



For Immediate Release:

July 3, 2025

Contact:

Marcus Harden, Executive Director

Marcus.harden@k12.wa.us

Office: 564.233.5202

Washington State Charter School Commission Celebrates Graduation Day for the Class of 2025

Seven charter public schools celebrated the achievements of their graduates, two schools celebrated their inaugural graduating class

Olympia, WA – As public school students across Washington state celebrate the end of the school year and the beginning of summer, the Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission) proudly honors *Graduation Day*—a milestone that represents perseverance, transformation, and promise. This year is especially significant as two of the seven charter public schools in the state commemorate the graduation of their inaugural senior classes.

“Graduation Day is more than a ceremony—it’s a powerful reminder of the journeys each student has taken to reach this point,” said Marcus Harden, Executive Director of the Commission. “While the charter public school sector in Washington is still relatively young, the impact is undeniable. For many students and families, charter public schools have provided a high-quality, student-centered education grounded in belonging, relevance, and excellence.”

Washington’s charter public schools are tuition-free, public, and open to all students, with a commitment to meeting the needs of diverse learners—particularly those historically furthest from opportunity. These schools are rooted in rigorous academics, culturally affirming environments, and strong community partnerships that create the conditions for students to thrive.

“As the Commission continues its work in oversight, renewal, and expansion, we remain focused on supporting schools that foster excellence and equity,” Harden added. “We are excited to continue serving as a modern public charter school authorizer—one that listens to and responds to community and stakeholder voices. We believe that advocating for more high-quality public school options is not just about choice—it’s about justice, innovation, and ensuring every student has access to the kind of education they deserve.”

Charter public schools celebrating Graduation Day include Spokane International Academy (first graduation), Why Not You Academy (first graduation), Rainier Valley Leadership Academy, Summit Atlas, Summit Olympus, Summit Sierra, Whatcom Intergenerational High School and the first elementary school graduation for Impact | Salish Sea Elementary.

In concluding the 2024-25 School Year, the Commission shared a high-level overview of its regular oversight activities and support for each school community over the past school year:

- **45** Quality School Reviews
- **Technical Assistance Hours** (estimated)
 - Boards and Compliance (120 hours)
 - Accountability (more than 80 hours)
 - Operations and Community (more than 70 hours)
 - Community and Equity (40 hours)
- **51** Charter Public School Board Meetings Attended
- **42** School Site Visits

About the Washington State Charter School Commission

The [Washington State Charter School Commission](#) is an independent state agency and Washington's primary charter public school authorizer. Established following the passage of Initiative 1240 in 2012, the Commission was created to oversee a rigorous application process for qualified nonprofits seeking to open charter public schools and to ensure ongoing accountability to high standards of quality. Charter public schools in Washington are tuition-free, non-sectarian, open to all students, publicly funded, staffed by certified teachers, and held to the same state and federal standards as traditional public schools. These schools are rooted in community voice, often led by local leaders to reflect the needs and aspirations of the communities they serve.

According to the 2024 October Enrollment Report, **approximately 67% of charter public school students identify as students of the Global Majority, compared to 52% statewide.** Additionally, students with disabilities make up about 15% of the charter student population, on par with the statewide average. The Commission remains committed to being an active partner in Washington's broader public education ecosystems, supporting great schools, celebrating student success, and working toward a future where every learner is known, seen, and prepared to lead.

To learn more about the Commission and charter public schools in Washington, visit charterschool.wa.gov.