at Impact Public Schools, a charter operator in Tukwila, WA.

The budget presented aligns to the stated priorities in other categories of the application. It shows incremental growth and transition of certain positions from the school-level to the CMO level in year three of operation. The school will pay a 10% management to the CMO office which is a reasonable amount when compared to other organizations.

The application includes a letter from the New Schools Venture Fund pledging their philanthropic support in the planning year and stating that, if authorized, the applicant will be eligible to apply for a multi-year grant in 2020. The fundraising plan includes targeting national and local institutional funders as well as individual donors. Amanda Gardner is listed as the primary person responsible for securing institutional funding, which may be challenging to balance with other assigned duties as the head of the middle school.

The facilities listing included in the application states a lease rate of \$17/sq. ft. The application states the school will need an estimated 16,800 sq. ft. in year one which would total \$285,600 in rent/lease costs. This total is above the \$275,000 budgeted in the financial workbook. However, the applicant may ultimately choose another facility that is within the budget amount provided in the Financial Workbook (Attachment 27).

The net operating income in year two is \$39,979 which leaves a small margin to cover any unforeseen expenses. However, net operating income increases to over \$320,321 in the third year of operations when several school roles will transition to the CMO office.

The applicant team has demonstrated significant financial capacity and presented a sound financial plan in their application.

Financial Plan and Capacity: Analysis and Evaluator Comments	
RUBRIC OUTCOME	MEETS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School co-founder Amanda Gardner has managed multi-million-dollar budgets as a school leader and has supported the development of budgets of similar size at Innovate Public Schools. Tatiana Epanchin has also managed large school budgets. (pg. 110)</li> <li>▪ Internal controls are well-defined, setting out amounts for which board approval is required, how cash and checks will be handled, and how and in what amounts the school will reimburse employees for travel. Includes statement that employees may not use school funds for personal use (pgs. 104-108).</li> <li>▪ The applicant describes a detailed financial plan for long-term fundraising. Four key strategies are laid out, including development of a fundraising strategy and development of collateral and marketing presence, national institutional funders, local institutional funders, and individual donor basis. The tasks are detailed. The applicant assigns Amanda Gardner as the person responsible. The board is included in some tasks but no individual additional names are given (Attachment 30: Fundraising Plan).</li> <li>▪ Co-founders have experience in school budget development and management, fundraising, and financial management. Some board members also have school financial experience (Attachment 14: Board Resumes).</li> <li>▪ There is a process in place where the Director of Finance will meet in collaboration with the school co-founder/Chief Executive Office, regularly to monitor the budget, review budgets and monitor cash flows (pg. 104).</li> <li>▪ There is a process in place for managing contracts over \$10,000. The applicant has stated that contracts for other goods and services exceeding \$10,000 on an annual basis are presented to the Board for approval during the annual budget cycle (pg.105).</li> </ul>



# EXISTING OPERATORS OR PROPOSED CHARTER MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Catalyst: Bremerton

MEETS

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## Summary

CPS proposes to be the second Washington-based charter management organization (CMO). Catalyst: Bremerton will be CPS's flagship school, and the organization hopes to open a high school in the 2023 school year. This would give students graduating from Catalyst: Bremerton a charter public school option for Grades 9-12, though current laws would prohibit automatic enrollment from one charter public school to another.

Geographic expansion throughout Kitsap County or into Mason County may be considered as there was higher than average political support in those counties for the 2012 charter school initiative. This support suggests that there may be an appetite for charter public school options in the community. Geographic expansion may also extend into Pierce County, which is currently home to three charter schools (the elementary option will close at the end of the 2019 school year).

Beginning in the 2022-23 school year, the co-founders plan to transition to CMO-level roles. The Director of Finance and Operations and the Community Engagement Manager positions will also transition to the CMO. A Principal will be hired prior to the transition to oversee both the elementary and middle school at Catalyst: Bremerton.

Once established, each school will pay a 10% management fee to the CMO to cover services including:

- Human resources
- Facilities acquisition and management
- Reporting and compliance
- Public relations
- Student recruitment

The management fee is 10% of total revenue (not including the CMO Fee/Salary Offset line item included in Attachment 27: Financial Workbook). The applicant indicated in the Capacity Interview that they had researched management fees and this was within the standard range.

The board of directors will institute a greenlight process that is built upon the best practices of local and national CMO's and is inclusive of the following considerations:

- Community engagement
  - Serving high-needs students
  - Access to facilities
  - Presence of a local community college and/or university
-

- Political landscape

The applicant addressed multiple factors that would lead Catalyst Public Schools to reassess its timelines and trajectory for growth. The issues listed demonstrate an understanding of the current realities and challenges that charter public schools face in Washington. The detailed description of the organization's growth plan suggests there is capacity to develop into a larger charter management organization.

<b>Existing Operators/CMO Development: Analysis and Evaluator Comments</b>	
<b>RUBRIC OUTCOME</b>	<b>MEETS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ There is a growth plan that will be implemented in phases. Phase one is launching two schools, an elementary and a high school in Bremerton, with the second school opening 2023. This growth plan is reasonable as there would be 3 years of data to indicate student progress prior to the school opening (pg. 111)</li><li>▪ The team has indicated that they will focus on Kitsap County for the first phase of growth and eventually opening a network of schools across Kitsap, Mason and Pierce County (pg. 113).</li><li>▪ The team has included a business plan and start up plan to support growth. The team has engaged in a needs analysis to demonstrate need and strong parent demand for a new school option in the region (pg. 113-114).</li></ul>

## EVALUATION TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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### **Krystal Starwich, Team Lead**

#### **Director of New School Applications**

#### **Washington State Charter School Commission**

Krystal is the Director of New School Applications for the Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission). In addition to managing the agency's new school application process, she also works to build capacity in potential charter school operators through educational and community outreach opportunities. Prior to her role with the Commission, she worked as a Grant Coordinator for Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and implemented the state's first US Department of Education Charter School Program (CSP) grant.

Prior to joining OSPI, she spent three years at an independent school in Seattle providing a variety of operations and student support. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Washington and her Master's Degree in Public Administration from Seattle University. Her non-profit professional experience includes legal advocacy and fund development for a community-based organization serving survivors of domestic violence, and volunteer program coordination for a political non-profit. She is passionate about youth civic engagement and has been a longtime volunteer and board member of the YMCA's Youth and Government program.

### **Adam Aberman, Evaluator**

Adam is the CEO and Founder of The Learning Collective. Adam has profound content expertise in technology-based innovation and a 20-year track record educating young people in numerous venues from traditional public schools to school district administration trainings. Over the past 15 years, Adam has assessed over 200 current, and 100 proposed, charter schools nationally (California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York and Washington), including lead writer for charter renewal inspection visits, charged with evaluating the school and writing the report that is submitted to authorizers. During every school visit, Adam evaluates the effectiveness of charter schools on a wide range of issues. The range of issues includes schools' use of assessment data, curricular development and alignment with the Common Core, instructional leadership and staff evaluations, classroom instruction, professional development, board governance, parental involvement and school finances.

Adam has led teams of reviewers on over 50 charter school applications, submitting the finalized application reviews to boards of education. Adam has also worked with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) and other organizations on evaluation and strategic planning projects regarding Florida, Idaho, Minnesota, New York, Oklahoma and Ohio authorizers. Other TLC clients have included Alliance College-Ready Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, College Board, Inglewood Unified School District, KIPP, Tiger Woods Foundation and UCLA. Adam began his career in education as a Spanish bilingual public school teacher in Los Angeles. Adam received a B.A. from Vassar College and Master in Public Policy, with an emphasis on Education, from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

## **Casey Caronna, Charter School Program Grant Coordinator, OSPI**

Casey is the Charter School Program Grant Coordinator for Washington State's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Casey is a life-long Washington resident and obtained a Bachelor of Arts with an emphasis in Political Science and Educational Administration from the Evergreen State College and a Master of Arts in Education from Goddard College. His previous experience includes working for the Boy Scouts of America, Saint Martin's University, and the Evergreen State College. He brings a holistic and well-rounded understanding of the educational world to the newly formed charter school sector in Washington State.

## **Laura Crandall, Evaluator**

Laura is the head of Crandall Strategy & Research, and has twelve years of experience in education management. For six years she was Head of School in a preschool through grade eight independent school of over 200 students. There, she led a faculty of thirty-five and managed budgets of up to \$2.9 million. Laura has understanding of crisis management, having also served as Interim Head of School for an independent school that suffered the sudden loss of their School Director. She was on a dual accreditation team for the Northwest Association of Independent Schools (NWAIS), and this is her third year as an independent evaluator for the Commission.

Prior to becoming Head of School, Laura was the Business Manager of an independent school, and was responsible for facilities management, policy and procedure development, financial management and controls, and admissions processes. She has a deep understanding of what is essential to an educational environment in which students will thrive. Laura holds an MPA with a focus in local government. She works as a public policy and finance analyst based in Seattle, Washington.

## **Crystal Wash, Evaluator**

Crystal, a former school administrator, has served in various leadership roles including, Senior Literacy Trainer and Project Consultant where she provided expertise to IL School Districts in Teacher Evaluation. She began her career as an elementary classroom teacher, which led to becoming a demonstration classroom teacher. Crystal opened her classroom for teachers to observe and develop their expertise using the Balanced Literacy Approach. Following her teaching, Crystal was promoted to Literacy Project Consultant in which she led literacy Collaborative Inquiry Groups for K-2 teachers.

Crystal was accepted into New Leaders for New Schools, as a resident principal program and later became an Assistant Principal. Within her administrator roles, Crystal remained committed to developing teachers' expertise in instruction. In 2012, Crystal engaged in groundbreaking work as a Principal Calibrator. Her role focused on providing training and support on Danielson-based teacher evaluation to administrators. Over her career, Crystal has conducted a variety of education workshops that focused on teacher evaluation and content instructional strategies to support the Framework for Teaching.

Crystal received an MBA from Northwestern University, a Masters in Educational Leadership from National Louis, MED in teaching and learning from DePaul University, Reading Endorsement from Chicago State and a BA in Philosophy and English from Indiana University.