

**Community Choice Schools
Commission Meeting Minutes**

February 21, 2024
Zoom Webinar

Call to Order - 3:50

Chair Schreiber called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. The Chair led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance, Ms. Kris Stockton took Roll Call, and the Chair read the Statement of Public Participation and welcomed guests: Patrick Webb, Montana Family Foundation, and Dr. Tim Tharp, Board of Public Education (BPE) Chair, introduced themselves to the Commission.

Commission members present: Trish Schreiber, Chair; Katy Wright, Vice Chair; Jon Rutt, Treasurer; Cathy Kincheloe; Dr. Katey Franklin; Mark Hufstetler; Dee Brown. BPE staff present: McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Kris Stockton, Administrative Specialist.

Presenters: Dr. Jim Goenner, National Charter School Institute; Mr. Ben Lindquist, Arcadia Education.

Guests online: Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair, BPE; Patrick Webb, Montana Family Foundation; Chip Lindenlaub; Carly Graf, reporter for Lee Enterprises; Julie Balsam, BPE; Cheryl Tusken, Frontier Institute.

Item 1 Approve Consent Agenda – 7:23

*Member Franklin moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.
Motion seconded by Chair Schreiber.*

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Approve Agenda – 8:20

*Member Wright moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.
Motion seconded by Member Hufstetler.*

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 2 Chairperson Welcome Statement – 9:13

Chair Schreiber reviewed work completed by the Commission since October and reviewed presentations given at previous meetings.

Item 3 Committee Reports – 11:52

Fundraising Special Committee: Cathy Kincheloe

Member Kincheloe reviewed the work of the Fundraising Special Committee since the January meeting and announced that a \$25,000 donation has been received. The Fundraising Committee estimates that an additional ten to twenty thousand dollars may be needed.

Rulemaking Special Committee: Jon Rutt

Member Rutt reviewed the work of the Rulemaking Special Committee since the January meeting to determine what rules may be necessary to be created pertaining to the Commission.

Chair Schreiber reminded members that the next meeting will be held in Missoula on April 24-26 and will be an “Advance”, with no action taking place.

Members discussed donations, the intake process, and if the list of donors is public information.

Item 4 Discussion: Jim Goenner, National Charter School Institute; Beginning with the End in Mind Assumptions and Timelines for School and Authorizer Applications; Goals and Expectations for April’s Advance – 22:11

Dr. Jim Goenner reviewed the January meeting presentation covering the Legislative intent to create choice schools in Montana, the Commission as the Authorizer of Choice Schools, and the dates and timeframes in statute. Dr. Goenner discussed the upcoming Advance scheduled for April, work that the Commission will undertake during the Advance, and asked members for topics and discussions for the meeting. Members brainstormed ideas including opportunities for discussion and learning, ensuring that the public has accurate information and to have the information on the public record, building personal relationships, working together as a team, building guiding values and strategic anchors, types of schools for which applications may be submitted, discussing what members are hearing from their communities regarding charter schools and clarifying the difference between the two charter laws, and how best to spread information on the purpose of the Commission and potential schools. Other topics considered for April included an update on the lawsuit, updates from stakeholders who are considering creating Boards and potential choice schools, and creating definitions. The Commission discussed a potential timeframe for when schools could open and when school enrollment must be reported for funding before discussing potential speakers for the April Advance, and the possibility of discussing potential model policies for schools.

Item 5 Discussion: Ben Lindquist, Arcadia Education; Making Pluralism Work in Practice – 1:28:43

Mr. Ben Lindquist thanked the Chair and the Commission for the invitation to present at the meeting and reviewed his previous presentation discussing the school choice ecosystem and the different types of schools existing in those ecosystems. Mr. Lindquist reviewed educational pluralism and how it can exist in the ecosystem by using the state of Colorado as an example of a pluralistic education system. Mr. Lindquist reviewed the public education system in Colorado and laws enacted over the course of the last two decades that have helped move Colorado towards a pluralistic education system. Mr. Lindquist compared how the education system is set up and exists in Montana, which, he suggested, is not yet a pluralistic education system, and the steps the state can take to change the current system moving forward. Mr. Lindquist answered member questions.

Public Comment – 2:34:25

Ms. Cheryl Tusken, Frontier Institute, gave public comment on Mr. Lindquist’s presentation and discussed work she does with the Frontier Institute.

Mr. Chip Lindenlaub thanked the presenters and the Commission for their work.

Chair Schreiber thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting and to the BPE staff for their assistance with the meeting.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:35PM.