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Contact:
Marcus Harden, Executive Director
Marcus.Harden@k12.wa.us
Office: 564.233.5202

Charter School Commission Adopts Transitional Kindergarten Policy

*New policy creates process for charter public schools to apply to serve families,
and oversight of programs*

Olympia, WA – The Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission) today adopted a policy for oversight of Transition to Kindergarten (TK) programs offered by charter public schools. This new policy follows the 2023 Legislature’s adoption of [HB 1150](#), defining TK programs at public schools. Following approval of a charter amendment submitted by any interested school, the law also allows Commission-authorized charter public schools to begin offering TK in the 2025-26 school year. All TK programs offered by traditional and charter public schools must [adhere to rules](#) adopted by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in July 2024. At a charter public school, Commission approval must be earned before a TK program may be offered. The new policy replaces the Commission’s legacy policy that was adopted in 2020 prior to the passage of HB 1150 and the subsequent rulemaking by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

“All [public school students benefit](#) from the growing availability of Transition to Kindergarten programs offered by the public schools serving their community,” **said Christine Varela, Commission Chair**. “As we look ahead to the 2025-26 school year, the Commission is ready to evaluate charter public school applications to offer Transition to Kindergarten as another education option for families in the communities they serve.”

[In alignment with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#), any TK programs at charter public schools will be for “children who are at least 4 years old by August 31 and have been identified through a screening process to be in need of additional preparation to be successful kindergarten students in the following school year.”

Following the Commission’s adoption of the new TK policy, staff are developing an application and review process for charter public schools to follow when pursuing the creation of a TK program. As a reflection of the importance of TK’s role in serving students, the authority to approve charter public school applications for TK will reside with the Commission.

The Washington State Charter School Commission is an independent state agency and the [main authorizer](#) of charter public schools. It was formed with the mission of creating a rigorous and comprehensive proposal process for qualified non-profits who wish to open a charter public school. The agency also monitors and provides oversight holding schools and charter public school boards accountable to high standards of quality. The Commission was formed following the passage of Initiative 1240 by state voters in 2012, which created the charter public school system in our state. In Washington, all charter public schools are tuition-free, non-sectarian, open to all students, staffed by certified teachers, and held accountable to the same state and national standards as traditional public schools.

To learn more about the Commission, its responsibilities and charter public schools in Washington, please visit our website: <https://charterschool.wa.gov>

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.

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