

Charter

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ing based on student enrollment, just like other schools. But public charter schools would be exempt from some state regulations, including some of the rules regarding hiring and firing teachers.

The Washington initiative was based on a model law created by the National Alliance

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—ASPIRE CEO James Wilcox.

for Public Charter Schools, said Todd Ziebarth, the advocacy organization's vice president for state advocacy and support. He feels it would attract successful charter organizations from other states.

Another charter organization keeping a close eye on Washington's election is Los Angeles-based Green Dot Public Schools. Green Dot, which focuses on middle and high schools in low income areas, is just starting to expand outside of Los Angeles but has yet to find a good fit on the West Coast.

The key for Green Dot would be making sure they had enough dollars to open and run schools in Washington and that the state wants to work with them, said Marco Petruzzi, president and chief executive offi-

cer.

"We would want the state to work with us and not be in the situation of being intruders," Petruzzi said, adding that he isn't intimately knowledgeable about Washington's charter schools initiative.

Green Dot, which has about 10,000 students enrolled in its 18 schools, brags about its graduation rate (85 percent in 2011) and the college acceptance rate for its graduates (91 percent in 2011).

Petruzzi said the earliest his organization could open a school in Washington, if everything is right, would be 2014.

Charter schools usually supplement their budget with foundation dollars and one of the biggest donors has been Seattle's Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Although the charter organizations said they wouldn't be enticed by the possibility of being in Gates Foundation's home town, Ziebarth didn't agree.

Aspire Public Schools, one of the largest charter management organizations with more than 30 schools and 12,000 students served, would also consider expansion into Washington state if the new law set up funding formulas and access to facilities in a fair way, said CEO James Wilcox.

Aspire, which also focuses on low-income students from its California base, has another requirement before moving to a new region: they want to partner with local school districts, not compete with them,

Roots



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Carver Gayton and Speedy Bryant joined hundreds of other long time Washingtonians Sunday Sept. 2 at the 40th Annual Roots Picnic on the grounds of the Northwest African American Museum. This year's event paid tribute to Washington State's 41st Division National Guard Band, the only all black band among the lower 48 states National Guard Units.

Wilcox said.

"We're not really interested in going and fighting with the local school system," he said.

The Washington initiative would make charter operators eligible for state matching funds for school construction, and they would have first dibs to rent or buy public school buildings that are not being used by the district in which the new school is locat-

ed.

A conversion charter school, which is set up by a school district to take the place of an existing public school whose students have been failing to meet state education standards, would be able to use the school's existing building without paying rent to the district, according to the initiative.

Tuition

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here and come here with small children, who are obviously not making the choice," said Craig Fisher, another member of West's group. "They come here to have a better life, if they come here for that and if the children and the children are benefited, that's another incentive for the parents. I think it's better if we approach it for the standpoint of legal immigration."

In June, President Barack Obama's administration announced that young illegal immigrants brought to the United States as children are able to apply for two-year permissions to stay in the country if they meet certain requirements.

The Obama administration's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals could expand the rights of more than 1 million young illegal immigrants nationwide. They are able to apply for work permits as well, though they don't obtain legal residency here or a path to citizenship. Under the rules, people who qualify for the program

can also be current students.

Dovetailing with the new program, Sanchez plans to lead an effort to get a measure passed in Olympia during the next legislative session that would make young

'The state is in the hole by significant amounts of money. We're gonna give significant resources to people who I think were given illegally a legal status'
— Bob West, chairman of Grassroots of Yakima Valley, a tea party group

illegal immigrants eligible for state financial aid. He tried in 2009, but the measure didn't make it past committees controlled by Democrats.

Sanchez said the amount money that the new allocation would increase is small compared to the overall pot.

Sanchez argued that these students and their parents have contributed their share to Washington's economy. They pay taxes — the chief source of income for the state's general budget. And many of the students

who would benefit are children of agricultural workers, who help maintain one of the state's chief economic sectors.

"What's at stake is giving kids hope," Sanchez said. "Often times for any child in poverty, they don't understand what higher education means or what it costs, it's especially true for undocumented students, especially for their parents who don't have the slightest clue. If kids grow up saying to themselves, I'm not going to college because I'm an illegal alien ... it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy."

Students who are illegal immigrants already qualify for in-state tuition.

The state estimated in 2009 that making illegal immigrants who are students illegible for financial aid would cost about \$7 million by the 2011-2013 budget cycle. State analysts assumed the change in eligibility would add more than 1,000 students statewide in any given year.

But Rachele Sharpe, director of financial aid at the Washington Student Achievement Council, said it's really not known how many students who are illegal immigrants are in the state, much less if they would apply for college.

Those estimates, she said, were given to provide lawmakers an idea of increment.

Should the bill pass, the added students would likely be absorbed into the already growing demand for state financial aid. Even if eligibility is expanded to these students, it's not guaranteed they would receive aid.

Only 2 percent of all students who receive state grants only get state money, she said.

Internet

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"We've seen an increase in all types of cyber crime," Durkan said in a recent interview. "The hope is to really put a focus on education and prevention. We'd rather do that than some of the heartbreaking cases we do."

The tips for kids include a series of warnings: Don't post personal information online. Don't send inappropriate photos or messages by email or text. Don't write online posts making it clear no one is at your home. Do remember that people can lie online; someone who says they're a 12-year-old girl could really be an older man.

For parents, they include guidelines for dealing with a child's use of technology: Set limits for how much time your children can

spend online, and know whom they're communicating with. Make sure you have all of your child's passwords, and review their

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emails and messages periodically. Keep the computer in a shared space, rather than in your child's bedroom.

Bethan Cantrell, a Bellevue mother of two school-aged children, is an Internet safety advocate who has given seminars on the

topic to parent-teacher groups. She said the tips include a lot of common sense, and some of the most important advice for par-

ents is simply to talk to their children rationally about the potential dangers.

"Parents listen to people who are in a position of authority," she said. "If they actually take the time to pull that piece of paper out of the backpack and read it, there's a good chance it will have a good effect."

The students involved in the Des Moines party were never charged.

Mount Rainier High Principal Julie Hunter said that after it happened, her primary concern was supporting students involved in or troubled by the episode, and making sure they knew they could talk to counselors about it.