



WASHINGTON STATE
Charter School Commission
STUDENTS • INNOVATION • TRANSPARENCY

2019 NEW CHARTER SCHOOL PROSPECTUS

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Introduction

The Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission) is an appointed 11-member body tasked with, among other things, managing a new charter school application process for aspiring charter public schools and effectively monitoring the schools it authorizes through ongoing oversight.

The Commission is an agency that is guided by its mission, strives to achieve its vision and aspires to operate in alignment with a set of core values.

Mission:

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

Values:

Student-Centered, Cultural and Community Responsiveness, Excellence and Continuous Learning, Accountability/Responsibility, Transparency, and Innovation

Vision:

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

Information about the Commission and the New Charter School Application Process

The Charter School Act requires the Commission to annually issue a solicitation for applications (New Charter School Application) to open new charter schools. Through the issuance of a New Charter School Application, the Commission seeks applicants to open new high-quality charter schools that are aligned with its strategic vision throughout the state of Washington. To that end, the Commission worked closely with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), in 2013 to develop a rigorous, thorough, and transparent response and review process and has enhanced the process each year.

The solicitation, review, and decision making stages of the application process are collectively referred to as “authorizing.” Per the Charter Schools Act, the Commission has established its strategic vision for authorizing to guide its work:

The Washington State Charter School Commission seeks to authorize high-quality schools that will significantly improve student outcomes, particularly for at-risk students. The Commission will hold schools accountable for student learning using multiple measures of student achievement.

The Commission seeks to build a diverse portfolio of school delivery models that expands the authority of teachers and school leaders and encourages and accelerates the identification and use of best practices in teaching and learning. It also seeks to develop, test, and document innovative, new ideas that can be replicated in other Washington schools.

The Commission expects schools to have authentic and sustainable connections to the communities they serve. These connections are evidenced by strong commitments from community and business stakeholders, systems for ensuring cultural sensitivity, responsiveness to all students and their families, and effective, engaged governance boards.

Note: at-risk student is defined in RCW 28A.710.010(2):

“At-risk student” means a student who has an academic or economic disadvantage that requires assistance or special services to succeed in educational programs. The term includes, but is not limited to, students who do not meet minimum standards of academic proficiency, students who are at risk of dropping out of high school, students in chronically low-performing schools, students with higher than average disciplinary sanctions, students with lower participation rates in advanced or gifted programs, students who are limited in English proficiency, students who are members of economically disadvantaged families, and students who are identified as having special educational needs.

The Commission is committed to authorizing schools that are culturally responsive. To that end, the Commission requires applicants to demonstrate how they will implement the following concepts throughout their application:

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.” The process of inclusion seeks to engage each individual and make 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.¹

Culturally Responsive Education Systems

Culturally responsive educational systems are grounded in the belief 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.²

Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is based on integrating the awareness and learned skills needed to effectively and sensitively educate, work with, and serve people from diverse backgrounds and social identities. These skills enable the educator to build on the cultural and language assets and qualities that young people bring to the classroom rather than viewing them as deficits.

Cultural competence allows educators to ask questions about their instructional practice in order to successfully teach students who come from different cultural backgrounds.

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

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

- Executive Summary
- Family & Community Engagement
- Program Overview & Instructional Design
- School Culture
- Organizational Structure and Staffing
- Mission-Specific Goals

These sections were chosen because they are fundamental to the vision and design of a school. The Commission believes individuals and groups, even those who are early in their ideation process, can and should be able to speak to these elements. The culmination of the Prospectus process is an opportunity for individuals and groups to have their school ideation efforts reviewed and rated by trained independent external evaluators.

Independent external reviewers will review each Prospectus based on the Evaluation Rubric standards noted below. The reviewer’s feedback will be shared with the Prospectus applicant. Commission staff will not review Prospectus documents, nor will they provide technical assistance in writing the Prospectus and/or explaining the reviewer comments.

Rating Characteristics

In general, the following definitions guide reviewer ratings:

- Sufficient:** Clear and complete response to all aspects, demonstrates capacity.
- Insufficient:** Provides little or no evidence of capacity or understanding.

The *Charter Starter* training and Prospectus process are valuable opportunities intended to inform a potential charter school applicant of their level of readiness to submit an application in the annual New Charter School Application solicitation process. Again, the Prospectus process is **not** part of the Commission’s annual New Charter School Application solicitation process.

- The Prospectus is an **optional**, non-binding process.
- The Prospectus includes an adaption of language from the New Charter School Application.
- **External reviewers** (not Commission staff) will read and rate all Prospectus submissions using an Evaluation Rubric.
- External reviewer feedback will be given exactly as is (Sufficient, Insufficient, comments, and questions). Individuals and/or teams will not be given any explanations or technical assistance on their Prospectus submissions.
- Submitting a Prospectus and receiving feedback **DOES NOT** guarantee future New Charter School Application approval. Evaluators reviewing a New Charter School Application in its entirety may not have the same findings as those participating in a Prospectus review.
- Only one Prospectus may be submitted for review per school per calendar year.
- Participants must have attended a full *Charter Starter* training within the last eighteen months in order to be eligible to submit a Prospectus for review.

PROSPECTUS INFO SHEET

Section A: School Information			
Name of School:			
School Type (Bold One):	Elementary, Elementary/Middle, Middle, Junior High, Middle/High, High		
Grades Served:			
School District:		Neighborhood/Community	
Contracted Education Service Provider (EMO, CMO, Other):		Calendar Type (Standard or Extended School Year):	

Section B: Primary Contact Person			
Name:		Position:	
Address			
Mobile Phone:		Alternate Phone:	
Email:			

Section C: Start-up Team Members (if applicable)	
Name	Title/Position on Start-up Team

Section D: Attendance Projections

Grade Level	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		At Capacity	
	Min.	Max	Min.	Max	Min.	Max	Min.	Max	Min.	Max	Min.	Max
K												
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
9												
10												
11												
12												
Total												

Section 4: School Culture (3 pages)

1. Describe the culture of the proposed school. Explain how it will promote a positive and culturally inclusive academic environment and reinforce intellectual and social development for students.
2. Describe a typical school day from the perspective of a student in a grade that will be served in the school's first year of operation.
3. Describe how student recruitment strategies are in alignment with the culture of the proposed school.

Section 5: Organizational Structure and Staffing (4 pages including staffing chart template)

1. Describe the size, desired composition, powers, and duties of the governing board. Identify key skills, areas of expertise, and constituencies that will be represented on the governing board.
2. Explain the procedure by which board members have been (if applicable) and will be selected.
3. Describe the school's strategy and plans for recruiting and hiring the teaching staff. Explain key selection criteria and any special considerations relevant to the school's design.
4. Provide a completed staffing chart for the school using the template provided by the Commission.

Section 6: School Mission Specific Goals (Pages are dependent on the number of goals identified. Must use template.)

1. Provide the school's proposed mission-specific academic and organizational goals and targets. Provide 1-3 goals each for academics and 1-3 goals for organizational effectiveness. All goals must include clear measures/assessments, specific, measurable, action oriented, relevant, and time-bound. Please see Mission-Specific Goals Template.