



Accountable Options

A Message From Dr. Roberta J. Wilburn

There is a saying that only the person who crosses the river at night knows the value of the light of day.

In education, the universe is in constant motion. There are new curricula, new tests, new standards, and a constantly changing student population with new tools and state-of-the-art technology at their fingertips. A time to step back and evaluate how we are doing, how we may move forward in the most equitable, most impactful way often seems elusive and far out of our reach. Yet this is a task we must make time for. If we wisely use the daylight hours afforded us to reflect on where we have come from, it can prove to be an invaluable compass for the roads ahead.



Dr. Roberta J. Wilburn

I joined the Commission in May of this year. The Commission had just released its second Request for Proposals (RFP), and this was on the heels of culminating the previous RFP with the authorization of seven schools in January. I soon discovered that, even in such a short period of time, a culture of camaraderie and respect was being created amongst Commissioners and staff. The development of positive working relationships such as these was necessary to help us effectively address the new sphere of public education that was coming into existence in the State of Washington.

The Commission was not designed to reinvent the wheel – really, many of the processes, policies, networks, and systems we intend to use already exist in Washington. The Commission is utilizing best practices in these areas as a foundation on which we are building new opportunities for children and families. What to some could be exhausting, is in fact invigorating to the Commission. We constantly challenge one another and the status quo to seek out innovative solutions to education’s 21st century questions; we are engaged, learning as we go from those with experience within the charter school sector, as well as those who have so much to offer within the traditional public school system.

Perhaps then, the saying should go that those who are wise join hands and build a bridge of arms across the river at night.

None of us at the Commission pretend to know exactly what public education will need in the years ahead. However, we have a collective vision of limitless possibilities of what it could be. We willingly take hold of the daunting assignment that lies ahead knowing that we can’t let fear of the unknown stop us. Instead we must forge ahead with purpose and intentionality since the future of our children is at stake. We can’t afford to give them anything less than our very best because they deserve it, and their future determines the future of our state. ☪



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Second Green Dot Public School Approved

On October 9, 2014, the Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission) approved Green Dot Public Schools Washington State to open a charter school so serve students grades 6-12 in South Seattle. This charter school is scheduled to open in fall 2016, and is the second approval for Green Dot.

Green Dot's expansion to Washington State comes after fourteen years of successful education reform in some of Los Angeles' toughest neighborhoods. Founded by Steve Barr in 1999, Green Dot's vision was to create small, highly-effective schools to address Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) inability to graduate over 50% of their students. Green Dot's primary demographic would be children from low-income families, those most likely to fall through the cracks of the LAUSD system.

Since opening its doors to a 9th grade class of 140 students in August 2000, Green dot has expanded to serve more than 10,000 students

Green Dot's expansion to Washington State adds needed charter school operator experience to the Commission's portfolio of approved schools. As with Summit Public Schools, Green Dot is a Charter Management Organization (CMO). Though elements such as the education model remain consistent with the national CMO model, all Washington State charter schools will be independently governed by a Washington based non-profit corporation. Green Dot's Washington board includes:

- Kimberly Mitchel, Founder and CEO of Inquiry Partners
- Andrew Buhayar, Head of User Research & Analytics at Nordstrom
- Marguerite Kondracke, Former President & CEO of America's Promise Alliance
- Kaaren Andrews, Principal at Interagency Academy

In September 2014, Green Dot Washington announced that it had hired Bree Dusseault as its Executive Director. Before accepting her position at Green Dot, Ms. Dusseault was the Executive Director of pK-12 Schools for Seattle Public School from 2010-2013. In 2013, Ms. Dusseault helped to found the Washington State Charter Schools Association ([WA Charters](#)), a statewide nonprofit organization committed to empowering parents and students by supporting the start-up of high-quality public charter schools. ☺

2014 RFP BY THE NUMBERS

Second Round of Applications Produces One Additional Charter

The infographic below is a breakdown of the 2014 RFP process, where the 2014 RFP proposed schools originated, public attendance at the public forums and the total number to high quality charter school seats the Commission has authorized to date

The RFP Process

June 13



LETTERS OF INTENT: 12 Letters of Intent to submit and application were received by Commission by the June 13 deadline.

July 15



APPLICATIONS: 4 Applications were submitted to the Commission to open public charter schools Washington by the July 15 deadline.

September 4-18



PUBLIC FORUMS: The Commission hosted public forums for the 4 applicants from September 4-18.

OCTOBER 9

The second application process culminated on October 9, 2014, with the Commission authorizing Green Dot Public Schools Washington State to open a charter school to serve students grades 6-12 in South Seattle.

Letters of Intent & Applications



12 Letters of Intent Received (by County)

4

...Applications received from Washington non-profit organizations.

- Bilingual Charter Academy, Clark County
- Green Dot Seattle Charter School, South Seattle
- The Village Academy, DuPont
- Sunnyside Charter Academy, Sunnyside

Public Forums

241

...Members of the public attended 4 public forums.



45
35
49
112

Authorization: Green Dot Seattle



4299

Green Dot Seattle Green Dot Tacoma Excel
Summit Sierra Summit Olympus Soar
Rainier Prep First Place

With the authorization of Green Dot Seattle, the Commission has added 4,299 new high-quality seats to Washington State public schools.

2014 Charter School Applicants

Bilingual Charter Academy, New Applicant

A community-based organization led by an educator with over twenty-years of bilingual and bicultural education experience, hoping to establish a bilingual school in Clark County.

Charter Schools of Sunnyside, Returning Applicant

A parent-led, community-based organization hoping to bring blended learning to a small community in the Yakima Valley.

The Ducere Group, Returning Applicant

A parent-led, community-based organization hoping to offer a fully-inclusive, blended learning option for students in Pierce County.

Green Dot Public Schools, Previously Approved Applicant

A national charter school operator currently serving some of California and Tennessee's most at-risk communities, hoping to expand its services to South Seattle.

Five Commission-Approved Charter Schools Receive Federal Grants

Five Commission-approved charter schools will be receiving a boost in start-up funds from the U.S. Department of Education Charter Schools Program (CSP).

Excel Public Charter School, First Place Scholars, Rainier Prep and SOAR Academy each received between \$200-250K for planning, program design and implementation.

The new funds are essential to

First Place Scholars Paves the Way for Public Charter Schools in Washington State



Commission Executive Director, Joshua Halsey, and First Place Scholars Board President, Dan Seydel, at First Place Scholars' Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, September 2, 2014



the homegrown charters as they hire high-quality teachers and implement their program design over the next two years.

Charter Management Organization (CMO) Green Dot Public Schools will receive \$7.3 million over three years with \$2.5 million earmarked for replication and expansion in Washington State. With the 2016 opening of Green Dot's second approved charter school in South Seattle, the new funds will see good use in bringing the CMO's top-rated education program to some of Washington's most underserved communities.

On September 3 2014, First Place Scholars Charter School made history, opening its doors as Washington State's first charter school. The Commission is confident that First Place is prepared to lead the way in a new era of public education in Washington State, and to serve the 96 students who have enrolled over the last five months.

First Place is located in Seattle's Central District, and is designed to serve students with multiple traumas, including homelessness. Operating as a private school in the 2012-13 school year, First Place saw 97% of students receiving free/reduced lunches and 67% of students homeless at the beginning of the year.

The Commission looks forward to the coming years as First Place Scholars grows its student population, offering a high-quality education opportunity to some of Washington State's most underserved students. ☺

SOAR Academy, Summit Public Schools and Green Dot Charter Schools Hosting a Series of Community Forums in Tacoma

On Wednesday, October 8th Green Dot, SOAR Academy and Summit Public Charter Schools, the city of Tacoma's first charter schools, hosted the first of four joint community forums for prospective families, students and the community.

Facilitated by Marcus Hardin, Director of Community Relations at the Washington State Charter Schools Association, each school presented their models and participated in a Q & A session with attendees. All three schools are currently enrolling students for their opening in the fall of 2015. Further information can be found at:

Green Dot Public Schools: <http://www.greendot.org/Washington>

SOAR Academy: www.soaracademies.org

Summit Public Schools: <http://www.summitps.org/washington>



A NEW public charter school in the Hilltop neighborhood of Tacoma. NOW enrolling kindergarten and first grade students for fall of 2015.

SOAR Academy Info Sessions (*refreshments provided*):

Peoples Community Center: Maple Room

1602 S MLK Jr Way
Tacoma, WA 98405

**Saturday,
November 1, 2014**
10:15-11:30am

Lakewood Public Library

6300 Wildaire Rd SW
Lakewood, WA 98499

**Tuesday,
November 4, 2014**
6-7:30pm

**Pacific Lutheran University
Anderson University
Center 133 (Union Pacific Room)**

12180 Park Ave S
Tacoma, WA 98447

**Thursday,
November 13, 2014**
6-7:30pm

**Bates Technical College:
Auditorium**

1101 S Yakima Ave
Tacoma, WA 98405

**Thursday,
November 20, 2014**
6-7:30pm



SOARacademies.org Excellence is the Standard

Excel Public Charter School Begins Student and Teacher Recruitment

On October 1, Excel Public Charter School announced that it was opening enrollment for 6th and 7th grades for the 2015 school year. The college prep Middle/High School will be located in Kent, and hopes to serve 156 students in its first year. Excel will utilize project-based science-technology-engineering-mathematics (STEM) and social studies-infused English Language Arts (ELA) curricula in tandem with data-driven assessments to dramatically expand opportunities for Washington State's at-risk students.

Excel is also seeking founding teachers. The hiring announcement states:

We believe that educators hold a powerful place in society, and we are looking for exceptional people who refuse to believe in the limitations of children.

Interested parents, students, and teachers should visit www.excelwa.org for more information.

Commission Continues to Develop Performance Framework

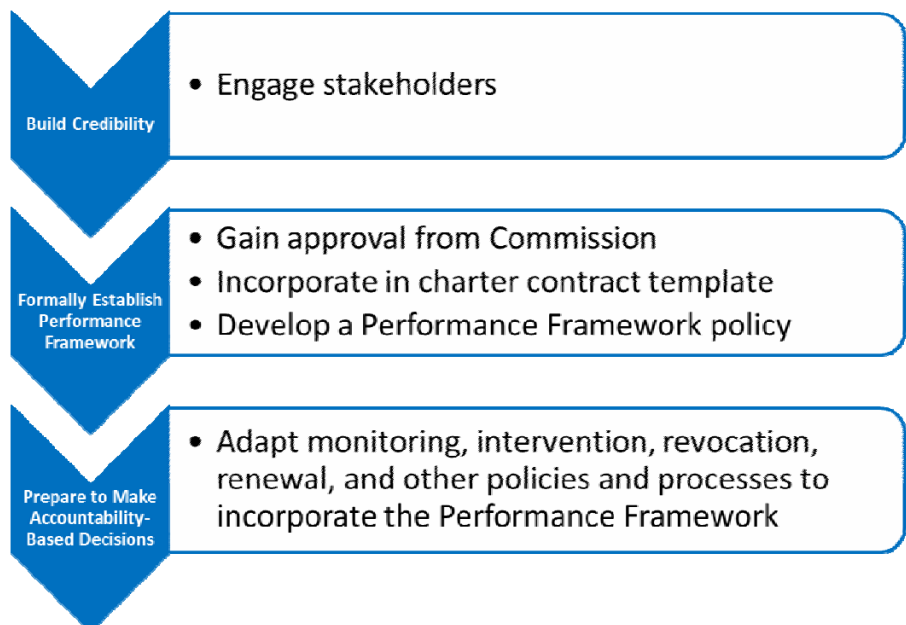
With the help of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, Commission staff continue to make real progress in creating the Commission's Performance Framework, the most important tool the Commission and approved charter schools will utilize as they collectively strive to create student centered, academically rigorous and organizationally vibrant charter schools.

To date, Commission staff have engaged charter school leaders and stakeholders, as well as the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the State Board of Education (SBE), the State Auditor's Office (SAO), the Washington Charter School Association (WA

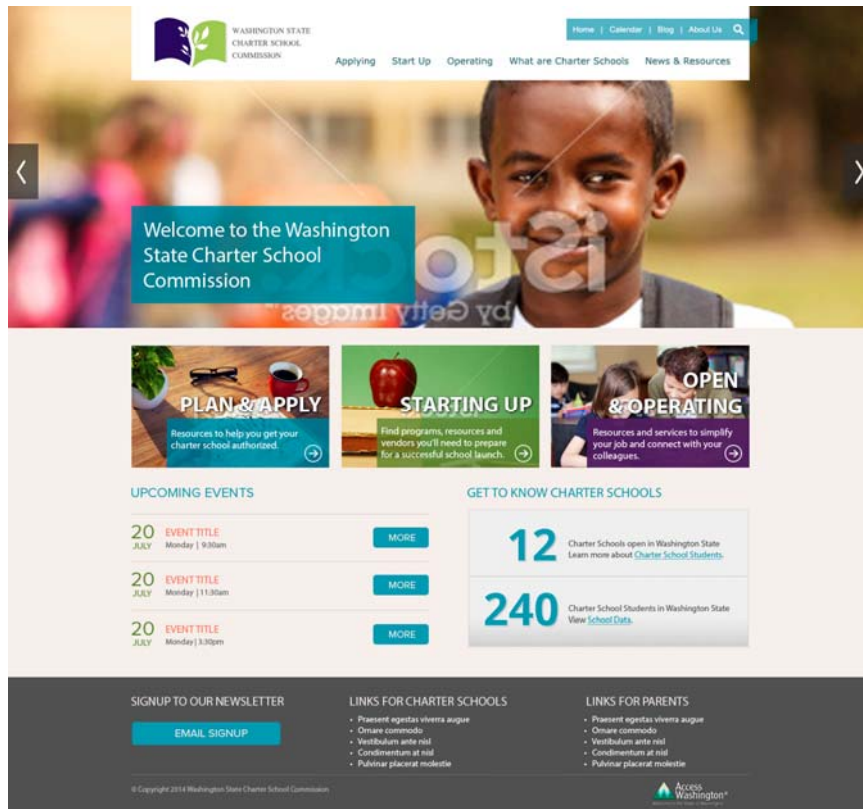
The Commission's Performance Framework: the most important tool the Commission and approved charter schools will utilize as they collectively strive to create student centered, academically rigorous and organizationally vibrant charter schools

Charters), and a number of Educational Service Districts (ESD), collecting feedback on the financial and organizational components of the framework. The Commission eagerly awaits the trial-run results of the academic component of the framework as OSPI collects school-level data.

The Commission expects to approve the Performance Framework at its December 11 public meeting in Tacoma. ☺



Redesigned Commission Website Scheduled to Go-Live in November



The Commission's Redesigned Website

The Commission is excited to announce that it is putting the final touches on a new, user friendly, independent website. Since its creation in February 2013, the Commission's online content has been housed under Governor Inslee's website. Though the space has served the Commission well, the Commission looks forward to expanding its audience, as well as engaging parents and students in the charter school conversation.

The Commission expects work to be done on the new website by November 1. The Commission's new URL will be www.charterschool.wa.gov, though users will be redirected from the existing URL. ☺

Washington State 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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