



For Immediate Release:
October 13, 2023

Contact:
Jessica de Barros, Executive Director
Jessica.debarros@k12.wa.us
Office: 360.972.5672

Commission approves charter public school applications to expand, renew charters

Catalyst: Bremerton authorized as a K-8 school since 2019, will expand to serve students K-12

Summit Public Schools: Atlas earns 3-year renewal to continue serving students in its community

Applications to earn authorizations for expansion and renewal are subject to a [rigorous accountability process](#) led by the Washington State Charter School Commission, the main authorizer of tuition-free, non-sectarian, not-for-profit and accessible-to-all charter public schools in Washington State

Olympia, WA – The Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission) is pleased to announce approval of Catalyst: Bremerton’s expansion from a K-8 school to a K-12 school and of Summit Public Schools: Atlas’ contract (charter) renewal. Under Washington law, charter public schools submit applications to the Commission on a least a five-year basis, for renewal of their charter and for any proposed changes, such as expansion. Each application is subject to a [rigorous accountability process](#) to uphold the interests of the public school students served in the school. Criteria for approval includes organizational strength, academic performance and financial compliance.

“Charter public schools in Washington are subject to a greater level of accountability in exchange for more flexibility in serving the public school students in their community,” said Christine Varela, **Chair of the Washington State Charter School Commission**. “Our review of applications to renew charters and to expand are a great opportunity to closely evaluate how students are being served. In the case of Catalyst: Bremerton and Summit Public Schools: Atlas, the organizational performance and data on student outcomes demonstrate that their respective expansion and renewal are appropriate for the families they serve and the communities where they operate.”

Catalyst: Bremerton

The Commission approved Catalyst: Bremerton’s application to begin serving K-12 students starting in the 2024-25 school year, contingent on successful fulfillment of expansion conditions for the high school

grades March 31, 2023. As detailed in the staff report, “Catalyst’s academic performance is strong overall” and “the school’s Academic Performance Framework report demonstrates that in 2021-2022 the school received both ‘Meets’ and ‘Exceeds’ standards in all areas reported except science proficiency and attendance for students with disabilities compared to assigned school comparison.” Regarding science, the Commission further noted that science proficiency increased considerably in 2023.

If conditions for expansion are not met on time, the Commission may delay expansion. The full staff report may be accessed [online](#). Conditions include:

- Demonstrating funding to the satisfaction of the Commission
- Securing a facilities agreement with Olympic College
- Submitting Board-approved updates/additions to school policies and/or student or employee handbooks to reflect the addition of high school students
- A pre-opening site visit of the high school program and facilities

Summit Public Schools: Atlas

The Commission approved Summit Public Schools: Atlas application for a three-year renewal of its authorization. According to the [staff report](#), “Overall, Summit: Atlas is meeting academic performance expectations in proficiency based on 2021-22 and initial 2022-23 outcomes. There is insufficient SBAC data to make a determination regarding recent student growth; however, the school presented data that was promising in this area.” Summit Public Schools: Atlas was [previously approved](#) by the Commission for a two-year renewal, with conditions, in March 2022. Since then, the school has made “significant strides” in its organizational performance, including a determination by the State Auditor’s Office that the findings concerning teacher certification in the 2021-22 school year have been “fully” resolved and corrected. Additional oversight by the Commission regarding the school’s teacher credentialing practices found them to be “sound in both design and implementation.”

Every charter public school in Washington is monitored regularly throughout the year. Additionally, on a two- to five-year cycle, each school must be assessed by the Commission to ensure it is still meeting the needs of the students in its community, and the conditions of its charter contract. A charter public school that falls irreparably short of meeting its requirements can be closed.

About Washington State’s 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.

###

