

The Washington State Board of Education

Governance | Accountability | Achievement | Oversight | Career & College Readiness

Title:	Spokane Charter Authorizer Application		
As Related To:	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal One: Effective and accountable P-13 governance. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Two: Comprehensive statewide K-12 accountability. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Three: Closing achievement gap.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Four: Strategic oversight of the K-12 system. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Five: Career and college readiness for all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Relevant To Board Roles:	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy Leadership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> System Oversight <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Convening and Facilitating	
Policy Considerations / Key Questions:	Does the application by Spokane School District for approval as a charter school authorizer under RCW 28A.710.090 meet the standard for approval established by the State Board of Education in WAC 180-19-040?		
Possible Board Action:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
Materials Included in Packet:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Memo – Evaluation documents. <input type="checkbox"/> Graphs / Graphics <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Third-Party Materials <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint		
Synopsis:	<p>Spokane School District submitted a charter authorizer application to the SBE by the required July 1, 2013 due date for consideration for approval in calendar year 2013. Under WAC 180-19-040(1), the SBE must issue a decision approving or denying the application no later than September 12, 2013.</p> <p>In your packet you will find:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Part 1 (Strategic Vision for Chartering) and Part 2 (Plan to Support the Vision) of the Spokane authorizer application. (The full application may be viewed at the SBE web site.)• A summary of the evaluation of the Spokane authorizer application by the SBE evaluation team, followed by a summary of the personal interview of Spokane School District leaders on the district's application, with evaluator comments.• The authorizer application form.• WAC 180-190-040 (Evaluation and approval or denial of authorizer applications)		

The Washington State Board of Education

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Old Capitol Building, Room 253
P.O. Box 47206
600 Washington St. SE
Olympia, Washington 98504

August 15, 2013

Dr. Shelley Redinger
Superintendent
Spokane Public Schools
200 North Bernard Street
Spokane, WA 99201-0206

Dear Superintendent Redinger:

Thank you for your submission of an application to be an approved authorizer of charter schools in Washington State. It is the first such application by a school district under the state's new law.

As you know, the Board is required to evaluate and make a decision whether to approve or deny the application according to the process set out in WAC 180-10-040, implementing RCW 28A.710.090. We have assembled a high-quality team of evaluators to review the application, assign a rating to each part, based on criteria and rubrics posted on our web site. These results will inform my recommendation, but the ultimate decision to approve or deny will be that of the Board.

Understanding the demands on your time as we approach the school year, I have asked that the application interview be conducted in Spokane. The August 21st meeting will afford the district an opportunity to clarify and elaborate on content in the written application, as needed, and to respond to any questions or concerns evaluators may have about the application. The responses provided in the interview will supplement the information in the application document, and be taken into consideration in the recommendation whether to approve.

Jack Archer of our staff has been in on-going contact with Dr. Gering, and will continue to be as we near the interview. We are happy to help with any questions you and your team may have about the process. We are deeply conscious of the responsibility we have to carry out these duties in a fair, transparent and high-quality way that meets the intent of the law and assures good outcomes for kids.

Sincerely,



Ben Rarick
Executive Director

cc: Members, State Board of Education
Dr. Steve Gering, Chief Academic Officer
Jack Archer
Linda Drake

Randy Dorn, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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Spokane Public Schools

Charter School Authorizer Overview

Spokane Public Schools

200 N. Bernard

Spokane, WA 99201

Phone: (509) 354-5900

Glossary

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Part 1: Spokane Public Schools Strategic Vision for Chartering

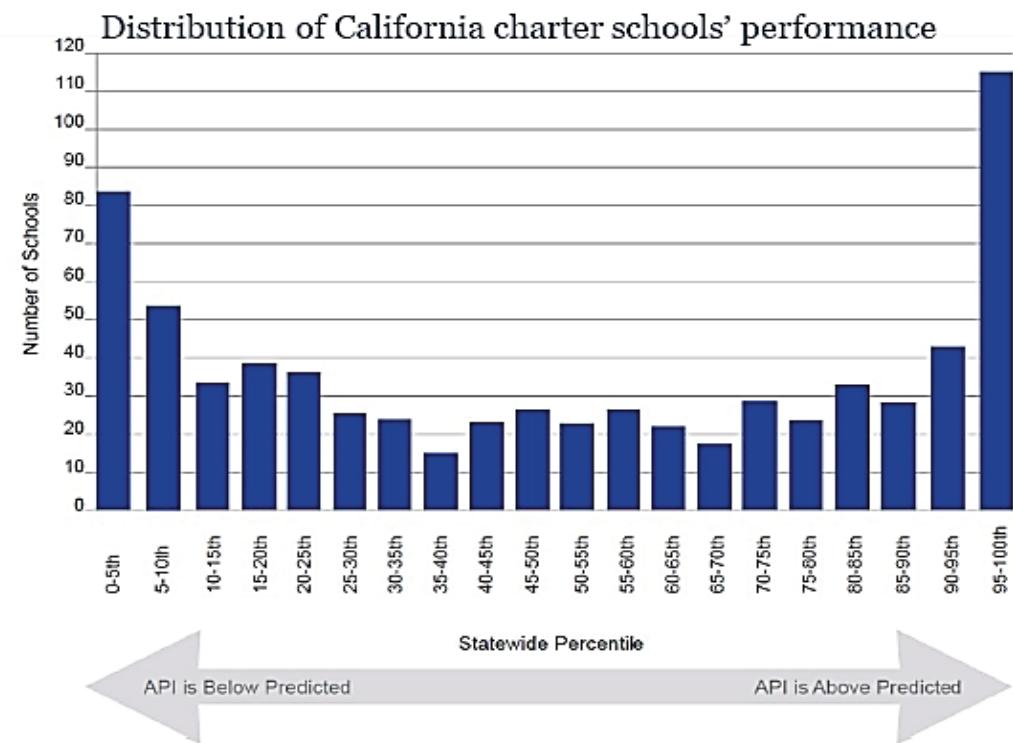
District Purposes for Wishing to be a Charter Authorizer: Statutory Purposes and Education Goals

According to Article IX, section 1 of the state constitution, “it is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provisions for the education of all children residing within its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste, or sex.” And RCW28A.710.005 (Findings for Initiative Measure No. 1240) declared that all students deserve excellent educational opportunities and the highest quality standard of public education available. With these as the back drop, Washington State voters passed Initiative Measure 1240 to approve charter schools as options for the State of Washington.

Once voters approved this as a viable option, our superintendent was clear that Spokane should use this as an option to help move Spokane Public Schools forward on our academic mission. Additionally, our board of directors unanimously passed a resolution approving our school district to move forward with a charter school authorization application (**Appendix I: Spokane School Board Resolution**).

Spokane and the statutory language in RCW 28A.710.005 have similar views about the potential of charter schools. Overall, the research on charter schools is mixed. In fact, the typical charter school across the United States actually is lower performing than typical neighborhood public schools.

Chart # 1: Charter School Performance in the State of California



But what is so intriguing about charter schools is that, “all over the United States charter schools are some of the highest performing schools in their states. Many of these are having tremendous success in improving student outcomes and are closing the achievement gap for at-risk students” (RCW 28A.710.005). Examining Chart #1 shown above, it is clear that there are a number of schools in the 80th to 100th percentile of the California Performance Index. Our goal is to replicate these charters that have a proven track record.

The promise of charter schools for Spokane, therefore, is to help serve as a catalyst for school improvement, to provide new techniques and strategies to reach at-risk students, and to add choices to the portfolio of options available in Spokane Public Schools (all explicitly mentioned in RCW 28A.710.005). Spokane Public Schools is applying to be a charter school as it aligns with our mission and vision. By being a charter school authorizer and ensuring that we actively cultivate the types of charters that align our district to our vision statement of Excellence for Everyone, by closing the achievement gap, serving all students, and ensuring that all students are prepared for a variety of post-secondary pursuits.

As part of our strategic planning efforts, Spokane Public Schools has identified the following as its education mission:

"The mission of Spokane Public Schools is to develop the skills and talents of all students through rigorous learning experiences, relevant real-life applications, and supportive relationships."

Towards this end, we have examined a range of data from across our school system to track school progress and performance. For example, using the Washington State Achievement Index, it is possible to see a number of schools that are underperforming and are falling short in one or more areas of academic performance.

Chart # 2: Washington State Achievement Index from 2008 to 2012 by Performance Level

Spokane Public Schools Washington Achievement Index Scores from 2008 to 2012					
Elementary Schools					
Grade	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Exemplary	1	3		1	3
Very Good	10	4	2	9	9
Good	19	14	7	17	13
Fair	4	13	23	7	9
Struggling			2		

Middle Schools					
Grade	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Exemplary					1
Very Good				1	1
Good	3	4	2	3	3
Fair	3	2	2	2	1
Struggling			2		

High Schools					
Grade	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Exemplary				3	
Very Good			1		1
Good	2	2	1	2	4
Fair	3	3	4	1	1
Struggling	1	1			

Special Sites					
Grade	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Exemplary		1		1	1
Very Good	1				
Good	1				
Fair		1			2
Struggling	1	1		2	

Combined					
Grade	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Exemplary	1	4	0	5	5
Very Good	11	4	3	10	11
Good	25	20	10	22	20
Fair	10	19	29	10	13
Struggling	2	2	4	2	0

Breaking this down by region of the city, it is possible to see that school performance on the Achievement Index varies across the city.

Chart # 3: Washington State Achievement Index by Region

Spokane Public Schools Washington Achievement Index Scores from 2008 to 2012				
Northwest Schools				
Grade	2008 - 09	2009 - 10	2010 - 11	2011 - 12
Exemplary	1		2	1
Very Good		1	4	4
Good	8	2	9	9
Fair	8	12	2	3
Struggling		2		

Spokane Public Schools Washington Achievement Index Scores from 2008 to 2012				
Northeast Schools				
Grade	2008 - 09	2009 - 10	2010 - 11	2011 - 12
Exemplary				
Very Good	1		2	2
Good	7	3	7	6
Fair	4	8	3	4
Struggling		1		

Spokane Public Schools Washington Achievement Index Scores from 2008 to 2012				
Southeast Schools				
Grade	2008 - 09	2009 - 10	2010 - 11	2011 - 12
Exemplary				
Very Good	2	1	1	5
Good	1	1	4	1
Fair	4	4	2	1
Struggling				

Spokane Public Schools Washington Achievement Index Scores from 2008 to 2012				
Southwest Schools				
Grade	2008 - 09	2009 - 10	2010 - 11	2011 - 12
Exemplary	2		3	2
Very Good	1	1	2	2
Good	4	4	2	4
Fair	2	3	2	1
Struggling		1		

Examining this data, it is clear that there are particular region(s) of our city in which underserved students reside. Consequently, we will be working diligently to recruit charter schools that meet our academic and citizenship goals and that are targeted towards at-risk students, particularly in the Northeast and Northwest sections of the school district.

In addition to the Washington State Achievement Index, we have conducted comprehensive reviews of district data. With similar trends in all of our data, in many ways, Spokane Public Schools is incredibly successful. School data mirrors or exceeds state averages and many schools are performing at very high levels. However, there are also some schools

identified in the bottom two levels of the Washington State Achievement Index. There are a number of students underperforming. Consequently, Spokane is not satisfied with its overall performance nor will we be until we are reaching all students and adequately preparing all of these students for post-secondary routes of study.

In addition to our comprehensive review of our data, we also conducted a large number of surveys and focus groups as part of our strategic planning initiatives. Some of the results of our survey efforts are summarized below in chart # 4.

Chart # 4: Parent, Employee, and Community Priorities

Priorities – Percent of Respondents that Rate of Greater Importance			
	Parent (n=2,797)	Employee (n=2,083)	Community (n=234)
Putting students first when making decisions.	89%	91%	90%
Ensuring high academic standards and expectations for all students.	90%	90%	88%
Improving student readiness for careers.	87%	90%	90%
Ensuring a well-rounded experience for all students.	86%	88%	84%
Improving student's readiness for college.	87%	79%	83%
Providing learning experience for students that match learning style and interests.	84%	77%	77%
Adding new options at the high school level such as magnet programs for science, technology, engineering, and math, the arts, gifted, etc.	82%	72%	84%
Providing individualized instruction for students.	78%	73%	65%
Adding new options at the elementary and middle school levels such as expanding Montessori and creating a K-8 model.	45%	41%	63%

There are a number of clear takeaways from this data. First, there is wide-spread community support for our college and career readiness agenda. In particular, 87% of the parent respondents indicated that our schools need to keep improving students readiness for college as a high priority. Second, there is also a clear agenda from the entire community for increased choice options in general. Overall, all of our survey data, focus groups, and individual feedback helped craft our strategic plan and future priority goals. And as a part of our future work, we are explicitly working on creating additional choice options for students.

Serving At-Risk Students

Spokane Public Schools plans to give priority to charter schools that serve at-risk students as defined in RCW 28A.710.010 (2) in a number of ways. First and foremost, we have explicitly added this into our charter school application materials. All charter school applicants will have to address recruitment of at-risk students in their application and this will be part of our consideration in the authorization process.

Secondly, we plan on publishing a specific request for proposal and application that outlines the types of schools and locations of the schools where we find the greatest need (based on at-risk student data). Our intent is that through our request for proposal process that we will provide tremendous clarity about regions of the city we are most interested in serving; types of schools and curriculum programs we are interested in offering; and our clear intent of providing priority for at-risk students.

Third, we have been doing extensive research across the nation. For example, this spring we sent a team of eight people to Spring Branch, Texas on a three day visit to examine how that school district has established relationships with charter schools. We were also specifically observing how that school district leveraged charters to serve at-risk students. Additionally, we have also met with a number of charter management organizations who have been particularly successful in serving at-risk students. Finally, we met with other school districts this spring who have pursued their strategic goals using charters as a tool to accomplish their mission.

Fourth, we plan on refining our lottery process to provide preference for at-risk students (if it is legally possible). We observed this in Texas and it was very successful in its ability to ensure at-risk students are able to attend charter schools. For their lottery, they gave first preference to siblings. Second, they gave preference to students from the attendance areas where the schools were physically located (and they intentionally placed charter schools in areas of the city to serve at-risk students). Third, they gave preference to students physically residing in zip codes predominantly serving at-risk students. Their last phase of the lottery was open to all students. Finally, as previously mentioned, we will run our final lottery process legally and in compliance with the applicable laws.

Respecting and Protecting Charter School Autonomy

Spokane Public Schools plans on fully following the charter school renewal, revocation, and non-renewal process. Successful applicants will enter into a five year agreement with Spokane Public Schools to run the school as outlined in their charter application. As the charter authorizer, we plan on engaging with any successful applicants in our regular review and evaluation process as outlined in **Appendix C: Performance Framework**. In all other respects, the charter will have autonomy unless specific agreements have been established in the charter contract.

Since charter schools authorization is part of our strategic plan and vision, Spokane Public Schools is interested in a number of unique ways such as facilities and/or other fee-based services. However, Spokane Public Schools will not require this and for any fee-based services we may agree to provide schools will be voluntary for schools. Additionally, there are no plans to improve district process in areas such as curriculum, schedules, and personal policies; potential charters applicants will have to address these areas as part of the application process, but this is only to determine capacity and planning. No litmus test will be used in these areas.

Promoting and Ensuring Charter School Accountability

Along with a commitment to ensuring charter school accountability, we also have a plan for ensuring that charter schools authorized by Spokane Public Schools will be held accountable for their performance. Spokane will follow all of the criteria outlined in RCW28A.710.170. In section three of our application, we have outlined our performance framework to communicate with any approved charter schools on an annual basis. This will allow us to have regular updates on charter school performance and progress. Additionally, we plan on using the information in section five of our authorization proposal as an accountability tool as we go through renewal.

Spokane views charters as one potential tool to assist us with our overall academic mission. Consequently, if a charter school is underperforming and is not meeting expectations as outlined in our performance agreements, then it will be imperative that we use the revocation and/or non-renewal process accordingly as part of our accountability efforts.

Although we anticipate that this process would be tremendously difficult, we also view this as strength of charter schools. With increased autonomy comes an increased level of accountability. Both of these tools (autonomy and accountability) are part of the package that comes with charters, and they need to be embraced.

Characteristics of the schools the district is most interested in authorizing

Combining our academic performance data and the clear desires from a large number of community members for increased choice options, these were placed into our new strategic plan as clear objectives: Goal 1, Objective 5 – Expand the range of and access to educational options, particularly at the secondary level (7-12). Additionally, our school board passed a resolution approving our administrative team to pursue charter school authorization status (see **Appendix I: School Board Resolution**).

As part of the follow through with our strategic plan and the Board Resolution, Spokane Public Schools launched into a comprehensive examination of choice options. We see this as being a multiple year process in which we investigate choice programs, conduct research, weigh the viability of the programs as part of our school system, and propose implementation of the most feasible and viable programs in a staged implementation schedule. As we examined our strategic plan and priorities, we looked at different features of schools such as staffing, scheduling, curriculum, and community engagement. During this process, a couple of consistent interests rose to the top: Curriculum, instruction, and proven success (or a track record of success with at-risk students).

In our initial surveys of educational choice and options, the following were reviewed by Spokane Public Schools committees:

Chart # 5: Educational Choice Programs Explored in 2012-2013 School Year

College and Career Readiness		
Upgraded Curriculum and Rigor	Pedagogical Innovation	Proven Practices
Core Knowledge	Dual Language	Charter Management Organizations
Cambridge	Blended Learning	Early College in the High School
I.B.	Project based Learning	

Through our initial phases of research, there are a couple of categories of charter schools that we are most interested in authorizing. The overarching mantle for these characters is a clear focus on college and career readiness. Goal #1 of our new strategic plan is the following students will be provided rigorous academics and real-life learning opportunities to become college and career ready. To monitor the progress of our schools towards this goal, we have established metrics to track students' progress towards College and Career Readiness standards, to monitor student entry into post-secondary routes of study, and to track whether students are successful in obtaining degrees. For example, the following chart outlines the metrics that we currently use to track school progress.

Chart # 6: Metrics for Tracking College and Career Readiness Goals

Students ready for Post-Secondary	Students gaining entry into Post-Secondary	Students getting through Post-Secondary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rigor of Curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PSAT ○ ACT ○ SAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students Entering Post-Secondary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Graduating high school ○ Going to Post-Secondary ○ Completing FAFSA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students Succeeding in Post-Secondary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Remediation in college math, reading, and persistence rates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intensity of Curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student graduating with college-ready transcripts ○ Students taking dual credit courses ○ Students taking AP exams ○ Seniors passing AP exams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expectations for Post-Secondary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student Expectations (surveys) ○ Teacher Expectations (surveys) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Technology Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ teacher proficiency 	

Because this is so central to our overall mission, it will be imperative that any potential authorized charter school will help us move forward our college and career readiness agenda in substantial ways. Charter schools will be held accountable for reaching these college and career metrics in the same way as other Spokane Public Schools.

Curricular Rigor

Knowing that we want to have College and Career Readiness as the backdrop and clear mission for any charter school, we are also interested in charter applications that have upgraded curriculum and rigor(see chart # 5). Consequently, one of our subcommittees spent the school year examining the Core Knowledge curriculum and the new Core Knowledge ELA

curriculum that is one of the approved Common Core curriculum packages for the state of New York. Through this year-long study and examination, the committee believes that the Core Knowledge curriculum has a lot of potential promise in serving all students and in particular at-risk students. This was concluded through meetings with schools in New York using Core Knowledge; discussions with schools in Arizona using the Core Knowledge sequence as part of their work with students; meetings with the publishers in New York (from Amplify Education) about their progress with the English Language Arts curriculum; through book studies; and examination of research results. The results of the English-Language Arts pilot in the city of New York with at-risk students are particularly impressive and deserve further consideration. Because of our intense interest in this program as a potential curriculum for a charter school or choice option, we sent our Director of Innovative Programs and a team of three people to the Core Knowledge National Conference in the last week of June. Additionally, we plan on piloting the Core Knowledge ELA curriculum in two schools (grades K-3) next fall to allow us to get first-hand experience with these materials. Overall, we see this as a promising practice that has had considerable success across the country. Surveys of our community show support for this as a choice option (see **Appendix G: K-12 Options Survey Results**); therefore, this would be one potential curricula that Spokane Public Schools would explicitly name a request for proposal call to the community for charter schools.

Core Knowledge is not our only interest, however. One of our main goals is to provide upgraded curriculum and rigor for at-risk students in anticipation of the Common Core State Standards coming to Washington in the fall of 2014. Because of our general interest in curriculum upgrades in terms of choice and rigor, we also had a committee examine other curriculum options. Currently, Spokane Public Schools is heavily invested in Advanced Placement at the high school level. We were on the National AP Honor Roll for the second year in a row, and we are in a very small number of school districts in the nation to make the honor roll in this area with our levels of students on free and reduced lunch (56.7% in May of 2012). Spokane plans to continue to pursue Advanced Placement support, training, and appropriate expansion in the future. One challenge, however, in preparing at-risk students for Advanced Placement courses and exams has been in the long-term curriculum scope and sequence in the

K-9 experience. Outside of the SpringBoard curriculum (which Spokane uses as part of our 6-11 grade English courses), the College Board does not have an official pre-AP curriculum to help prepare students for the rigor of Advanced Placement. Schools and school district often have to create materials on their own through vertical alignment and sequencing.

One potential solution that we have been investigating is the Cambridge Curriculum. The Cambridge Curriculum has been a late entry in the United States market and is based out of England. It has grown in popularity on the east coast (particularly in Florida) and has recently come to the state of Washington in the Federal Way School District. Additionally, one of our high schools, North Central High School, was part of approximately twenty schools in the world to participate in a joint pilot project between the College Board and Cambridge. As part of this pilot, North Central has started the AP/Cambridge Credential Program. Though intensive training and support, a new course program was started that has been tremendously successful; students have had the opportunity to learn how to do college-level writing, deconstruct and reconstruct ideas, and present the results of these findings. All of these have been supported through international standards, clear targets, and quality professional development. Consequently, we have started a full review of the Cambridge Curricula. This organization has a full elementary, middle school, and early high school program that deserves additional consideration. We had the lead for the national organization come to Spokane to present, and this committee is going to continue into the next school year. We believe that this program has merit and strong community interest (**see Appendix H: Spokane Public Schools K-12 Options Committee**), consequently, we will also add this to our request for proposal process.

The last subcommittee focus on specific curricula rigor was around the International Baccalaureate curriculum. In addition to our examination of Cambridge, this subcommittee spent time looking at IB as another possible addition to Spokane. Spokane is currently one of the few large districts in the state of Washington without an I.B. program.

**Chart # 7: Survey of Large Washington State School Districts and Advanced Placement,
Cambridge, and I.B. Programs**

Survey of Large Washington State School Districts and Advanced Placement, Cambridge, and I.B. Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Seattle: AP and IB▶ Bellevue: AP and IB▶ Federal Way: AP, IB, and Cambridge▶ Kent: AP and IB▶ Tacoma: AP and IB▶ Edmonds: AP and IB▶ Auburn: AP▶ Everett: AP▶ Vancouver: AP and IB

Through our research that will also continue into the next year, we see this program as having potential to help provide a strong scope and sequence from our primary program up to high school which is something that we have identified as a top priority.

Overall, our K-12 Options Committee and our sub-committees examining upgraded curriculum and rigor and specific programs are still in progress. These are not non-negotiables for a charter application, but we plan on being explicit in our request for proposal process that we are interested in receiving proposals that provide upgraded curricular rigor to all of our students and, in particular at-risk students, in all regions of our city.

Pedagogical Innovation

In addition to curriculum rigor, our K-12 Options Committee launched multiple subcommittees to examined Pedagogical Innovations (see Chart # 5). These were identified after many discussions, surveys across the country, and through internal stake-holder interests.

The three pedagogical approaches that were examined in the most detail this school year as potential charter options were project based learning, blended learning, and dual language programs.

Spokane has a number of project based learning opportunities. However, one gap that we currently have is at the middle school level. For the purposes of this charter school authorization application, we will include our Montessori Program as a project based approach. Spokane has large demand for its Montessori program. Currently, we have two 1-6 grade Montessori programs located in our district: Jefferson Elementary and Balboa Elementary. Parents from our Montessori community have begun to organize and play an active role in requesting Spokane Public Schools to consider expanding our Montessori program. This group of parents and community members has met throughout the school year with the school district expressing interest in three main prongs of potential expansion: expanding to the early years with a strong pre-K and Kindergarten program; expanding to the middle school; and in creating a Montessori school that is K-8 (potentially as a charter school). If this option were pursued by a potential charter school applicant, it would not be totally new to Spokane. However, we only currently have small school-within-a-school programs, and we do not have a full school focused on Montessori. This could, then, be a potential charter school program that would expand this type of project based learning into the middle school years which is a gap for Spokane currently a weakness in terms of our project based learning continuum.

At the high school level, we have in the past couple of years launched a Big Picture High School called The Community School. This school is a 9-12 grade program that has also been successful. Again, however, we have the same gap at middle school. We have a large number of families who desire an option at the middle school level for students with a strong project-based learning focus. Knowing that we have this large gap, we are plan on specifically putting into our request for proposal application our desire to have a middle school program (or K-8) program that is centered on project based learning and leverages project based learning to engage and reach out to at-risk students.

In addition to our research and desire for project based learning opportunities, we formed a subcommittee to examine blended learning approaches. We read a number of

research articles and did a thorough review of what is happening across the United States in terms of blended learning. Spokane Public Schools has some BYOD, blended learning classroom pilots, and some individual teachers who are pursuing blended learning and flipped approaches to instruction. Additionally, we have launched a program with interested teachers to provide the technology and professional development support to pursue this type of innovation across our system. We have also met this school year with a company creating a middle school blended learning curriculum and delivery method totally aligned to the Common Core State Standards; they are creating this from the ground up. We are currently investigating creating future partnerships and piloting some of this curriculum.

However, we do not have a school-wide approach to blended learning. This fall we plan on continuing our subcommittee work on blended learning. We also plan on pursuing a grant opportunity to receive planning dollars for a blended learning middle school program. Overall, we are particularly interested in innovative and novel approaches to blended learning at the 5th – 12th grade levels. We see this as having a lot of potential interest in our community. Additionally, we see this as an opportunity for tremendous collaboration. If this were a charter school, then we could potentially partner with the charter school to learn about blended learning implementation, curriculum, hardware, infrastructure, novel ways to approach class size, differentiation, and facilities. This could be a tremendous opportunity for a district/charter connection that would benefit both entities.

In a totally different vein, we also explored dual language instruction and programs. This subcommittee was led by Dr. Irene Gonzales and Nancy Huff. Both of these individuals have backgrounds in Dual Language programs and world language instruction. Currently, Spokane does not have any dual language programs in the region. Interestingly, this probably has the most community support of any choice or charter option (see **Appendix G: K-12 Options Survey Results**). There is wide-spread interest and support from a range of stakeholders to continue to investigate this option. The work of this committee started out by investigating the research and different approaches to dual language instruction. We also conducted surveys of staff members about potential interest in teaching in a dual language school (if they were properly certified). This group will also continue into the fall. We plan on

starting out with some site visits to dual language schools. We have also contacted the Washington State Charter School Association for some leads on dual language charter schools that they would recommend we visit in the United States. While there are not a large number of dual language charter schools in the United States, there are some successful programs that they identified as potential models of replication and study.

Again, we anticipate that there is sufficient interest from the community to actively pursue dual language elementary and/or K-8 schools in the future. Additionally, this has the potential to bolster some of our college and career metrics. For example, when Spokane examines the number of students graduating from high school with college ready transcripts or transcripts eligible to apply to one of our Washington State four-year universities, the area where students typically fall short is in transcribed credits in world language. This is most pronounced in areas of our city that serve the most at-risk students. In these areas of our city, large numbers of students are not finding success in world languages and/or are not even accessing these courses. Because of the large interest from the public and due to the potential to help increase our success rate for at-risk students on our college and career readiness indicators, we believe that a dual language program has a lot of potential in our school district as a choice program or a charter school.

Proven Practices

For the purposes of this application, the last group of potential charter schools that we are most interested in possibly working with in the future is categorized as Proven Practices (see Chart # 5). The first area that we will discuss here is charter management organizations. As we have previously mentioned, we are particularly interested in charter schools that have a track record of success. A number of charter schools have formed replication divisions and have demonstrated that they are particularly successful with serving at-risk students. We have conducted research into some of the most successful charter management organizations in the United States. Additionally, we were fortunate to attend a meeting in San Francisco with approximately twenty of the most successful C.M.O.'s in the United States. As one of only a few school districts invited to this meeting, we were able to learn about relationships that

districts can establish with charter management organizations as well as the successful ingredients that make these organizations successful. We followed this up with a trip to Texas to observe some C.M.O. and district compact success stories and to see this interaction. This three-day trip was invaluable in helping us understand how this might work and to expand our thinking about potential relationships with charter schools. Consequently, we are potentially interested in receiving applications from successful C.M.O.'s for a charter school. In anticipation of this possible opportunity, we have added into **Appendix B: Replication Application Addendum**.

The last new approach that we will discuss in this application is the Early College in the High School model. This subcommittee was led by Wendy Watson and Melissa Pettey. This group of educators investigated different approaches across the United States in terms of Early College initiatives. We have also launched a number of conversations with two local universities about potential programs in this area; in particular, one of our local community colleges is extremely interested in pursuing this type of relationship. We have met with Dr. Janet Gullickson, President of Spokane Falls Community College, and her leadership team about exploring this type of program multiple times this school year; consequently, the foundation for a potential charter has been established. This is also one of our most active subcommittees this summer. We have a large amount of work continuing into the summer to investigate potential funding models, curriculum alignment, and programmatic approaches. There is also community support to continue pursuing these options (**see Appendix G: K-12 Options Survey Results**) Therefore, we see this as a potential charter opportunity in the future.

Summary

Overall, Spokane Public Schools has done extensive research and planning since the voters passed the charter legislation this fall. In **Appendix H: Spokane Public Schools K-12 Options Committee**, you can see a draft document that outlines some of the work that has taken place this school year. While this version of the committee work is outdated in terms of current content, it does document that Spokane has been diligent in exploring a wide range of options for charter and choice programs and is extremely committed to this effort.

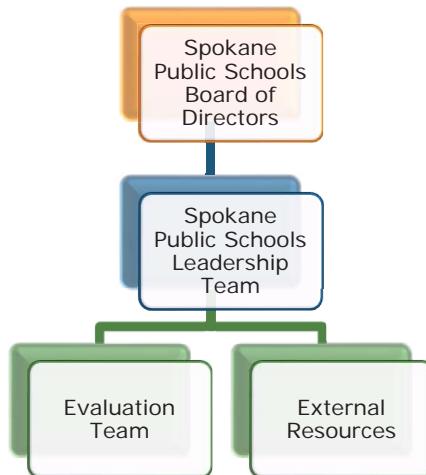
Additionally, we are submitting some of our survey results from the community about charter and choice programs. In **Appendix G: K-12 Options Survey Results**, you can see a short survey that was opened to the public this spring that was referenced in this section multiple times. We plan on greatly expanding these types of surveys and studies this fall. However, it does show that there is wide-spread interest and excitement about a range of expanded opportunities. It also establishes that the previously discussed options are beyond theoretical ideas. We have pursued these systematically and thoughtfully. We see charters as part the available options to help us in the next year to provide increased choices and options to all of our students and, in particular, our at-risk students.

Spokane Public Schools is committed to receiving and fairly evaluating charter applications on the criteria outlined later in this document. We will not exclude applications that propose to fulfill other goals and will actively entertain other and new ideas that will help us accomplish our strategic plan. However, we do plan on reaching out to desired groups or proposed types through a variety of methods. One area that we feel will be of particular interest and will help encourage applicants is our desire to partner in unique ways. For example, we plan on encouraging potential applicants to meet with us around facilities. During this school year, we have undertaken a comprehensive review of our facilities. We are confident that we have one or more facilities that Spokane can make available as part of our incentive package. One of these facilities is currently unused and could be available for use in less than 12 months. Additional facilities could be available as soon as one year to three years depending on our 2015 Bond pending the outcome of the bond by the voters.

Part 2: Spokane Public Schools Plan to Support the Vision

Below you will find an organizational chart showing where primary authorizing responsibilities lie within Spokane Public Schools.

Chart # 8: Organizational Chart for Spokane Public Schools Authorization Process



Spokane Public Schools Board of Directors will be responsible for the final approval or denial when involving new, renewal, non-renewal, or revocation of charter schools.

Spokane Public Schools Leadership Team will have the primary job of reviewing all charter school applications for new, renewal, non-renewal, or revocation before submission to the Spokane Public Schools Board of Directors. The Evaluation Team will be made up of individuals from Spokane Public Schools that will specialize in different areas of the charter review process. The Evaluation Team Breakdown is based on RCW 28A.710.100. Spokane Public Schools evaluations will be reviewed in a tiered application process which is outlined below:

Step 1: Initial Review of Charter Application. A Evaluation Team of individuals from Spokane public Schools will first review the charter application to determine if the applicant has meet all the requirements to be considered for review. If the application is complete the charter application will move on to step 2.

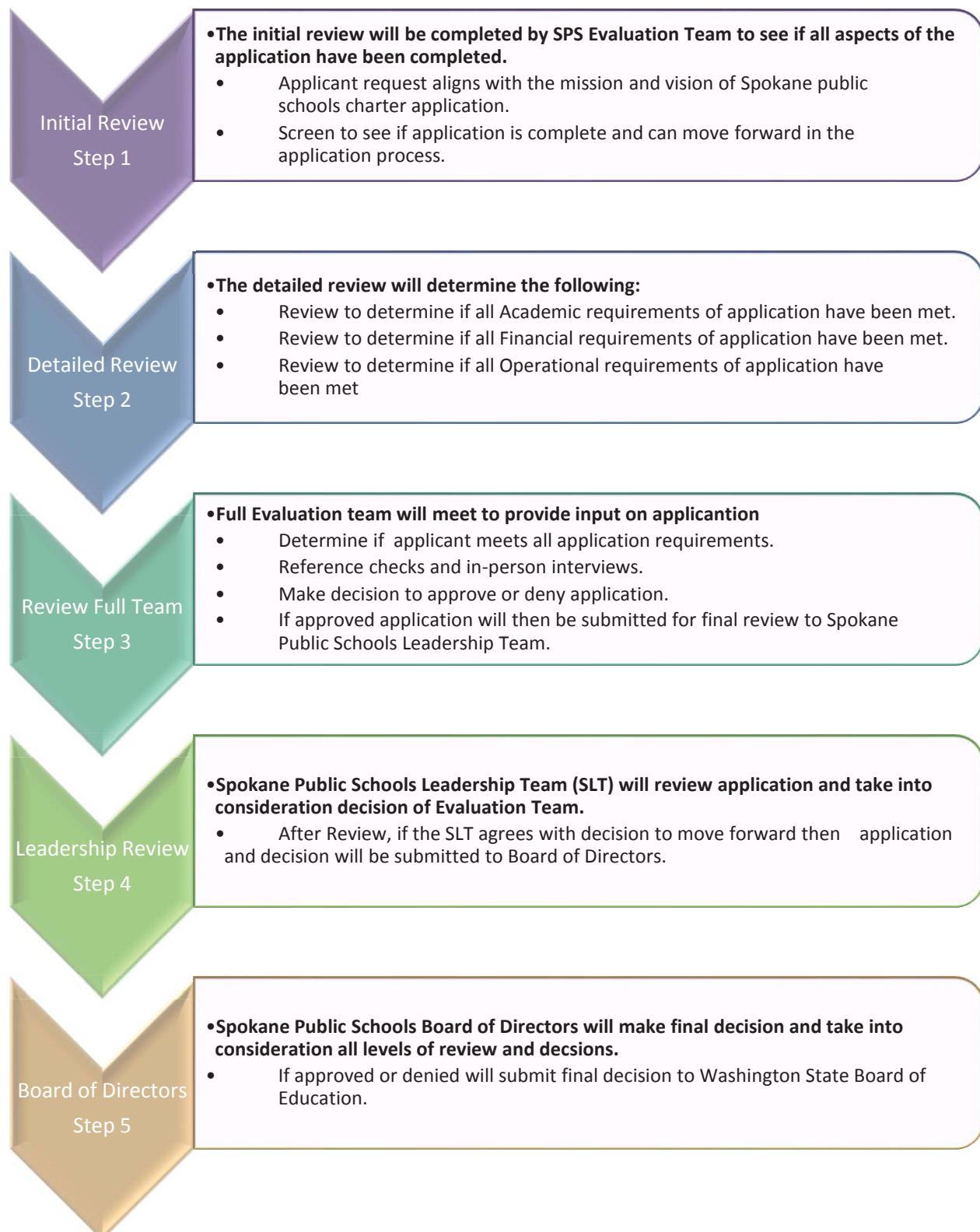
Step 2: Academic Review of Charter Application, Financial Review of Charter Application, and Operational Review of Charter Application. This review will be completed by evaluation team member specific to each area of the application.

Step 3: Once each area has been reviewed by focused groups the full evaluation team will then meet to discuss the application and determine if the applicant should be considered for approval or denial.

Step 4: The evaluation team will then submit the application to the Spokane Public Schools leadership team with their recommendation. The Spokane Public Schools Leadership Team will review the application and decision of the evaluation team and then determine if they agree with the decision of the evaluation team. Once the Spokane Public Schools Leadership has determined their plan of action they will then submit their decision to the Spokane Board of Directors for the final review with details on their decision.

Step 5: Spokane Public Schools Board of Directors will have the final say on the charter school application. Once the final decision is made the Board of Directors will submit their decision to the Washington State Board of Education.

Chart # 9: Tiered Application Process



Spokane Public Schools Evaluation Team will be responsible for the following:

- Soliciting and evaluating charter application, approving quality applications that meet identified educational needs and promote a diversity of educational choices, and denies weak or inadequate applications
- Negotiating and executing sound charter contracts with each authorized charter school
- Monitor in accordance with charter contract terms the performance and legal compliance of charter schools, including, without limitation, education and academic performance goals and student achievement
- Determining whether each charter contract merits renewal, nonrenewal, or revocation

Spokane Public Schools will annually submit a report to the Washington State Board of Education according to a timeline, content and format specified by the board, which includes:

- The authorizer's strategic vision for chartering and progress toward achieving that vision
- The academic and financial performance of all operating charter schools overseen by the authorizer, including, the progress of the charter schools based on the authorizer's performance framework
- The status of the authorizer's charter school portfolio, identifying all charter schools in each of the following categories: approved but not yet open, operating, renewed, transferred, revoked, not renewed, voluntarily closed, or never opened
- The authorizer's operating costs and expenses detailed in annual financial statements that conform with generally accepted accounting principles
- The services purchased from the authorizer by the charter schools under its jurisdiction under RCW28A.710.110, including an itemized accounting of the actual costs of these services
- Neither an authorizer, individuals who comprise the membership of the authorizer in their official capacity, nor the employees of an authorizer are liable for a employee acts of omission of a charter school they authorize

- No employee, trustee, agent, or representative of an authorizer may simultaneously serve as an employee, trustee, agent, representative, vendor, or contractor of a charter school under the jurisdiction of that authorizer

Spokane Public Schools will have a variety of individuals who will take part in the overall authorization process. Below you will find the biographies of Spokane Public School current Board of Directors who will play a significant part in the charter approval process.

Spokane Public Schools Board of Directors

Robert Douthitt

Board President

Robert H. Douthitt, currently board president, has been a board member since 2007. In the past, Douthitt served on the board of directors of Holy Family Adult Day Centers, Girl Scouts, American Cancer Society and the Chase Youth Foundation; on Dominican Network (Holy Family Hosp.) Planning and Finance committees; Spokane Chamber of Commerce Taxation Committee; and was a member of Spokane Downtown Rotary. A graduate of Princeton University (AB Econ), University of Virginia (JD), and NYU (LLM Taxation), he served as a tax attorney with Lukins & Annis from 1981-1999, and was chairperson of the Business Law Section of the Washington State Bar Association in the mid 1990s. He started Great Clips in Spokane in 1994, growing it to 15 salons before selling it in 2007. He also represented franchisees in the western U.S. on the franchisee advisory board of Great Clips, Inc. for seven years. All three of his children graduated from Spokane Public Schools. Expiration of term: November 2013.

Jeffrey Bierman, PhD

Co-Legislative Liaison

Jeffrey D. Bierman, currently co-legislative liaison, joined the board in 2008. A professor of physics at Gonzaga University, Dr. Bierman has served as a member of the Washington State Board of Education Science Standards Advisory Panel. Past community service includes, among

others, appointments to the Spokane City Plan Commission, the Spokane Design Review Committee, the Spokane Regional Transportation Committee, Citizen's Advisory Committee on Transportation and the Spokane Housing Advisory and Appeals Board. Bierman also is a member of several physics education organizations, and has served on many committees at Gonzaga. He is a member of Franklin Elementary's Parent Teacher Group and a volunteer at that school. In the past, he served as an alternate representative to the SPS Citizen's Advisory Committee. Bierman's three children attend Spokane Public Schools. Expiration of term: November 2015.

Susan Chapin

Vice President

Susan S. Chapin, currently vice president, has been a board member since 2007. Selected as a Volunteer of the Year for 2004-2005, she has volunteered with the district since 1994 in a number of roles: as a PTG member at Hamblen Elementary, a parent representative of the Libby Center Site Council, a levy campaign representative, an alternate on the SPS Human Growth and Development Committee, and PTG president and fund-raising chair of the Odyssey Program. Chapin also served as Ferris' representative to the Citizens Advisory Committee, as a member of the Principal's Advisory Committee for Ferris, and as a member of the Gifted Education Parent Advisory Committee. Chapin is currently employed as Infection Control Coordinator at Sacred Heart Medical Center. She was a CampFire USA club leader and board member for the Spokane AIDS network. A Washington State University graduate, Chapin has been a registered nurse since 1979. Both of her children attended Spokane Public Schools and graduated from Ferris, as did Chapin herself. Expiration of term: November 2013.

Deana Brower

Co-Legislative Liaison

Deana Brower, currently co-legislative liaison, joined the board in 2011. Brower has volunteered with the district since 2005 in a number of roles: PTG President and Volunteer Coordinator at Jefferson Elementary, Chair of the SPS Human Growth and Development and

Safety Committee, participant of the Middle School Advisory Committee, and delegate representing Jefferson Elementary on the Citizens Advisory Committee. A graduate from the University of California, Brower taught secondary Social Studies and English for twelve years before serving as a youth and education advocate in Spokane. Most recently, Brower has served on the Board of Directors at the YWCA, the Chase Youth Commission, and Citizens for Spokane Schools. She has two children, both attending Spokane Public Schools. Expiration of Term: November 2017.

Rocco Treppiedi

Board Member

Rocco N. "Rocky" Treppiedi has been a board member since 1996. A graduate of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice and the Gonzaga University School of Law, Treppiedi divides his time between serving as an Administrative Law Judge for the State of Washington and practicing as a local attorney. He has served the Spokane Legal Services Center, Spokane Project Self Sufficiency, the Washington SIDS Foundation, and the Downtown Exchange Club Foundation as president, and is involved in various youth, professional, and community activities. Treppiedi has served on the Parent Advisory Committee at Woodridge, Salk, and Shadle Park, and on the district's Gifted Education Parent Advisory Committee. Treppiedi's three children graduated from Spokane Public Schools. Expiration of term: November 2015.

In addition to the Board of Directors, Spokane Public Schools Leadership Team will also play a significant role in the approval process for charter schools. Below you will find brief biographies of each member of the Spokane Public Schools Leadership Team.

Spokane Public Schools Leadership Team

Dr. Shelley Redinger

Superintendent

Dr. Shelley Redinger joined Spokane Public Schools as superintendent in the summer of 2012, returning to the community where she was born. She received her B.A. and M. Ed. from

Spokane Public Schools Charter School Authorizer Application Overview 28

Washington State University and her M. Ed. and Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of South Carolina. Dr. Redinger's past experience includes superintendent of Spotsylvania School District in Fredericksburg, Va.; superintendent of Oregon Trail School District in Sandy, Ore.; executive director of Teaching and Learning for Richland School District and principal of Sacajawea Elementary in Richland, Wash.; principal of H.E. Corley Elementary in Irmo, S.C.; assistant principal of Conder Elementary in Columbia, S.C.; and teacher at Rice Creek Elementary in Columbia, S.C., Jefferson Elementary in Richland, Wash., and Park Middle School in Kennewick, Wash. Dr. Redinger leads through collaboration and by focusing on the vision of the district. She works hard to develop and nurture relationships between all stakeholders, and isn't afraid to make changes when needed after thoroughly studying an issue. Dr. Redinger and her husband have one son in elementary school.

Dr. Mark Anderson

Associate Superintendent, School Support Services

Mark Anderson has served as Associate Superintendent for Spokane Public Schools, the state's second largest school district serving over 30,000 students, from 1998 to the present. As Associate Superintendent, Dr. Anderson provides leadership for all aspects of Spokane Public Schools' business operations to include direct supervision of directors for budget and finance, school construction and planning, property management and acquisition, facility maintenance and custodial services, purchasing and warehousing, safety and security, technology and information services, pupil transportation, student nutrition services, payroll, voice communications, and KSPS public television. As a member of the superintendent's senior staff, Dr. Anderson serves as the chief operations officer for Spokane Public Schools and as assistant secretary to the Board of Directors.

Dr. Steven Gering

Chief Academic Officer

Steven Gering entered education through Teach for America. Teaching in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas for four years, he was named secondary teacher of the year for the secondary schools

in his third year of teaching. He then went on to Harvard Graduate School of Education to pursue his masters degree. For the past sixteen years, he has served as a school and district administrator. In his first administrative role, he was assistant principal of Mountlake Terrace High School. In his role there, he wrote two grants totalling approximately 1.5 million dollars and helped lead the conversion of the high school into five small schools. He then served as principal of North Central High School and helped lead the work around dramatically increasing the numbers of students graduating with college ready transcripts, the percentage of students taking Advanced Placement courses, and the graduation rate. For the past two years, he has served as the Director of Assessment, College and Career Readiness, and Innovative Programs and as the Chief Academic Officer for Spokane Public Schools.

Erica Hallock

Director, Community Relations

Erica Hallock has served as the Director of Community Relations for Spokane Public Schools since May 2013. Prior to assuming this role, she was the President/CEO for the United Ways of Washington, a position she held for five years. Former Governor Chris Gregoire appointed Hallock to the State Nursing Commission in 2006 where Hallock is currently in her second year as Vice Chair. Hallock earned a Masters of Public Policy and Administration from California State University, Sacramento in 1995 and a BA in Political Science from the University of California, Riverside in 1992. She lives in Spokane with her husband, Bob, and two school-aged children.

Tennille Jeffries-Simmons

Chief Human Resources Officer

Tennille Jeffries-Simmons serves as Spokane Public Schools' Chief Human Resources Officer, a position she has held since July 2012. Jeffries-Simmons has worked with Spokane Public Schools since July of 2005 in a number of roles, including Executive Director of Human Resources and Director of Employment and Equity Services. Prior to joining Spokane Public Schools, Jeffries-Simmons worked for Habitat for Humanity where she served as the Director of Spokane Public Schools Charter School Authorizer Application Overview 30

Major Gifts and Coordinator of Family Services. Tennille Jeffries-Simmons received her degrees from Gonzaga University. Jeffries-Simmons lives in Spokane with her husband and school-aged son.

Dr. Linda McDermott

Executive Director, Finance

Dr. Linda A. McDermott is Executive Director of Finance with Spokane Public Schools. Dr. McDermott provides strategy and leadership for all aspects of the District's financial, accounting, budgeting, payroll and benefits operations, and enrollment reporting. She provides direct supervision to the directors of accounting, budget, and the internal control accountant. Dr. McDermott serves as the chief financial officer and the certification officer for the District.

Dr. McDermott received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration in 1985 and her Masters degree in Business Administration in 1995, both from Eastern Washington University. She earned her Doctorate of Education (Educational Administration) from Washington State University in 2012. Dr. McDermott began her professional career as an accountant in private industry and in 1987 moved to the public sector as an investigative auditor for the Washington State Gambling Commission. In 1989 she joined Community Colleges of Spokane; from 2002 to 2010 she served as the district chief financial officer. In July 2010, she moved to Spokane Public Schools as the Executive Director of Finance. Dr. McDermott is a Certified Public Accountant.

Dr. McDermott has held statewide leadership positions in Washington's community and technical college system and is a past president and board member of the Association of Government of Accountants. She previously served as a board member and Treasurer of Girl Scouts Eastern Washington & Northern Idaho.

External Partnership

As Spokane has considered pursing its authorization application, we have created strong external partnerships to help support us in our authorization role and help us ripen our thinking in terms of partnership with charter schools and expanding choice to help move our strategic goals forward.

We are attending the Portfolio School District Network Meeting hosted by the Center for Reinventing Public Education in early July. This will be an excellent opportunity to network with school districts all across the United States who are using charter schools as a part of their portfolio of available programs. We have also met and consulted with this group multiple time this past school year. Most recently, we consulted with them to do an internal audit of our district compactly to support charter schools. We are still waiting for the initial results of this audit which we will review, analyze, and incorporate necessary changes into our strategic plan.

We have also been in regular contact with two teams from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Washington state team led by Edie Harding, Senior Program Officer for the U.S. Program, paid for our trip to Spring Branch, Texas, to visit a successful district-charter compact and charter school in action. The College-Ready Education Strategy Leadership Team co-led led by Don Shalvey, Deputy Director, hosted our leadership team at a meeting of Charter Management Organizations (C.M.O's) in San Francisco. This meeting allowed us to network with school districts such as Denver Public Schools and to meet with leaders from some of the most successful C.M.O's in the United States. Finally, we have been a part of a number of meetings to learn more about what is happening across the United States. We have also done extensive research and have found a number of our own relationships and networks to support us in this undertaking.

One of the most helpful support organizations in terms of the actual authorizer application has been the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA). We attended a one day work shop hosted by Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) where we received involved technical assistance on the authorizer application. We have also consulted with them during the writing of the application; it is possible that we may use NACSA as an external partner to support us as an authorizer as the need arises. Budgetary

funds have been specifically allocated to support the need for potential contracting with NACSA. Our primary contacts at NACSA have been William Haft, Vice-President of Authorizer Development, and Carly Bolger.

Finally, we have worked extensively with the Washington State Charter Schools Association, the new statewide nonprofit that supports the startup of high quality public schools in Washington. We have been in touch with them weekly as they have helped us refine our thinking about our charter/choice strategies. They have flown over to meet with us, and we conduct conference calls on a regular basis.

Financial Responsibilities

Since the effort to expand the choice options for families in Spokane public Schools is part of our larger strategic plan and initiatives, we have created an Office of Innovation as a key part of our school district. This office has dedicated office space, secretarial support, and a dedicated lead, to get this office off the ground. Part of the responsibilities of this office will be to oversee charter schools. This includes soliciting requests for proposals; managing the process of retrieving applications; using our performance framework and review process; and ultimately managing the renewal, non-renewal and revocation processes. We anticipate that these resources will be more than adequate to get the department off the ground and that this department will be able to receive, process, and lead the review of any charter school applications. Spokane Public Schools undergoes yearly budgetary reviews and prioritization; if we need to restructure and/or reallocate funds to support authorization activities, we will do so in our annual review.

In addition to this office, we also plan on using some district resources in our system as part of our authorization and oversight. For example, our purchasing and contract services department will assist in crafting and executing any necessary agreements with charters that are approved in our district.

We have also been using resources from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers. We attended a training session hosted by NACSA and WASA. Additionally, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has paid NACSA for some consulting services to assist any

interested district with the charter school authorization process. We have taken advantage of these resources by using template documents, their full library of materials, and some consultation.

District staff possesses the necessary skills and expertise to evaluate applicant business plans and the financial performance of approved schools. The expertise is evidenced by staff qualifications in the School Support Services/Budget and Finance division, to include division leadership by the following employees:

Mark E. Anderson, Associate Superintendent, School Support Services, Ph.D.

Over 20 years leading school support operations to include governance and school district policy and procedure, HR, transportation, nutrition services, long-term facility planning and budgeting.

Linda A. McDermott, Chief Financial Officer, Ed.D, CPA

Over 20 years of experience in higher education and K-12 education.

Cindy K. Coleman, Director of Accounting, CPA, CGMA

Over 20 years of experience auditing and oversight of school district accounting.

Craig T. Skillestad, Director of Budget, CPA, CGFM

Over 20 years of experience in budgeting and grant administration; currently manages a \$325 million General Fund Budget supporting 50 schools and 29,000 students.

Craig A. Numata, Supervisor of Fiscal Analysis and Data Reporting, CPA

Over 10 years of experience in data analysis and state reporting for the district.

The school district has a long standing reputation for financial stewardship, accountability, and reporting as evidenced by nearly a decade of unmodified audit opinions and financial awards from the Government Finance Officers Association and Association of School Business Officials. Additionally, the district's 2011-12 total Financial Profile Score determined

by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction was 2.95 on a 4.0 scale. The profile score illustrates the district's strong financial condition as well as prudent fiscal management. The district anticipates allocating current staff resources and will rely on existing staff expertise to monitor charter schools. Additionally, the district will hire external contractors (e.g. public accounting firm) to assist with periodic financial program evaluations and review. The initial estimate of resources need for external evaluations is \$50,000 per year. The resource estimates will increase and be revised as additional charter schools are authorized. The resource estimates assume that the authorized schools are able to implement their own accounting and payroll systems and procedures. Additional fees will be assessed to the school should the school district provide these services. A fee for these services will need to be determined.

Staff to support the process have recently been allocated in the budgetary process. We now have a Department of Innovation with dedicated leadership, secretarial support, discretionary budget allocations, and in-kind supports to launch this work. Initial budgets and dedicated FTE exceed \$200,000. There are 2.0 FTE specifically dedicated to this work. Above and beyond both of these figures are the tremendous in-kind support that will be provided by the school district. Because we are the second largest school district in the state, we have the organizational expertise and specific skill sets that will allow us to adequately support this program.

**Evaluation Summary
Charter Authorizer Application
Spokane School District
August 20, 2013**

EVALUATORS

Jack Archer (Lead)
Linda Drake
Tina Boyle-Whyte
Maria Flores
Lynn Van Deventer

SECTION I. AUTHORIZER STRATEGIC VISION FOR CHARTERING

Evaluators Rating: Well Developed

All evaluators rated Section I of the application as Well Developed.

The district's response presents a clear and compelling vision for chartering that is well aligned with the purposes of Washington's charter school law as set forth in RCW 28A.710.005. The application is exemplary in describing the purposes the district has for chartering with specific reference to student populations, geographical areas, curricula and practices. It has identified three priorities for the charter school applications it will solicit: upgraded curriculum and rigor, pedagogical innovation and proven practices to advance its goal of college and career readiness for all students.

College and Career Readiness		
Upgraded Curriculum and Rigor	Pedagogical Innovation	Proven Practices
Core Knowledge	Dual Language	Charter Management Organizations
Cambridge	Blended Learning	Early College in the High School
International Baccalaureate	Project based Learning	

The district presents Achievement Index data to identify the areas of the city in which underserved students reside and the greatest needs for improvement are found. "Consequently, we will be working diligently to recruit charters schools that meet our academic and citizenship goals and that are targeted towards at-risk students, particularly in the Northeast and Northwest sections of the school district." It identifies four specific ways in which it intends to identify, recruit and serve at-risk students with a charter school option. (One, providing preference in the lottery process for at-risk students, may not be permissible under the statute.)

The district shows clear evidence of having engaged in a long, thoughtful and collaborative process of research and planning in developing its strategic vision for chartering, closely tied to district goals. It is not so targeted in its purposes and priorities, however, as to be unwelcoming to other purposes and ideas from charter applicants.

The district demonstrates, mostly through reference to its proposed performance framework in Section V, a sound understanding and commitment to performance-based school accountability.

Concerns

Three evaluators rated Partially Developed the district's response on criterion 1.4, "Reflects a commitment to providing flexibility for charter schools in day-to-day operations, including respecting the autonomy of the charter school board." The district refers the Board to the performance expectations for charter schools set out in its performance framework, and states that in all other respects the charter school will have autonomy unless specific agreements have been established in the charter contract. In the interview, evaluators will ask the district to elaborate, and provide examples of what such agreements might be.

SECTION II. AUTHORIZER CAPACITY AND COMMITMENT

Evaluators Rating: Well Developed

All but one evaluator rated this section of the application Well Developed.

The district sets out a well-conceived, multi-tiered process for approval or denial of charter application, with a clear role for the board of directors. (p. 24.) It presents highly qualified Leadership and Evaluation teams, with distinct responsibilities, and strong and appropriate external partnerships. It is creating an Office of Innovation whose responsibilities will include charter schools, and allocating staff to the new office in FTE units. (The administrative model appears similar to that in place in Denver Public Schools.) In-kind support will be provided by other district staff. The estimates of district resources to be devoted to authorizing are reasonable and supported, but not intended to be exclusive of other resources. It is inherently difficult to project with precision the resources that will be needed to carry out authorizing responsibilities. So much is dependent on the number and grade levels of schools and the size and characteristics of the enrollment, as well as on state funding allocations). The district has worked, however, with external partners to make best estimates, and indicates it's prepared to make adjustments as needed, based on a budgetary review. "Because we are the second-largest school district in the state," the district says, "we have the organizational skill sets that will allow us to adequately support this program. The district's financial condition, moreover, is sound, based on the most recent Financial Profile issued by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. It states that it will contract with a private accounting firm for periodic evaluation and review of its financial plan for chartering.

Overall, the district demonstrates, in financial and human resources, as well as in how they will be deployed, that it has the capacity and commitment to carry out the duties of a charter authorizer in a high-quality way.

Concerns

The district states that the Evaluation Team will be made up of individuals with Spokane Public Schools that will specialize in different areas of the charter review process. The application would benefit from more detail on the composition and individual responsibilities of its membership. The organizational chart and narrative could provide more clarity on lines of reporting and authority for decision-making. More detail could be provided on the responsibilities of staff at levels below the Leadership and Evaluation teams. The district does not directly specify how expertise, whether through staff, contracting or external partnerships, will be accessed in certain areas essential to authorizing and oversight, such as law and performance management. Some of this is implicit in staff bios and job descriptions, as well as in the general discussion of district capacity, but could be addressed more explicitly with reference to 2.4. The district will have an opportunity to expand on these areas in the interview. The district also will be asked to explain its plan for training the board and staff on the duties of an authorizer in an ongoing, rather than just initial, way, so as to assure continuity and a consistent level of quality.

SECTION III. DRAFT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Evaluators Rating: Well Developed

The evaluation team assigned Section III a rating of Well Developed overall, but with a recurrently identified need for clarification by the district about how applications will be evaluated.

The district presents its draft RFP as a memo to applicants describing its purposes for chartering and the kinds of applications it is most interested in soliciting, followed by a highly detailed, draft charter application (Appendix A) and a replication application (Appendix B). The application, derived from a NACSA model, sets out clear and rigorous requirements for each of the required components of the application, including:

- The proposed educational program, in each required feature;
- The proposed organizational plan;
- The proposed business and financial plan;
- The applicant's capacity, including governing board and school leadership.

The Replication Application Addendum in Appendix B responds effectively to how the RFP will provide, in the case of applicants that operate charter schools in any other state, for review of evidence of past performance.

The "School Overview" section of the RFP adequately articulates criteria for evaluating the charter applicant's mission and vision that are aligned with Washington's charter law.

Concerns

The recurrent question of evaluators about Section Three is how the district will use the detailed information it requires in the application to evaluate the quality of the information submitted. In each of the areas above – educational program, organization plan, business plan and capacity -- the RFP must have "clear and rigorous requirements for presenting *and criteria for evaluating*" the applicant's plan. While the clear and rigorous requirements are there, in every instance, the criteria for evaluating are not -- or at least not in explicit terms. An RFP should clearly communicate to charter applicants how their applications will be evaluated.

At the same time, there is a point at which application requirements are so specific and so prescriptive as to constitute *de facto* criteria for approval if they're met. Examples run through the draft application document. (See, for example, Curriculum and Instructional Design, Student Performance Standards, School Calendar and School and Schedule, Special Populations and At-Risk, and Student Discipline, pp. 64-68.) It is difficult to see, on the face of it, how an applicant would not have a good idea of what's expected of it from the RFP/Application.

The evaluator team recognizes that the requirement of RCW 28A.710.090(3)(c) and WAC 180-19-030(3)(c) is that the district submit a *draft or preliminary outline* of the request for proposal that it would, if approved as an authorizer, issue to solicit applicants, and not a finished product. The district states (pp. 39-41) that "there are still a number of unresolved issues that need to be addressed" before it can post its first request for applications." These include (1) Inserting demographic and district-specific information from Section I into the application, to help guide potential applicants toward the types of schools it is most interested in authorizing and the parts of the city it's most interested in serving; (2) Presenting the draft RFP and application to external partners for review and feedback; (3) Cross-referencing the draft RFP with the RFP to be published by the Washington Charter School Commission, for possible improvements, and (4) Adding measures of quality assurance to the written evaluation of applications.

Evaluators will discuss this question in detail with the district in the interview. Given the overall development of this section, the level of specificity in the requirements and instruction for applicants, and the district's explanation of the work still to be done to bring the draft RFP to completion, the evaluation team rates Section III Well-Developed, with the expectation that its concern about criteria for approval of charter applications can and will be addressed to the satisfaction of the Board.

SECTION IV. DRAFT PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Evaluators Rating: Partially Developed

Evaluators rated Section IV Well Developed on several key criteria for approval:

- 4.1. The draft performance framework meets the requirements for performance frameworks in Washington's charter school law, including indicators, measures and metrics for each component enumerated in the law.
- 4.2. The district clearly states any additional, district-selected indicators, measures and metrics of approval it may include in its performance framework.
- 4.5. The draft performance framework includes clear, valid and objective criteria for evaluating the financial performance and sustainability of the charter school.
- 4.6. The draft performance framework includes clear and objective criteria for evaluating the organizational framework of the charter school.

The addition as Appendix D (p. 125) of a weighting scheme for each performance indicator is a strong feature of the application, though not specifically required by the law.

The evaluation team nevertheless withheld an overall rating of Well Developed from this section, principally because of a lack of response to criterion 4.4., "The draft performance framework requires the disaggregation of all student performance data by major student subgroup as specified in RCW 28A.710.170." Two evaluators rated the application Partially Developed on this criterion, and two as Undeveloped. Only in Measure 2c, p. 109 ("Is the school increasing subgroups' . . . median student growth over time . . . ") are student performance data explicitly disaggregated by subgroup. The evaluators recognize that performance data reported in conformance the Achievement Index will by definition be disaggregated by major subgroup. They also recognize the well-established purpose of the district to give priority in its plan to at-risk students. Given that the requirement is specifically called out in law, however, and that it goes to the heart of the purposes of the charter law, the performance framework should make clear and explicit how student data will be disaggregated in setting goals and measuring performance.

As before, the evaluators recognize that the requirement of 28A.710.090(3)(d) is for draft performance framework, and not the final version to be posted and incorporated in charter contracts. And as before, the district very appropriately states that there are issues still to be resolved before the performance framework is finalized. These include a comprehensive, internal review process, which the compressed time frame for applications made difficult to go through before the application submission, the soliciting of feedback from external partners, and internal testing and review of the proposed weighting of performance indicators in Appendix D.

The concern about disaggregation of data will be a focus of the interview with the district. The district will be asked about the extent to which it has been remedied through the work done to develop and refine the performance framework since July 1. It would seem to the evaluators not difficult of accomplishment. It can also be addressed in an authorizing contract, if necessary, should the application be approved.

Other evaluator concerns about Section IV, of less significance but meriting attention, include:

- The district does not identify the data sources for all district-selected indicators, or clearly state the rationale for each. (Some are self-evident.)
- It is unclear to evaluators what is meant by the phrase "*materially complies with* applicable laws, rules, regulations and provisions of the charter contract," in the draft framework for the organizational performance of the school. The district will be asked to clarify.

SECTION V. DRAFT RENEWAL, REVOCATION, AND NON-RENEWAL PROCESSES

Evaluators Rating: Partially Developed

Most or all evaluators also rated Section V of the application Well Developed on each of the following key criteria:

- 5.1. The plan illustrates how academic, organizational and financial data, based on the performance framework, will drive decisions whether to renew, revoke or decline to renew a charter contract.
- 5.3. The plan sets reasonable and effective timelines for actions to renew, revoke or decline to renew a charter contract, including for notification of the charter school board of the prospect and reasons for revocation or nonrenewal.
- 5.4. The plan identifies interventions, short of revocation, in response to identified deficiencies in a charter school's performance, based on the charter contract and the performance framework set forth in the charter contract.
- 5.5. There are sound plans for communicating the standards for decisions on renewal, revocation and nonrenewal of charters to the charter school board and leadership during the term of the charter contract, and for providing guidance on the criteria for renewal in the renewal application.
- 5.6. The plan clearly sets forth how opportunity will be provided for the charter school board to present evidence and submit testimony challenging the stated reasons for revocation or renewal of a charter contract.

We note for particular mention the Summary of Notice for Revocation (p. 165), which provides for a thoughtful process of scaled interventions and assistance in response to weak or insufficient performance, failure to meet performance targets, continued failure to comply with applicable laws, or significant failure to comply with provisions of the charter contract. The district will be asked to provide more information about these interventions than can be discerned from the display, and why they are chosen.

Proposed timelines for actions to renew, revoke or decline to renew a charter contract appear realistic, and to provide sufficient time for the orderly closure of schools if necessary. It is also appropriately flexible to accommodate likely needs for adjustment.

Despite these and other strengths, the evaluation team has withheld an overall rating of Well Developed for this section, based on the following two criteria:

- 5.2. The plan articulates a process for ongoing monitoring, oversight and reporting on school performance consistent with the expectations set forth in the charter contract and performance framework.

All evaluators rated Section V as Partially Developed on this important criterion for approval. Comments include:

"The renewal application should clearly articulate the process, and the monitoring should go beyond the annual report."

"While section V does not directly address the monitoring and oversight of the charter school, its response to section, IV, performance management, does mention the annual review process the district will undertake to regularly monitor student outcomes. . . . However, monitoring a school's

annual progress, while important, is likely not frequent enough to know how well a charter school is performing and whether corrective action should be taken mid-school year.”

“The application does not specifically articulate a process for ongoing monitoring, oversight and reporting on school performance in Part V of the application. The district does state in Part I that it will use its performance framework for regular updates on charter school performance (p. 10) and in Part V that it will base its renewal recommendation on evidence collected throughout the charter term (p. 137). The summary of notice for revocation . . . also includes a notice of deficiency, identified through oversight, ongoing compliance, and regular performance reviews.”

While content is therefore to be found related to this criterion, in various parts of the application, evaluators would ask the district to explain, more clearly and explicitly, what its process would be for ongoing monitoring, and reporting on school performance, consistent with the expectations of the charter contract and performance framework. The intent appears to be there; it requires more development through the document, the interview, and, if executed, the performance contract.

In asking for this, evaluators recognize that RCW 28A.710.090(2)(e), requiring the authorizer applicant submit draft renewal, nonrenewal and revocation processes, and the rule to implement reference only RCW 28A.710.190 (Charter contracts – Renewal) and 28A.710.200 (Charter contracts – Nonrenewal or revocation), and RCW 28A.710.180 (Oversight – Corrective action) from which this criterion is drawn. To the extent there is a lack of clarity in the rule, and therefore the application, evaluators recommend that the Board make allowance for that in consideration of this criterion for approval.

- 5.7. The plan considers under what exceptional circumstances a charter contract might be considered for renewal if the charter school’s performance falls in the bottom quartile of schools on the Achievement Index developed by the State Board of Education.

All evaluators rated the application Undeveloped on this criterion, because the district does not address it at all. The criterion is intended to explore how the applicant might implement RCW 28A.710.200(2), which provides

A charter contract may not be renewed if, at the time of the renewal application, the charter school’s performance falls in the bottom quartile of schools on the accountability index developed by the state board of education under RCW 28A.657.110, unless the charter school demonstrates exceptional circumstances that the authorizer finds justifiable.

The district references this provision in the helpful table on pp. 46-47, which cross-references statutory requirements to content in the application, but doesn’t get to addressing it. The inference is that the section was simply not completed in this respect. We again are reminded that the requirement of the statute is for a *draft* of the district’s proposed renewal, revocation, and nonrenewal processes, and that it is not, given that, reasonable to expect it to be complete in every feature.

Last, this part of the application, which starts from a NACSA model, has several references to words, phrases or provisions not to be found in Washington charter school law. We would expect the district’s finalized processes for renewal, revocation and nonrenewal to be in every reference reflective of Washington law. This is simply a matter of editing, with the benefit of more time than afforded in this initial cycle for applications. It will be brought to the attention of the district in the interview.

**Charter Authorizer Application
Evaluator Questions
District Responses**

**State Board of Education
Interview
Spokane Public Schools
August 21, 2013**

For Spokane School District

Superintendent: Dr. Shelley Redinger
Chief Academic Officer: Dr. Steven Gering
Chief Financial Officer: Dr. Linda McDermott

For State Board of Education

Jack Archer (Lead)
Tina Boyle-White
Linda Drake
Maria Flores
Lynn Van Deventer

Source: Evaluator notes at meeting. Not verbatim transcript. Audio recording of interview is available.

SECTION I. AUTHORIZER STRATEGIC VISION FOR CHARTERING

- 1.1** *The vision clearly aligns with the statutory intent and purposes for charter schools. . .*
- 1.2** *The district clearly articulates any additional purposes it may have for chartering that are particular priorities for the district.*

Question: Describe the district's purposes for wishing to be a charter school authorizer.

Response:

SUPERINTENDENT: Native of Spokane. Moved back to Washington from Virginia to take Spokane position. Discussed when the charter school measure was on the ballot that if it passed, Spokane should be included. Talked with school board. Heard from community that more choices and options desired. Talked with union leadership. Had experience with charters at Oregon Trail school district. [Sandy, OR.] Our district charter school [Sandy Trail Academy] immediately filled up. It increased the academic focus for the entire district. Brought students and parents back to the district that had been lost to private schools, home schooling, and other districts. District elementary school was worried about losing students to charter. Result was they upped their rigor. Very positive experience in Oregon. Portland also embraced options and charters. District enrollment now higher, and largest bond ever was passed.

CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER: Saw similar things when I worked in Massachusetts. Charters caused district schools to be more customer-focused. Had to focus on parent engagement, student engagement in ways that they hadn't had to before.

SUPT: Spokane is interested in the Denver Public Schools model – a portfolio of options.

CAO: Baltimore also. Cleveland going in same direction. Took trip to Texas school district. Spring Branch, 32,000 students, about same size as Spokane. Cross-pollination of ideas (between charters and traditional public schools) moved the district forward. Principals said they really learned from charter schools.

CAO: Green Dot Schools came on a site visit yesterday. They have been sharing the U-shaped chart, showing concentration of charter schools at low end and top end of performance. Went to authorizer conference in San Francisco. Met with charter management organizations (CMO's); Talked about replication strategies. If they have proven track record and evidence of success, we want to have those options open. Open to any evidence-based school models.

SBE: Any additional charter management organizations?

SUPT: Talked with Summit, Great Heart, SEED as well. CMO's are cautious about Washington state. Some are on hold because of reluctance of Puget Sound area to embrace charters.

SBE: How in particular would you serve traditionally underserved and at-risk populations?

SUPT: Our big focus is at-risk students. The district has the highest concentrations of poverty of any in the state. New district strategic plan (called) T-2-4. Goal is all students will complete some form of post-secondary education, whether technical, 2-yr, or 4-yr. Working with media, community groups to get message out. Changing finish line for success to college completion (2-year; 4-year; military; technical school). Washington is very low for college completion. Spokane low for Washington. Creating choices and options is a good wake-up call for the district. Can't keep doing things the same way in SPS. Focus is post-secondary completion for at-risk.

CAO: We have the poorest legislative district in the state on the other side of the freeway (NE and all parts just north of the river). Concentration of poverty is 10 times greater than Seattle or Portland. Need to revitalize NE part of our city. 16% of kids go on to complete post-secondary education. In common with CMOs, our driver is getting kids to post-secondary completion.

1.3. The district's response describes with specificity the desired characteristics of the schools it will charter, such as types of schools, student populations to be served, and geographic areas to be served, along with the demographic data and instructional research it will use to evaluate needs.

Question: Please describe the instructional methodologies that the district would like to see implemented in the charter schools it authorizes. How do these methodologies differ from what is currently implemented in Spokane Public Schools? How effective are these methodologies in teaching at-risk students?

Response:

CAO: Example: SPS has been so locked in on one literacy model. Haven't had Content Knowledge, Scope and Sequence here for years. Want to pilot Core Knowledge for Literacy. Core Knowledge very different from the literacy model used in Spokane. Maybe one approach doesn't work for all schools. Opportunity for freeing up teachers. Opens up new doors and opportunities for students.

SUPT: Need to change the mentality of one-size-fits-all. Not paying enough attention to high-end students who are at-risk. Ran Gifted and Talented program, but required parents to provide transportation. At-risk kids couldn't access. That's an example of things that need to change. Another is time in school. Length of day. Length of year. A real desire for year-round school. Large number of students adrift in summer. We have to be change agents.

CAO: Want choice options to introduce new pedagogies. Conversation with New Tech Network. Very different -- project-based learning approach. Very successful for some kids. Also a MetSchool we're trying to grow. [Management company based in N.Y.] Great opportunity for blended learning.

SUPT: Also character education, Languages. Immersion, dual-language.

SBE: Plans to involve family and community?

CAO: Have done some surveys. But need to do better job. Just hired new marketing and communications director to help with outreach. Have done focus groups in NE community.

SUPT: District has neighborhood councils. I speak at these frequently. Development of strategic plan -- comprehensive survey of business, citizen advisory, parents from every school, staff, retirement communities. Choice and options really came out as a theme in survey. Change desired at middle school level. Continuing listening and learning surveys.

CAO: Did a specific survey on choice. Had 300 respondents.

SBE: How were at-risk students matched up with community outreach?

SUPT: We have some nice avenues for that. President of NAACP is a district employee. Meet monthly. We do not wait for them to come to us, we go to them. Native Americans project—go to parents to get input.

CAO: Need for more reach-out to get wide input. We're past the survey phase now. Need to do targeted focus groups. Might need to contract out for that.

SBE: How would you ensure the sustainability of the changes you're trying to make? How do you make sure it continues if the people at the top change?

CAO: It takes structural change. There needs to be change in structures to sustain changes in programs. Have created an Office of Innovation, allocated staff and resources to it. Talking with Denver and Baltimore. Asking, what are support structures? What are freedoms that allow those offices to flourish? How do you support and nourish? Have posted position of Director, K-12 Innovation Programs. Attracted strong applicants. (Physical) space allocated.

1.4 *The response reflects a commitment to providing flexibility for charter schools in day-to-day operations, including respecting the autonomy of the charter school board.*

Question: The district's application notes that the charter "will have autonomy unless specific agreements have been established in the charter contract." What specific agreements do you foresee that might be included in a charter contract? Please describe more fully how Spokane Public Schools will ensure the charter school board's autonomy.

Response:

CAO: Approaching it like Baltimore and Denver. Potentially providing facilities to schools. Big problem for charters nationally is access to capital dollars. Charters cannot issue bonds. If a charter is interested, we see lots of opportunities to contract for facilities, food service, etc. These are the types of agreements we're thinking about (in the contract). Human resources, business services also possibilities.

SUPT: It is really important that the (charter school governing) board is autonomous. Don't want to micromanage. Having conversations with school board about that. All five members are supportive. Board passed resolution [Dec. 2012] that they wanted SPS to proceed on the charter option. Two of our board members have had positive experiences with charter schools.

CAO: We want a true, high-quality evaluation process. NACSA will lead authorizing for us this fall.

SUPT: So we have a mentor.

CAO: if someone comes up with a different idea for a charter, we won't throw out a particular application that wasn't explicitly addressing the models in our RFP. We will learn from NACSA. They are spending a whole day with us on the 12th.

Evaluator Comment:

The evaluation team rated Section I of the written application, Authorizer Strategic Vision for Chartering, Well-Developed. In the interview, staff strongly articulated the district's purposes for wishing to be a charter authorizer. The discussion was indicative of the great amount of work the district has done to identify the kinds of applications it would most like to attract and the populations and geographic areas it most wants to serve, as well as the efforts made to gain community feedback and support. The focus on serving at-risk students was very strong, and well-supported. The district showed how its purposes for being an authorizer are closely tied to its strategic plan, which has a goal of post-secondary completion for all students. Staff responded to questions about instructional methodologies and charter school autonomy, which arose from the evaluation of the written application, to the full satisfaction of the evaluators.

SECTION II. AUTHORIZER CAPACITY AND COMMITMENT

2.1 The description of capacity conveys a clear and accurate understanding of the district's duties and responsibilities as a charter school authorizer.

Question: What ongoing actions will the district undertake to ensure understanding of the duties and responsibilities of a charter school authorizer on the parts of school directors, central administrators and staff? How will the district provide for training of staff to ensure continuity and quality in authorizing practices on an ongoing basis?

Response:

CAO: In first six months we've done an impressive amount of professional development; Attended authorizer conference in San Francisco. Took team to Spring Branch, Tex. for learning tour. Attended portfolio meetings with Center for Reinventing Public Education. Learning about portfolio strategy from Denver, Baltimore.

SUPT: Have to keep it going. Have to continue to learn. Denver has continual process of renewal, continual learning. Our board is grandfathered for six years. A really stable board. I am committed to staying in Spokane. Steven [Gering] is also really committed.

CAO: Resourced new department with travel and conference funds. Leveraged even more funds for PD.

SUPT: I went to all 50 schools in the district and talked about charter schools. Lots of excitement about it throughout the system. Lots of city support. Our newspaper is supportive.

CFO: Resourced and restructured our Assessment Department to evaluate the strategies we're using. Then periodic evaluation to make sure that it's really working. That is approach that will be taken to choice options.

SBE: You've talked about the positive responses you've had. What are the less positive responses?

CAO: We had principals list their concerns. Concern about equity. They want to be sure there are policies and that schools are located so that (at-risk) students can attend. Questions about sustainability; Equity and sustainability – those are concerns we hear.

SUPT: Administrators expressed concerns (as well as) excitement. There is a fear of the unknown. There is fear of charters as anti-public schools. We are very pro-public schools. Charter does not mean anti-public education. The politics in Washington state are interesting. Fear that other schools will lose.

CAO: Discussed sustainability with Denver Public Schools. Their advice: Be really hard on the applications. Go slow to go fast. Mistakes were made in Colorado with organizations that were borderline. The nicest thing to say to an applicant could be "Come back next year." We don't want to launch schools that aren't ready.

CFO: Spreading knowledge throughout the district and community is very important. Our community is very supportive of Spokane Public Schools. If the broader community understands, we will get more champions.

2.3 *The district clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of chartering staff, and provides thorough and clear job descriptions. The organizational chart shows clear lines of reporting and authority for decision-making.*

Question: Have job descriptions been created for chartering staff? Please clarify the assignment of duties and responsibilities for charter authorizing among the Leadership Team and Evaluation Team? Who, or what positions, would be responsible for what responsibilities? Please clarify lines of reporting and authority for authorizer duties other than soliciting and evaluating charter applications, such as negotiating charter contracts and monitoring performance and compliance.

Response:

CAO: Yes. Job descriptions are done. Applications are being collected to staff the Office of Innovation. Director is being hired. Office will be responsible for applications. For administrative requirements, monitoring and evaluation. Contracts department will handle contracts.

CFO: All contracts go through the director of purchasing. Have standard template for contract language. My background is contracts, so have solid foundation for process of contracting. Infrastructure is solid. Also have legal department. Solid in legal.

CAO: Page 24 (of the application) shows our tiered process for evaluation and decisions on (charter) applications; Step 3 (Review by full Evaluation Team) will be done side-by-side with NACSA first time out. The plan is the district will learn from them.

SUPT: We want to be successful, and to be a model for Washington state.

CFO: Will keep our board informed before entering into any final contract.

SUPT: Critical to keep board up-to-date as we go through the process, before it gets to them for decision. Our board meets weekly and will be informed regularly.

SBE: What positions will be included in the evaluation team?

CAO: Will have internal and external members. Size of evaluation team to be determined. Will seek NACSA advice, look at practice elsewhere.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: I previously worked for community college for the Spokane region. See it as similar to self-study accreditation team in higher education. Typically seven to ten people on team. Similar to a program review with subject matter experts.

CAO: Need NACSA support, so we know what a great application looks like first time out. We want external eyes that have looked at a large number of applications.

2.4 *The district demonstrates that it has or will secure access, through staff, contractual relationships or interagency collaboration, to expertise in all areas essential to charter school authorizing and oversight, including:*

- *School leadership*
- *Curriculum, instruction and assessment*
- *Special Education, ELL, and other diverse needs*
- *Performance management*
- *Operations, i.e., law, finance, and facilities*

Question: Please describe how the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; special education; ELL, and law will be addressed.

Response:

CAO: Size of evaluation team is TBD so that it's manageable. Need to have finance, curriculum, student support services on it. Has to serve at-risk students and all students. Our team has to be able to effectively evaluate on a rubric, for example p. 66, (Special Populations). Have to describe plans to do that.

SUPT: We have a lot of capacity in SPS. Have a lot of resources to draw on. We are big, we have good employees, have specialists on staff that we can access for authorizing. (Examples: autism experts, deaf-ed specialists). Strong gifted and talented program.

CAO: New Office of Innovation will pull resources together. The office needs to be outside the regular structure and independent, but able to access/harness district resources.

SUPT: I do like to give departments a lot of autonomy. If you have to ask permission for everything, you won't be able to move forward.

CAO: We will have intersectional committee, with representatives from different departments. Will ask, what's it going to take to get this to happen?

2.5 *The estimates of the financial needs of the authorizer and projected resources for authorizing are reasonable and supported, to the extent possible, by verifiable data, including such data about the district's overall financial condition as will demonstrate capacity for the new task.*

Question: Please describe how the district arrived at these estimates.

Response:

CFO: The 2.0 FTEs are reflective of the Office of Innovation -- office staff, supplies and travel. Estimates based on history of contracts for external program reviews. Looked at what (in them) has cost. Also looked at independent audits. If we contract with an organization that has limited administrative support, we would charge fee for those services. So looking at it that way.

SBE: Have you looked at the authorizer oversight fee? SBE rule: 4% of state allocation to charter school.

CFO: Will need to understand how it works. 4% is similar to our regular indirect rate. Would not cover comprehensive services to a school, depending on what was provided. That would be much higher than that. Would need opportunity to study the operation and what are the services to know whether (oversight fee) covers our costs. We didn't assume [in the application] that the 4% would cover all costs.

CAO: Not authorizing to break even. Not a money-making deal. It's evolving. Moved secretary to new department.

CFO: We know the need for autonomy for the school. Approached it (from a finance standpoint) as though it were a grant. Autonomy of charter school will look and feel different, though, than a grant.

Evaluator Comment:

The evaluation team rated Section II of the application, Authorizer Capacity and Commitment, Well Developed. The district responded well to the question on criteria 2.1, providing additional information about how it would ensure understanding of the duties and responsibilities of an authorizer on the parts of directors, administrators and staff. It responded fully to the question on criteria 2.3 and 2.4, on defining roles and responsibilities of chartering staff and accessing the needed professional expertise for authorizing and oversight of schools. The creation of an Office of K-12 Innovative Programs similar to that in Denver, with lead responsibility for chartering functions and assured access to other staff resources, demonstrates the priority the district is giving to the authorizing function. The district discussed its belief that changes in structure and organization are needed to sustain a charter authorizing program. The discussion of estimating the resources needed for authorizing was thoughtful and informed. The district said it does not assume that the 4% authorizer oversight fee will necessarily cover its costs.

The district demonstrated fully in the interview both its capacity and its commitment to serve as an authorizer of charter schools under Washington's law.

SECTION III. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

3.1 *The draft or outline of the RFP includes all components of RFPs required by RCW 28A.710.130(1)(b).*

3.2 *The draft or outline of the RFP demonstrates that the district intends to implement a comprehensive application process that follows fair procedures and rigorous criteria, based on a performance framework meeting the requirements of Washington's charter school law.*

Question: SBE evaluators are unclear as to how the district will evaluate the detailed information required in the charter application to make decisions on the quality of the applications. Since this application has been submitted, has there been additional work completed on the criteria that will guide the authorizer's decision to approve or deny a charter application? Has a scoring rubric been developed? If not, how will this be done? (Also applies 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7.)

Response:

SUPT: We are contracting with NACSA to get that completed. Meeting Sept. 12 for that. Don't want to create it from scratch. Because our law is different from others, thought it would be helpful to have NACSA help us with rubric. Things we'll emphasize: Making sure school serves at-risk students; strong rigor; strong family involvement. We will take NACSA rubric and modify it for Spokane, so it's not just us making it up.

CAO: Sent RFP (Appendix A and Appendix B) to NACSA. They are currently reviewing. Asking for specific comments on rubric. Setting up process of internal and external review and launch of RFP to community. NACSA will lead evaluation for round 1. We want to use their expertise on this first one. Don't feel we have expertise within the state of Washington.

SUPT: We'll make sure they know what our priorities are.

CAO: Denver has 20 pages on the types of applications they're looking for. The more up-front work we do, the better. Nervous about the state timeline (for posting RFP). In the future, the time should be okay. Plan for launching RFP. Denver's launch is very impressive. Community forums prior to launch are good model, can be done.

SUPT: We've been talking with the community about charter schools for a year already. Even though we're on a tight timeline, we still have access to our community, will still seek input.

Follow-up. The district mentions (p. 39) "unresolved issues" that need to be addressed before it can post its first request for applications. Please describe the work that's been done or will be done to resolve those issues

Response:

SUPT: We're paying close attention to what the Charter School Commission is doing. One of our parents [Chris Martin] is on the Charter Commission. So a close, friendly relationship with them.

CAO: We were ahead of the Commission. We are still ahead of them. We plan on using what they post as a resource. We'd like to see their documents and learn from them.

SBE: Are you confident you will have a completed RFP, addressing those unresolved issues, ready for posting September 22?

SUPT: Yes. We have had that conversation.

Evaluator Comment:

The evaluation team rated Section III, Request for Proposals, Well Developed, with an identified need for the district to clarify the criteria by which charter applications will be evaluated for approval. The district responded that it is has contracted with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers for support in development of rubrics for evaluating the quality of information submitted by charter applicants. The district said it does not believe that that expertise currently exists in Washington, and that it does not want to start from scratch if it is to ensure quality. It said it has an all-day meeting scheduled with NACSA on September 12 for this purpose. The district did express clear priorities for application rubrics, including serving at-risk students; rigorous standards, and family engagement. It said it is conducting an internal as well as external review of its RFP, and will seek input from the community, within the tight timelines for posting the RFP in the first year. It also said it wishes to examine the RFP that will be developed by the Washington Charter School Commission before it finalizes its own. Evaluators were satisfied with the response of the district to this question, in that district leaders know what work they need to do and have set out a clear path to doing it. Evaluators have reasonable confidence, based on the interview, that the district will complete all requirements of the RFP on time and to a high standard. In this determination evaluators are again reminded that the requirement of the relevant statute and rule are for "a draft or preliminary outline of the request for proposals." Given the significant work remaining for the district, however, evaluators recommend that, should the Board approve the district's application, it consider specifying in the authorizing contract, as a performance term, the incorporation of rigorous criteria in the RFP, based in the performance framework. (Charter authorizing is subject to revocation for violation of material provisions of the authorizing contract. RCW 28A.710.120.)

SECTION IV. PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

4.2 *The district clearly states any additional, district-selected indicators, measures and metrics of student and school performance it may include in its draft performance framework.*

Question: In the draft Performance Framework, what does “materially complies with” mean? Is there a common meaning of this term, understood by all? Is it an informed judgment on the part of the district staff responsible?

Response:

CAO: It's asking did they comply with the program that they entered into the contract with. How much adjustment, evolution is allowed? Knowing that programs will evolve, did they meet the intent of the contract? Part most difficult to assess. Is the spirit of educational the program still there, while allowing for enough evolution?

CFO: If they're deemed to materially comply, it means there's little risk that they won't meet their intent. In finance, 5% variance on a financial statement represents materially complies with. It means the variance would not have significantly changed the outcome of the operation. Materiality is really easy for me to assess. You look at the body of what they did.

CAO: If they say, for example, that they'll do blended learning, but they haven't purchased the technology to do it with, that would be an example (of not materially complying). Or (on the other hand) if they laid out a math program and found it didn't work as presented, and they changed it, that would be okay. A judgment call for authorizers. There's not a number you can apply. Don't want to turn it into a metric.

4.3 *The district identifies the sources of all data supporting the indicators, measures and metrics included in its draft performance framework.*

Question: Some data sources are indicated, some not. Please provide the missing sources of data.

Response:

CAO: We need to go through and address that. Even some rubrics and cut scores need to change.

4.4 *The draft performance framework requires the disaggregation of all student performance data by major student subgroup as specified in RCW 28A.710.170.*

Question: Has any additional work been done on this section of the draft performance framework? How will the district ensure that its performance framework, as incorporated in the

charter contract, requires the disaggregation of student performance data by all major subgroups?

Response:

CAO: Washington Achievement Index has disaggregation by subgroup. We understand that there will be changes coming from the State Board. We've been following that very closely. We will modify (the performance framework) to match it to the Index that is coming. Regret that State Board dropped peer comparison. We're going to do peer analysis within the district. We love the growth measure in the Index.

I think we have the most sophisticated district dashboard in the state in terms of disaggregating data. We built it internally and it has been copied by others. We have the most sophisticated early warning system in the state.

Presentation follows on SPS dashboard and capabilities for reporting student performance data, disaggregated multiple ways. Responds affirmatively to question about ability to cross-tab data by subgroup.

SUPT: Every single principal has been trained in the dashboard.

CAO: 4,000 staff have access to SPS dashboard. We evaluate all our schools on student growth. Plan to evaluate internal and external schools [i.e., district and charter] on same school report. Used Colorado rubric and cut scores for student growth. Now these same metrics need to go into this tool to make sure everyone is being evaluated the same. Tool allows us to break down data by subgroups. Allows us to look at interventions, demographics and cross-tabulate. The mandatory indicators [in RCW 28A.710.170] that are not in Achievement Index (e.g., attendance, recurring enrollment) can be tracked and disaggregated through this tool.

SUPT: Received a grant to measure performance of community organizations (that operate educational programs).

CAO: District assessment tool enables viewing student performance in real time. Used for all schools in district. Will be used to measure performance of charter schools. Commissioned an outside study on early warning indicators. We've identified factors that lead to drop-outs all the way from elementary. Biggest predictor for elementary is four or more unexcused absences. In the Becca Law it's ten.

SUPT: Using it not to label children but to get them help early.

CAO: [Charter] schools will be built into the dashboard. Academic performance will be (measured) through this tool. A charter school will know how they're doing every single day. Not just at the end of the fifth year.

SUPT: Presented it in Olympia. A big focus for us.

4.5 *The draft performance framework includes clear, valid and objective criteria for evaluating the financial performance and sustainability of the charter school.*

Question: What are the sources of the metrics used in this part of the performance framework? Are they standard metrics? Best practices from the field? Modeled after district financial profiles by OSPI?

Response:

CFO: The ratios are standard performance indicators. The financial ratios are totally standard. If you go to any accounting standard: Need enough cash on hand to pay your bills, and liabilities don't exceed assets so you don't have creditors coming at you. [Others mentioned.] These are very standard operational measures. In terms of cash flow, you need positive cash flow every month. State of Washington gives us an apportionment every month. Private organization will be different from every month. [Discussion follows. Assuming charter schools will receive state allocations on same schedule as school districts. OSPI will need to write rules.]

Evaluator Comment:

The evaluator team assigned Section IV, Draft Performance Framework, a rating of Partially Developed. The principal reason for the rating was the draft performance framework submitted in the application did not clearly disaggregate student performance data by major student subgroup, as required by statute, and evaluators placed a great deal of importance on this criterion. The district explained that the school and district dashboard it has developed has a high capability of disaggregating and cross-tabulating student data by subgroup, that every indicator – both in the Achievement Index and outside it, both statutorily required and district-selected – can be tracked and disaggregated in it, and that this tool will be used by the district to monitor and measure the performance of charter schools against the framework. Evaluators were impressed, from both the discussion and the demonstration of the dashboard, that the district has exceptional capability and unquestionable intent to meet criterion. The deficiency was in the failure to make that explicit in the application. It was well addressed in the interview. The district responded satisfactorily to the questions addressing criteria 4.2, 4.3 and 4.5. The discussion of financial metrics was interesting and helpful.

SECTION V. RENEWAL, REVOCATION, AND NON-RENEWAL PROCESSES

5.2 The plan articulates a process for ongoing monitoring, oversight and reporting on school performance consistent with the expectations set forth in the charter contract and performance framework.

Question: Please describe the process for ongoing monitoring and oversight more fully.

Response:

SUPT: Will use the new school report card [i.e., dashboard]. Regular monitoring will be a responsibility of the new Office of Innovation director.

CAO: We have real-time system that calculates data. CCR, student performance, attendance, school climate, quality of teaching. Will have data on all five criteria. Will also have ongoing site visits (of charter schools) to give formative feedback so it's not last-minute. Will communicate to CEO or principal of the charter school AND the governing board. Ongoing feedback process that will go to school leadership and board, so you don't get to the end of contract term before the charter board knows about issues.

SUPT: Constant feedback is really important. In Oregon, we had someone visiting their [the charter school's] board meetings, just to know what was going on. Don't want it to be totally separate relationship.

CFO: The financial statements will be based on annual figures.

CAO: Site teams will go in. Developing how that will work.

5.4 The plan identifies interventions, short of revocation, in response to identified deficiencies in a charter school's performance, based on the charter contract and the performance framework set forth in the charter contract.

Question: Please describe the interventions. Why were they chosen? What does "TA" mean, in the table on p. 165? How would the district make the interventions it finds needed without unduly compromising the autonomy of the charter school?

Response:

CAO: Our research indicates that interventions are most often for financial reasons. Most likely cause is some sort of legal or financial crisis that might put students at risk. Table on p. 165 adapted from NACSA. "TA" means technical assistance.

SUPT: We personalized (the NACSA model) but looked at other revocation processes as well.

5.6 *The plan clearly sets forth how opportunity will be provided for the charter school board to present evidence and submit testimony challenging the stated reasons for revocation or nonrenewal of a charter contract.*

Question: Please clarify the proposed timeline for revocation on p. 143. Does it apply equally for nonrenewal as for revocation? Are the timeline and process the same for each?

Response:

CAO: The timeline is basically the same. Could accelerate timeline for revocation if there was some major financial or legal problem (e.g., criminal activity), where you needed to act quickly. Will revise to make sure the title of the timeline is correct.

5.7 *The plan considers under what exceptional circumstances a charter contract might be considered for renewal if the charter school's performance falls in the bottom quartile of schools on the Achievement Index developed by the State Board of Education.*

Question: The district did not address this provision in its written application. What would you think of as exceptional circumstances that might cause the district to consider a contract for renewal if the school's performance fell in the bottom quartile of the Index?

Response:

SUPT: It would have to be pretty exceptional circumstances.

CAO: An example might be a school making significant improvements, significant gains. Graduation rate is best example. It lags in the index two years. When a high school gets the Index in the fall, it is not the graduation rate for the previous year. Index calculates it on an average. Graduation may be heading in proper direction, but Achievement Index puts them in bottom quartile. That might be an example. Schools might be improving faster than what shows up in the Index.

Evaluator Comment:

The evaluation team rated Part V of the application, Draft Renewal, Revocation and Non-Renewal Processes, Partially Developed. The reasons were two:

- *The district did not clearly articulate a process for ongoing monitoring, oversight and reporting in this part of the application (Criterion 5.2),*
- *The district did not address under what exceptional circumstances a charter contract might be considered for renewal if performance fell in the bottom quartile of the Achievement Index (Criterion 5.7).*

The district explained how charter school performance will be monitored on in real time through its dashboard tool, and how feedback would be provided to the principal or CEO and the

governing board on a regular and timely basis. The director of the new Innovation office will have lead responsibility for monitoring and oversight. Staff said that site teams will be used, though a plan is still to be developed. The discussion made clear to evaluators that the district takes this key responsibility of authorizers seriously, and that it is well prepared to carry it out. (Evaluators also recognize a possible lack of clarity in the rules and application with regard to this criterion, which the Board may wish to address as it reviews the rules and process for potential changes.)

The district discussed circumstances under which it might consider renewal of a charter when a school's performance falls in the bottom quartile of the Index. This criterion asks authorizer applicants to speculate, and the district did, thoughtfully so.

ADDITIONAL QUESTION

Question: The district's response uses a template from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) for major parts of the application. Please describe the process used to determine what parts of the template to keep intact and which ones to modify. How did you ensure that your responses were detailed, thorough and appropriately state-and district-specific, and not overly reliant on the template?

Response:

CAO: Our initial process was to lay out state law, establish each requirement. Took sample templates and made sure that state law was included in them. Included cross-reference charts in application. That was round 1. Then we took sections out to different departments. Finance, for example, on pp. 113-115 we took to Linda. Her team did some research and changed language. Other departments did the same. Some of them I was able to do internally. Some of the thresholds from NACSA were higher than what we currently can hold our schools to. Changed rubric to match up with performance framework for all our schools. Page 112. [Post-secondary readiness]. Had to modify measure 6c, because college enrollment is so low in SPS As it is in Washington generally, compared to the nation. On p. 111, those are national reference numbers for college readiness. Asked what do we aspire to? But do we want to non-renew a school that might be outperforming traditional schools? Had to figure out some balance.

SUPT: Post-secondary completion is the whole focus for us

CAO: School report card is main tool to match performance to criteria.

SBE: Some phrases in the response don't match Washington law. [Examples mentioned in Parts IV and V.]

CFO: We'll fix. We need to exactly conform to the law.

SUPT: Some of it keeps shifting, for example, requirements for instructional hours.

CAO: We know, but it's a good point.

CFO: We would evaluate against current law. If the contract is for a specific time period, it would reflect that specificity. You're doing the evaluation against the contract.

The Washington State Board of Education

Governance | Accountability | Achievement | Oversight | Career & College Readiness

CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER APPLICATION

APRIL 2013

School District: _____

District Contact: _____ **Title:** _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: _____ **Fax:** _____

E-mail: _____

I certify that I have the authority to submit this application and that all information contained herein is complete and accurate. The person named as the contact person for the application is authorized to serve as the primary contact for this application on behalf of the school district.

Signature

Title

Printed Name

Date

Both the original hard copy of the application and a complete electronic application must be received by SBE no later than July 1, 2013 (as specified in WAC 180-19-130). Direct your questions to sbe@k12.wa.us or (360) 725 – 6025.

I. AUTHORIZER STRATEGIC VISION FOR CHARTERING**Requirement**

“The applicant’s strategic vision for chartering.” -- RCW 28A.710.090(2)(a)

Guiding Question

Does the applicant school district present a clear and compelling vision for chartering, aligned with the purposes of Washington’s charter school law?

Instructions (target length 2,500 words)

The district must state:

- The district’s purposes for wishing to be a charter school authorizer. These include both the statutory purposes the district expects to fulfill under RCW 28A.710.005 and any district-specific purposes it may have.
- The educational goals the district wishes to achieve.
- The characteristics of the schools the district is most interested in authorizing.
- How the charter schools the district wishes to authorize might differ from the schools it currently operates with respect to such features as staffing, schedule, curriculum, community engagement, or other significant characteristics.
- How the district will give priority to charter schools that will serve at-risk students as defined in RCW 28A.710.010(2).
- How the district will respect and protect charter school autonomy.
- How the district intends to promote and ensure charter school accountability.

Criteria for Evaluation: Strategic vision for chartering

- The vision clearly aligns with the statutory intent and purposes for charter schools. The vision need not address every statutory purpose; however, it should align clearly with at least one of those purposes.
- The district clearly articulates any additional purposes it may have for chartering that are particular priorities for the district. Any additional purposes address clearly identified educational needs of the district, and are supported by specific evidence and examples that illustrate the identified needs.
- The district's response describes with specificity the desired characteristics of the schools it will charter, such as types of schools, student populations to be served, and geographic areas to be served, along with the demographic data and instructional research it will use to evaluate needs.
- The response reflects a commitment to providing flexibility for charter schools in day-to-day operations, including respecting the autonomy of the charter school board.
- The response demonstrates a sound understanding of and commitment to performance-based accountability.

II. AUTHORIZER CAPACITY AND COMMITMENT**Requirement**

“A plan to support the vision presented, including explanations and evidence of the applicant’s budget and personnel capacity and commitment to execute the responsibilities of quality charter school authorizing.” -- RCW 28A.710.090

Guiding Question

Does the district demonstrate the capacity and commitment to carry out the duties of a quality charter school authorizer?

Instructions (target length of 2500 words or fewer excluding organizational chart)

- Provide a detailed description of the staff resources to be devoted to charter authorizing and oversight.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of authorizing staff or staff positions. Provide an organizational chart showing where primary authorizing responsibilities lie within the district.
- List the qualifications of district personnel expected to have principal authorizing responsibilities. Provide brief bios or resumes of staff expected to have principal authorizing responsibilities.
- Describe any external resources on which the district intends to rely in the execution of its authorizing responsibilities.
- Provide estimates of the district’s projected financial needs and financial resources, supported by the authorizer oversight fee and any other anticipated resources, for carrying out the responsibilities of a quality charter school authorizer.

Criteria for Evaluation: Authorizer Capacity and Commitment

- The description of capacity conveys a clear and accurate understanding of the district's duties and responsibilities as a charter school authorizer, in accordance with Washington's charter school law and the *Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing* developed by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.
- Staff resources to be devoted to charter authorizing and oversight are appropriate to fulfill the district's authorizing responsibilities in accordance with the Principles and Standards of Quality Charter School Authorizing developed by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers and the provisions of chapter 28A.210 RCW.
- The district clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of its chartering staff, and provides thorough and clear job descriptions. The organizational chart shows clear lines of reporting and authority for decision-making.
- The district demonstrates that it has or will secure access, through staff, contractual relationships or interagency collaboration, to expertise in all areas essential to charter school authorizing and oversight, including school leadership; curriculum, instruction and assessment; special education, English language learners and other diverse learning needs; performance management; law, finance, and facilities.
- The estimates of the financial needs of the authorizer and projected resources for authorizing are reasonable and supported, to the extent possible, by verifiable data, including such data about the district's overall financial condition as will demonstrate capacity for the new task.

III. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**Requirement**

“A draft or preliminary outline of the request for proposals that the applicant would, if approved as an authorizer, issue to solicit charter school applicants.” – RCW 28A.710.190(2)(c).

Guiding Question

Does the district propose decision-making standards, policies and procedures for approval or denial of charter school applications based on applicants' demonstrated preparation and capacity to operate a quality charter school?

Instructions

- Provide as an attachment to this application a draft or outline of the district's proposed request for proposals (RFP) to solicit applications to establish charter schools.
- The draft or outline RFP must meet all the requirements for RFPs set forth in RCW 28A.710.130(1).
- Identify any key outstanding issues the district needs to resolve with respect to the RFP. Discuss the district's current assessment and direction with respect to these outstanding issues.

Criteria for Evaluation: Request for Proposals

- The draft or outline of the RFP includes all components of RFPs required by RCW 28A.710.130(1)(b).
- The draft or outline of the RFP demonstrates that the district intends to implement a comprehensive application process that follows fair procedures and rigorous criteria, based on a performance framework meeting the requirements of Washington's charter school law.
- The RFP has clearly articulated criteria for evaluating the charter applicant's proposed mission and vision that are aligned with the purposes of Washington's charter school law.
- The RFP has clear and rigorous requirements for presenting and criteria for evaluating the applicant's proposed educational program, including but not limited to:
 - The academic program aligned with state standards;
 - The proposed instructional design, including the type of learning environment, class size and structure;
 - Curriculum and teaching methods;
 - Teaching skills and experience;
 - Assessments to measure student progress;
 - School calendar and sample daily schedule;
 - Discipline policies, and plans for serving students with special needs.
- The RFP has clear and rigorous requirements for presenting and criteria for evaluating the applicant's organizational plan, including but not limited to:
 - The legal status of the applicant as specified in RCW 28A.710010(1);
 - The proposed organizational structure of the school;
 - The roles and responsibilities of the school's proposed governing board, leadership, management team, and any external organizations; staffing plan;
 - Employment policies, including performance evaluation plans;
 - Student enrollment and recruitment plan, and the plan for parent and community involvement.
- The RFP has clear and rigorous requirements for presenting and criteria for evaluating the applicant's proposed business plan, including but not limited to start-up plan, financial plan and policies, budget and cash-flow projections, and facilities plan.
- The RFP has clear and rigorous requirements for demonstrating, and criteria for evaluating, the applicant's capacity to implement the proposed program effectively, with particular focus on the capacity of the proposed governing board and school leadership. The evaluation of capacity includes a personal interview with applicants being considered for approval.
- For applicants that operate one or more charter schools in any state or nation, the RFP provides for review of evidence of the applicant's past performance.

IV. PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK**Requirement**

"A draft of the performance framework that the district would, if approved as an authorizer, use to guide the establishment of a charter contract and for ongoing oversight and evaluation of charter schools." -- RCW 28A.710.090(2)(d)

Guiding Question

Does the district's draft performance framework provide a clear and effective guide for charter school contracting and for ongoing oversight and evaluation of charter schools?

Instructions

Provide as an attachment to this application a draft of the district's proposed performance framework. The draft performance framework must, at a minimum:

- Meet each of the requirements of RCW 28A.710.170.
- Include measures and metrics for each of the indicators enumerated in RCW 28A.710.170(2).
- Provide that student academic proficiency, student academic growth, achievement gaps in both proficiency and growth, graduation rates, and career and college readiness are measured and reported in conformance with the Achievement Index developed by the State Board of Education.
- Identify any key issues that require resolution in order to finalize the performance framework. Discuss the district's current assessment and direction with respect to these issues.

Criteria for Evaluation: Performance Framework

- The draft performance framework meets the requirements for performance frameworks in Washington's charter schools law, including indicators, measures and metrics for each component enumerated in the law.
- The district clearly states any additional, district-selected indicators, measures and metrics of student and school performance it may include in its draft performance framework.
- Any district-selected indicators, measures and metrics are rigorous, valid and reliable.
- The district identifies the sources of all data supporting the indicators, measures and metrics included in its draft performance framework.
- The draft performance framework requires the disaggregation of all student performance data by major student subgroup as specified in RCW 28A.710.170.
- The draft performance framework includes clear, valid and objective criteria for evaluating the financial performance and sustainability of the charter school.
- The draft performance framework includes clear, valid and objective criteria for evaluating the organizational performance of the charter school, including governance, management and administration, and student and family engagement. The criteria should hold schools accountable for compliance with all applicable law and the terms of the charter contract, while respecting their primary responsibility and authority to manage their day-to-day operations.

V. RENEWAL, REVOCATION, AND NONRENEWAL PROCESSES**Requirement**

“A draft of the applicant’s proposed renewal, revocation, and nonrenewal processes, consistent with RCW 28A.710.190 and 28A.710.200.” – RCW 28A.710.090(2)(e)

Guiding Question

Does the district have proposed processes for renewal, revocation, and nonrenewal of charter contracts that base decisions on clear, measurable and transparent standards, and meet the requirements of RCW 28A.710.190 and RCW 28A.710.200?

Instructions

Submit as an attachment to this application a draft of the district’s proposed charter renewal, revocation and nonrenewal processes. The proposed renewal, revocation and nonrenewal plans must, at a minimum, provide for transparent and rigorous processes that:

- Establish clear standards for renewal, nonrenewal and revocation of charters that meet the requirements set forth in RCW 28A.710.190 and RCW 28A.710.200.
- Describe how academic, financial and operational data will drive decisions to renew, revoke or decline to renew a charter contract.
- Outline a plan to take appropriate actions in response to identified deficiencies in a charter school’s performance or legal compliance with applicable state and federal laws and the terms of the charter contract.

Criteria for Evaluation: Renewal, Revocation and Nonrenewal Processes

- The plan illustrates how academic, organizational and financial data, based on the performance framework, will drive decisions whether to renew, revoke, or decline to renew a charter contract.
- The plan articulates a process for ongoing monitoring, oversight and reporting on school performance consistent with the expectations set forth in the charter contract and performance framework.
- The plan sets reasonable and effective timelines for actions to renew, revoke or decline to renew a charter contract, including for notification of the charter school board of the prospect of and reasons for revocation or nonrenewal.
- The plan identifies interventions, short of revocation, in response to identified deficiencies in a charter school's performance, based on the charter contract and the performance framework set forth in the charter contract.
- There are sound plans for communicating the standards for decisions on renewal, revocation and nonrenewal of charters to the charter school board and leadership during the term of the charter contract, and for providing guidance on the criteria for renewal in the renewal application.
- The plan clearly sets forth how opportunity will be provided for the charter school board to present evidence and submit testimony challenging the stated reasons for revocation or nonrenewal of a charter contract.
- The plan considers under what exceptional circumstances a charter contract might be considered for renewal if, at the time of the renewal application, the charter school's performance falls in the bottom quartile of schools on the Achievement Index developed by the State Board of Education.

WAC 180-19-040

Evaluation and approval or denial of authorizer applications.

(1) The board shall evaluate an application submitted by a school district seeking to be an authorizer and issue a decision approving or denying the application by April 1st of each year; provided, however, that the board shall issue a decision approving or denying a district's application timely submitted for approval in 2013 by no later than September 12, 2013. The state board may utilize the services of external reviewers with expertise in educational, organizational and financial matters in evaluating applications. The board may, at its discretion, require personal interviews with district personnel for the purpose of reviewing an application.

(2) For an application to be approved, the state board must find it to be satisfactory in providing all of the information required to be set forth in the application. The board will also consider whether the district's proposed policies and practices are consistent with the principles and standards for quality charter school authorizing developed by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, as required by RCW [28A.710.100](#)(3), in at least the following areas:

(a) Organizational capacity: Commit human and financial resources necessary to conduct authorizing duties effectively and efficiently;

(b) Solicitation and evaluation of charter applications: Implement a comprehensive application process that includes clear application questions and rigorous criteria, and grants charters only to applicants who demonstrate strong capacity to establish and operate a charter school;

(c) Performance contracting: Execute contracts with charter schools that articulate the rights and responsibilities of each party regarding school autonomy, funding, administration and oversight, outcomes, measures for evaluating success or failure, performance consequences, and other material terms;

(d) Ongoing charter school oversight and evaluation: Conduct contract oversight that competently evaluates performance and monitors compliance, ensures schools' legally entitled autonomy, protects student rights, informs intervention, revocation and renewal decisions, and provides annual reports as required by chapter [28A.710](#) RCW; and

(e) Charter renewal and revocation processes: Design and implement a transparent and rigorous process that uses comprehensive academic, financial and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions, and revokes charters when necessary to protect student and public interests.

A determination that an application does not provide the required information, or does not meet standards of quality authorizing in any component, shall constitute grounds for disapproval.

(3) The state board of education shall post on its web site the applications of all school districts approved as authorizers. A school district approved as an authorizer shall post its application on a public web site.

(4) If the state board disapproves an application, it shall state in writing the reasons for the disapproval, with specific reference to the criteria established in these rules.

[Statutory Authority: RCW [28A.710.090](#). WSR 13-07-065, § 180-19-040, filed 3/19/13, effective 4/19/13.]