



WASHINGTON STATE
Charter School Commission

STUDENTS • INNOVATION • TRANSPARENCY

Executive Director
Opportunity Guide



About Washington State Charter School Commission

Established in April 2013, the Washington State Charter School Commission (the Commission) was formed as an independent state agency that exists to authorize and oversee high-quality charter public schools throughout Washington with an emphasis on schools designed to expand opportunities for students who have not been served well in other educational settings.

The Washington State Charter School Commission's mission is to authorize high quality charter public schools and provide effective oversight and transparent accountability to improve educational outcomes for at-risk students*. The Commission is the state's only non-district and statewide charter public school authorizer and is governed by an [11-member board](#) of appointed officials. Led by the Executive Director (ED) and guided by the Commission's Strategic Plan, the Commission staff leads the charter public school application process (when the window reopens), manages the authorization work, and provides support services to Washington state charter public schools.

Washington's charter school students and families rely on the Commission to ensure quality standards are met or surpassed. While guided by statute and administrative rule, within and beyond these guidelines the Commission's primary focus is the rigorous and thorough oversight of each charter public school. The Commission is committed to closing opportunity gaps between the state's most and least privileged groups of students within the educational system. It has a legal obligation to cultivate charter public schools where socio-economic status and protected groups status such as race, gender, language, sexual orientation, national origin, and disability cease to be a predictor of academic and life outcomes. [Educational equity](#) guided by policy benefits all students and the entire community.

*Revised Code of Washington (RCW): Title 28A: Chapter 28A.710: Section 28A.710.010: Definition (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. More information about RCWs found [here](#).



WA Charter Public Schools

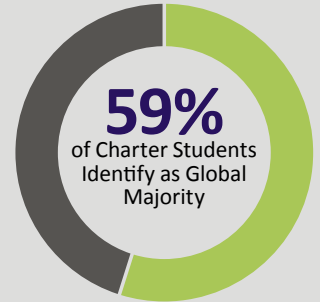
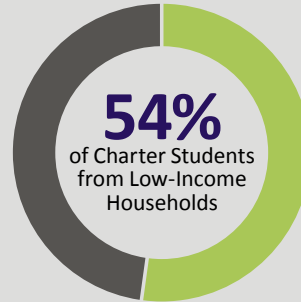
Charter public schools provide education choices for families seeking resources that best empower their children to learn and thrive. Like all public schools, charter public schools are open to all students, tuition-free, publicly funded, staffed by certified teachers, and held accountable by a charter contract, as well as state and federal laws. They are governed by a non-profit board of directors and are regulated by multiple state entities, including the Charter School Commission.

In 2012, the state Legislature passed Initiative 1240, making the State of Washington the 42nd state to allow charter public schools, and the current Charter School Act (CSA) was implemented in 2016. In 2016, schools began operating under new charter contracts. The CSA allowed for up to 40 new schools to open within a five-year window. That window closed in April of 2021 and will require legislative action in order to be re-opened. The founding Executive Director was instrumental in establishing the Commission, creating its structure, and developing systems and processes. The first ED left in 2021, and the Commission is ready for the next stage of leadership. There is currently an Interim Executive Director in place, who will lead until a permanent ED is hired.

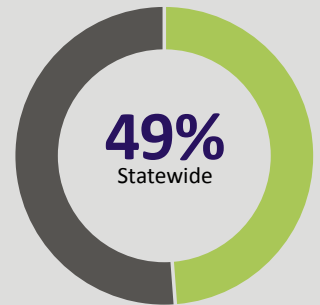
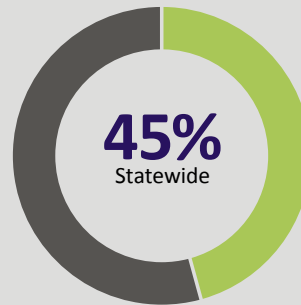
The 2022–23 school year will begin with 18 authorized charter public schools in Washington. The collective impact of these schools serves over 4,700 children, with combined operating budgets of \$69.8 million, and a total of 84 governing board members.



2022–2023 18 Charter Schools serving more than 4,700 Statewide



As compared to:

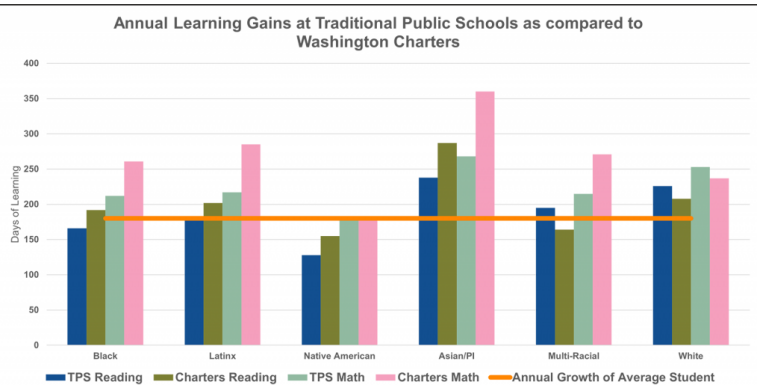
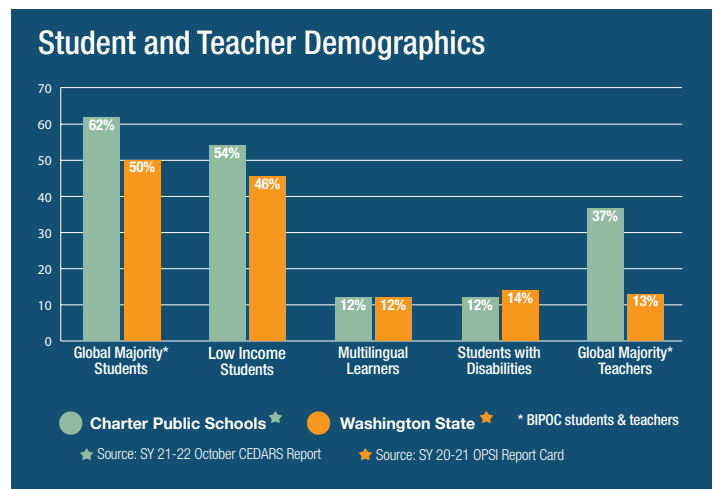


WA Charter Public Schools



Promising Results:

- A January 2019 [study](#) by Stanford University’s Center for Research on Educational Outcomes (CREDO) summarized the performance of Washington’s charter public schools as “promising but not yet definitive...given the limited years of data available.”
- A follow-up Stanford study in 2020 showed significantly higher learning gains for English Language Learners attending Washington’s charter public schools, especially Hispanic English Language Learners, as compared to peers in traditional public schools statewide.
- The 2019 Washington State Report Card also showed gains for charter public school students.
 - Students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch outperformed their state and/or district peers in at least one subject area at seven of the eight charter public schools that administered statewide tests.
 - Every single charter school that has been operating for two or more years has shown typical to high growth for its students as compared to the state average for growth.
 - A study conducted by the Washington State Charter School Commission showed that on average, median rates of growth were higher at Commission-authorized charter public schools, as compared to the schools that students would have been assigned, based on their home address.



*Data and graphics provided by the Washington Charter School Association and OPSI: Office of Public School Instruction.

The Opportunity: Executive Director

The Washington State Charter School Commission seeks its next Executive Director (ED) to lead the regulatory aspect of the charter public school ecosystem and implement effective policies and procedures for monitoring and reporting on school performance. The ED works closely with the 11 Commissioners. In addition to the Commission, they will lead a team of 6-8 professional staff members who oversee school accountability, strategic initiatives, finance and operations, and policy. The Commission Agency operates on a biennium budget of approximately \$3.48 million. The entire Commission, led by the ED, exists to ensure that operating charter public schools provide the educational services required by state and federal law as well as additional requirements under their contract. With oversight for academic, organizational, and fiscal responsibility, the Commission conducts periodic site visits, quarterly budget review, and annual financial audits.

Fostering and maintaining a strong and trusting partnership with each school leader, and board of directors is critical to the success of both charter public schools and the Commission. As the head regulator of charter public schools, collaboration with partners such as the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Washington State Board of Education (SBE), the State Auditor's Office (SAO), school leaders and boards of directors, state legislators, elected officials and policymakers, community stakeholders, and other charter-specific organizations is an essential part of the role. Noting the expired window for authorizing charter public schools and the political climate surrounding charter public schools in the state of Washington, the ED will be charged with building a greater understanding of how charter public schools operate. Increase the general public's awareness and understanding of the value of charter public schools by communicating about the positive effects and outcomes for students.



Performance Objectives

Strategic Vision & Administration

- Provide strategic, long-term direction, and recommendations to the Commission.
- Administer the development, implementation, and assessment of the Commission's Performance Framework consistent with the state statute.
- Serve as the State's expert regarding charter public schools, requiring broad professional knowledge of the Washington charter school law, its implementation, including compliance with academic and organizational requirements and national charter public school standards, and growth and compliance with educational standards.
- Assess progress towards strategic goals, effectively communicate progress and barriers to realizing goals, and implement tactics to propel the Commission's progress in achieving its strategic goals.
- Develop entrepreneurial strategies and oversee the implementation of the Commission's legislative and public policy agenda at the state level with particular focus on specific priority areas.
- Engage regularly with community and school stakeholders to receive input and feedback to ensure successful alignment of the authorization and oversight processes to the Educational equity policy.
- Research, collaborate, and lead efforts to fully understand and affect change across multiple state agencies and state regulations in the development and sustainability of a charter public school sector in Washington.
- Manage all aspects of the Commission, through the leadership of a highly qualified professional team, to operate efficiently, effectively, equitably, and ethically.

Commissioner & Staff Management

- Oversee and coordinate submissions and recommendations to the Commissioners on all matters requiring action. Provide the Commissioners with necessary facts, information, and reports needed to make informed decisions.
- Provide ongoing professional development to build staff and Commissioner capacity.
- Communicate openly and regularly with the Commissioners concerning programs, practices, and problems of authorized charter schools, and established Commission authorization and oversight practices and policies.
- Lead the development and implementation of policies developed by the Commission.
- Ensure the Commissioners, the agency, and the staff comply with all laws, regulations, and Commission policies.
- Foster a professional, respectful work environment that encourages open communication, continuous learning, and improvement for the staff, and lead the team through a lens of transparency and authenticity.
- Ensure policies are in place to develop and implement effective performance management and evaluation of staff. Place focus on improving individual and collective knowledge and skills around high quality charter school authorization and oversight.



Performance Objectives

Legislative Relations, Policy & Advocacy

- Establish and maintain relationships with legislators, the Governor, government relations leaders, charter school funders, and policy and public influencers to support the ongoing development of the charter public school sector in Washington.
- Support the charter school community in their efforts to promote new legislation to reopen the authorization window.
- Seek out and build strong relationships with state and local community-based organizations that represent and/or support diverse communities. Provide capacity-building opportunities to provide a continuing growth in understanding charter public schools and improved educational opportunities for students.
- Educate legislative staff who can impact issues important to the Commission and charter public schools.
- Serve as the Commission's spokesperson for legislative engagements, testifying before legislative committees, providing analysis and impact of proposed legislation on the Commission and authorized charter school operations to the media and other audiences.
- Proactively educate key stakeholders (i.e., communities served by charter public schools, partner state agencies, legislative and policy staff, and the media) about charter public schools.
- Partner with existing and emerging charter public school support organizations and leaders to increase capacity to support Washington charter public schools.
- Foster relationships with education reform organizations and entities that support charter public schools to positively influence legislative policies impacting charter public schools.

Charter School Relationships & Oversight

- Communicate a clear and understandable outline of the Commission's roles, responsibilities, and authority as the regulatory agency.
- Foster the development of respectful and dialogue-driven relationships between the Commission, its staff, and school boards of the districts that charter public schools are sited within.
- Ensure underrepresented communities are included at all levels of charter public school development and authorization.
- Oversee the intervention process with schools that are not meeting legal standards and performance expectations, including potential contract revocation and school closure.
- Align statewide resources including talent, knowledge, and collaborative partnerships with community-specific needs for the benefit of all students in the charter public school system.
- Assure ongoing development and revision of accountability systems and oversight practices.



The Qualified Candidate

The Executive Director (ED) will be adept at navigating complex legal and political issues as the Commission representative and recognizing that political support for charter public schools is critical for the sector to grow and thrive. The ED will be comfortable working with a variety of stakeholders to advance agendas, including the Legislature, Governor's Office, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), educational organizations, the media, citizen groups, other state agencies, school districts, and representatives of other local and federal government offices.

As someone who easily builds relationships and is focused on the growth of the entire charter public school system, the next ED will identify key partners at the community, school, and school districts level that can be coalesced to prioritize student outcomes and sustainability metrics for all operating schools, and the benefit of all students. The successful candidate will have increased public knowledge of the facts about Washington charter public schools and charter law to raise awareness and shift public understanding of the value public charter schools bring to their communities, families, and students.



Specific Requirements Include:

- Proven ability to build strong external relationships with a variety of public leaders, systemically marginalized communities, educational leaders, partner organizations, volunteers, and other stakeholders.
- Demonstrated commitment to advancing educational equity and strong educational outcomes for all students, preferably within charter public schools, as well as an ability to work effectively with individuals from diverse communities and cultures across the state.
- Strong experience working directly with/for a Board of appointed and/or governmental officials.
- Success in advocating for or obtaining adequate financial resources for a public entity.
- Proven success in building strong and productive work teams with a focus on mentoring and nurturing staff development.
- Ability to articulate and interpret the history of inequities in the educational system. Apply current day DEIB initiatives and an understanding of the current reality of communities of color to decision making and leadership framework.
- Strong analytic and strategic-thinking skills, with a demonstrated ability to create, implement, and monitor complex plans and then translate those plans into goals and concrete strategies.
- Career track record that shows stability with an organization and capacity to develop and nurture relationships culminating in overall success.
- A minimum of 7 years of progressive experience in leadership and management, with documented ability to manage staff and lead teams.

How To Apply

This position offers a competitive salary with strong benefits. Compensation is expected to fall in the range of \$150,000 to \$170,000 commensurate with experience. Relocation assistance might be offered.

The Washington State Charter School Commission (WSCSC) is an equal opportunity employer and encourages applications from job seekers who will contribute to our diversity. WSCSC provides equal access to all programs and services without discrimination based on sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. If you would like, please include your name and gender pronouns in your application to ensure we address you appropriately throughout the application process. Persons needing accommodations in the application process or this announcement in an alternative format may contact the Search Consultant, Stacy Harker at sharker@kees2success.com, for the list of an application process.

Condition of employment:

Per Governor Inslee's proclamation all state employees must be fully vaccinated. Your vaccine status will be verified. Please reach out to the HR Office at HROffice@k12.wa.us for information on medical or religious accommodations.

To assure confidential tracking of all applicants, no applications are accepted via email. ALL INQUIRIES WILL BE HELD IN STRICT CONFIDENCE. All candidate submitted materials and credentials are reviewed for consistency and accuracy. Candidates can expect that KEES will verify employment/academic/background information both in the screening process and for the finalist(s) in a formal background check.

This search is being managed by Heather Eddy (President) and Stacy Harker (Consultant) of KEES. Questions may be addressed to sharker@kees2success.com.

APPLY HERE



About KEES

KEES (formerly Alford Executive Search) is a nonprofit executive search firm that builds diverse teams with dynamic leaders in the nonprofit and public entity sectors. A woman owned and operated firm, KEES offers a full array of nonprofit consulting services including executive search, leadership development, interim staffing, and HR support. For more information, please visit www.kees2success.com.



More About Olympia, Washington



Olympia is the capital of the U.S. state of Washington and the county seat and largest city of Thurston County. It is 60 miles (100 km) southwest of the state's most populous region, Seattle, and King County. The legislative cycle is two years long and is comprised of both regular session and extraordinary/special sessions. Regular session starts mid-January and runs for either 60 or 105 days, depending on the year.

With a strategic geographic location along Interstate 5 at the gateway to the Olympic Peninsula, Olympia is within two hours or less of regional recreational attractions - from hiking and skiing in the mountains to beachcombing along ocean shores. Olympia is also driving distance to Seattle and Portland with many cultural, entertainment, and sporting venues to offer.

Historic Downtown Olympia offers a variety of eclectic shopping and dining experiences, while Olympia's Westside is a regional shopping destination with the Capital Mall and Olympia Auto Mall.

Over 40 public parks are available for your recreation enjoyment. Public trails lead to saltwater beaches where native tribes once met for potlatches through woods thick with big-leaf maples and towering Douglas firs. Salmon return to Budd Inlet each fall and run the ladder under the 5th Avenue Bridge.