

2019 NEW CHARTER SCHOOL PROSPECTUS

Issue Date: August 13, 2019 Due Date: September 30, 2019

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.

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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.

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,
- Examining the negative and disproportionate impact of systems, structures, policies and practices on all students and families particularly those who come from different cultures and background.

Building Capacity

In an effort to build capacity and knowledge in potential applicants, the Commission, has developed two new opportunities; Charter Starter (presentation) and a Prospectus, to provide information about what is required to open and operate a charter public school in Washington *prior* to undertaking the entire New Charter School Application. These new opportunities are separate and distinct from the official New Charter School Application solicitation discussed above

Charter Starter

The Commission has initiated quarterly *Charter Starter* trainings for individual(s) and teams that are considering opening a charter school. Attendance at one of these quarterly trainings IS REQUIRED to submit a Prospectus. However, interested individuals and groups are welcome to attend these trainings even if there is no intention to submit a Prospectus. The five to seven hour trainings focus on the charter bargain, requirements and accountability (i.e. Academic, Operational and Financial) for operating a charter public school in Washington, and the annual New Charter School Application solicitation process.

All *Charter Starter* training dates and locations will be posted to the Commission website: <u>http://charterschool.wa.gov/</u>

The Prospectus & Review Process

Disclaimer: Participation in the Prospectus process is separate and distinct from the annual New Charter School Application solicitation. Ratings of "sufficient" and positive feedback provided by reviewers on the Prospectus in no way guarantee a similar result in the evaluation of the New Charter School Application.

Each participant must respond to the following six sections and complete the Prospectus Cover Sheet. The sections are broken into the following topic areas:

- 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 <u>full</u> Charter Starter training within the last eighteen months in order to be eligible to submit a Prospectus for review.

Notice of Intent to Submit (NOI)

A non-binding Notice of Intent to Submit (NOI) must be emailed to <u>amanda.martinez@k12.wa.us</u> no later than August 30, 2019 at 5:00 pm PT. You will receive an email confirmation.

Prospectus Submission

Completed Prospectus documents must be submitted as a single Microsoft Word document, including the Prospectus Info Sheet, by September 30, 2019 at 5:00 pm PT. Submissions should be emailed to <u>amanda.martinez@k12.wa.us</u>. You will receive an email confirming your submission.

Completeness Review

All Prospectus submissions will be reviewed for completeness before they are accepted and distributed to the reviewer(s). If submissions are found to be incomplete (i.e. missing responses to required sections, sections left blank, etc.) or incorrectly formatted, the submission will be excluded from further review. Author(s) of the Prospectus will be notified of its completeness or incompleteness per the Prospectus Timeline. It should be noted that *findings of completion* are not indicative of the *quality* of the submission. For findings of incompleteness, there will be no opportunities to remedy any identified area of incompleteness. Individuals/teams are encouraged to resubmit in the future.

2019 Prospectus Timeline						
Date	Activity					
August 13, 2019	Prospectus Release - Posted on Commission Website					
August 26, 2019 2:30 pm PT	Prospectus Info Session – Information posted on the Commission website					
August 30, 2019 5:00 pm PT	Non-binding Notice of Intent to Submit (NOI) deadline. An NOI will only be					
	accepted via email to Amanda.Martinez@k12.wa.us					
September 30, 2019 5:00 pm	Prospectus submission deadline. Submissions will only be accepted via email to					
PT	Amanda.Martinez@k12.wa.us					
October 2, 2019	Prospectus Completeness Review conducted and findings disseminated					
October 16, 2019	Prospectus Submission feedback to participants					

PROSPECTUS INFO SHEET

Section A: School Infor	mation						
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		Calendar Type (Standard					
(EMO, CMO, Other):		or Extended School Year):					

Section B: Primary Co	act Person
Name:	Position:
Name.	
Address	
	Alternate
Mobile Phone:	Phone:
Email:	

Section C: Start-up Team Members (if applicable)						
Name	Title/Position on Start-up Team					
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Section D: Atte	endance P	rojection	าร		1						At Can	
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
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1												-
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3												
4												
5								/				
6												
7												
8							/					
9												
10												
11												
12												
Total												

PROSPECTUS NARRATIVE

NOTE: All Prospectus submissions must be typed in 11-point Calibri font, single-spaced with one-inch margins. Please include a title page with the name of your school, the name of the person submitting the Prospectus and the date of submission. Submissions exceeding the page counts listed below will not be accepted. Submissions that do not include responses to all sections listed below will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed.

Section 1: Summary (2 pages)

1. Describe the school plan and state the mission, vision, objectives and long-term goals of the proposed school.

The **vision** is a statement of the fundamental purpose of the school, describing why it exists; the **mission** statement outlines how the school will operate and what it will achieve long term. The mission and vision statements provide the foundation for the entire application. The mission and vision statements, taken together, should:

- Identify the students and community to be served;
- Articulate the long-term goals for the school and the students it serves;
- Illustrate what success will look like.

The long-term **goals** should articulate what the school hopes to achieve once it is at capacity and fully operational.

2. Describe the geographic location of the school and the rationale for selecting the school location.

Section 2: Family and Community Engagement (2 pages)

- 1. Describe how the school's founders have assessed family/community demand and/or need for the school.
- 2. Describe the process to engage families and community members/organizations in the development and ongoing operation of the school.

Section 3: Program Overview & Instructional Design (4 pages)

- Describe how the school will "provide a program of basic education that meets the goals in RCW 28A.150.210, including instruction in the essential academic learning requirements.
- 2. Provide the school's Educational Program Terms (see Sample Educational Program Terms) and the essential design elements of the school model;
- 3. Describe the research base, theory, and/or experience to support the Educational Program Terms and the essential design elements of the school model described above and how it is culturally responsive and effective for the targeted student population.
- 4. Describe the primary instructional strategies that the school will expect teachers to use, how these strategies are culturally responsive, and why they are well-suited for the anticipated student population.

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-Specific Goals (Pages are dependent on the number of goals identified. Must use template.)

 Provide the school's proposed school-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 School-Specific Goals Template.