



Message from Commissioner Dziko

The moment children are born, they are educating themselves by investigating and questioning their world. They are students. As educators, our role is to create an environment that nurtures and expands their educational journey; an environment which includes providing tools to focus inquiry and develop skills to solve problems.

Our current education system is doing exactly what it was designed to do: provide the same experience for all students as efficiently and inexpensively as possible. Unfortunately for many students—particularly those at-risk—this experience does not help them to develop to their fullest potential.

Charter schools were created to provide small school environments that focus on the success of each student. Like public and private schools, not every charter school is deemed successful, which is why the Washington State Charter Commission works diligently to ensure we authorize only the best school models for the intended student population. Ideally our public school system can learn from these schools and collaborate to share best practices that will help us build a better system.

Trish Millines Dziko
Founder & CEO, Technology Access Foundation



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Introducing New Commission Deputy Director, Cathy Fromme

Cathy began her work in K-12 Education as a first grade teacher in California, and has since held district, regional and state department positions in both Washington and California. Prior to staffing the Commission, Cathy developed Washington’s statewide Special Education Mediation System, chaired several statewide education committees, and was the Diversity Manager for the Washington Department of Natural Resources where she facilitated positive/inclusive working relationships and diversity in the workplace. Cathy, as well, is a long standing reviewer for federally funded programs. She has consulted, written and presented extensively in the areas of workforce diversity, trust, relationship building, and transition and the change process.

Cathy’s work with the Commission will include directing the Commission’s charter school authorizing and oversight activities, as well as coordinating directly with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the State Board of Education (SBE) for all Commission activities.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commission Develops Online Application and Reporting Platform with Washington-Based Business



Since September 2014, the Commission has worked with Washington-based Charter Tools to develop an online platform that will streamline its application, authorization, and oversight processes. The online platform is viewed as central to fulfilling the Commission’s values of accountability, responsibility and innovation as it moves the Commission toward a centralized system of data-collection and monitoring.

Starting with the 2015 Request For Proposals (RFP) all new school applications will be submitted and evaluated through Charter Tools. Additionally, the Commission has completed the development of the school reporting benchmarks and is ready to pilot the system. Once deployed, schools will have one central system for reporting, obtaining compliance status updates and storage of compliance related documents.

Based in Redmond, Charter Tools provides an online solution for authorizers to transform manual, labor-intensive processes into streamlined digital workflows that increase productivity while saving time, money and materials.

2015 Request For Proposals

On Friday, February 13, 2015 the Commission released its 2015 Request For Proposals (RFP) for schools opening in the 2016-2017 school year. The RFP, rubric, and associated templates are available at <http://charterschool.wa.gov/applying/application-materials/>.

This year, the Commission is excited to be hosting two full-day RFP Orientations. The purpose of this full work-day orientation is to deepen understanding of:

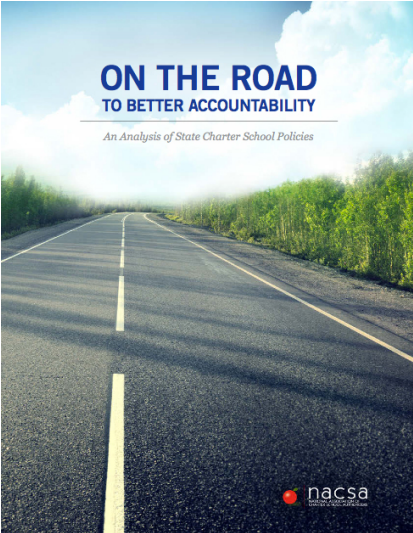
- The Commission’s expectations as articulated in the RFP
- How applications will be evaluated
- The purpose and format of Public Forums
- Changes that have occurred to the RFP since last cycle

The RFP Orientations will be held on the following dates at the following locations:

Wednesday, March 25, 2015 | 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Educational Service District 123
3918 W. Court St. Pasco, WA 99301

Tuesday, March 31, 2015 | 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
South Seattle Community College, Georgetown Campus
Colin Educational Hall, C122
6737 Corson Ave. S.
Seattle, WA 98108

Please contact the RFP Coordinator at colin.pippin-timco@charterschool.wa.gov for more information regarding the 2015 RFP.



BEST PRACTICES

Washington No. 1 Among States with Few Authorizers

Since its first public meeting in April 2013, the Commission has worked tirelessly to establish charter school authorization and oversight policies to serve as a model for the nation. As a result, in the recent report *On the Road to Better Accountability* released by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), Washington State ranked No. 1 among states with few authorizers, receiving perfect scores for policies including school and authorizer accountability.

In September 2014, the Commission adopted a [strategic plan](#) to propel it forward as a charter school leader and authorizer. NACSA’s report and subsequent top-

ranking of Washington’s polices serve as an affirmation that the State and the Commission are on the road to success.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COMMISSION

Performance Framework Update

Since April of 2014, the Commission has partnered with NACSA in the development of the **Performance Framework**. The Performance Framework is a reporting tool that provides the Commission with the necessary data to assess the financial health and viability, organizational effectiveness, and academic success of the charter schools in its portfolio. Using a Performance Framework ensures high standards and accountability not by dictating inputs or controlling processes, but by setting expectations and holding schools accountable for results.

The Commission adopted the **Financial Framework** in December 2014, and the **Organizational Framework** in January, 2015. The **Academic Framework** measures and metrics are approved, with trial runs and target setting based on 2015 Smarter Balanced assessment data set for Summer 2015, and a Commission adoption planned for early Fall 2015.

On-Boarding Process for New Schools

The Commission is currently developing an on-boarding process for new schools. The on-boarding process is intended to support schools as they transition from their planning year into fully operational, high-quality charter schools. School leaders and their staff will have access to resources and training sessions covering Charter Tools, the Commission's Compliance Calendar, the Performance Frameworks, and reporting requirements. Additionally, schools will be able to access information and resources such as the *New Schools Orientation Guidebook* (under development) from the **Commission website**. Lastly, the Commission is partnering with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to ensure access to state and federal program and apportionment information and training sessions.

UPCOMING EVENTS

RFP Webinar

Tuesday, March 17, 2015

THE COMMISSION'S MISSION

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

FORWARD TO FRIEND

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Our mailing address is:
info@charterschool.wa.gov
PO Box 40996 Olympia, WA 98504-0996

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