



MONTANA
COMMUNITY
CHOICE SCHOOLS

Commission's School Closure Guidebook

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Closure Protocol Commission's Tasks

Commission Closure Responsibilities						
Timeframe from Closure Determination	Due Date	Task	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible	Status	CHECK WHEN DONE
Within 24 hours of scheduling hearing		Notice to Staff & Parents	Customize letter template & distribute to school staff & parents	Commission Director		
Within 24 hours		Closure FAQs	Customize the School Closure FAQs template	Commission Director		
Within 24 hours		Initial Closure Notification Letter: Staff & Parents	Customize letter template for immediate distribution to school staff & parents.	Commission Director		
Within 24 hours		Talking Points	Customize template & distribute with Closure Letter	Commission Director		
Within 24 hours		Initial Closure Notification Letter: State & Local Agencies	Customize letter templates & distribute to OPI & BPE	Commission Director		
Within 24 hours		Press Release	Customize template & distribute	Commission Director		
Within 24 hours		Initial Closure Notification Letter: Local and Resident School District	Customize letter & distribute	Commission Director		

Within 48 hours		Schedule Meeting with School Leaders & Governing Board Chair	Review the School Closure Protocol and establish a plan specific to the school including identifying a Transition Team dedicated to ensuring the smooth transition of students, staff and close down of the school's business populated by authorizer staff in conjunction with board members and staff of the closing charter school. Team to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead person from Authorizer Staff; • Charter School Board chair; • Lead Administrator from the Charter School; • Lead Finance person from the Charter School; • Lead person from the Charter School Faculty; and, • Lead person from the Charter School Parent Organization. 	Commission Director, School Leadership, & Governing Board Chair		
Within 48 hours		Weekly Check-ins	Establish a system for weekly updates with school leadership on the progress on the Closure Plan.	Commission Director, School Leadership, & Governing Board Chair		
Within 72 hours		Determine the Need to Hire a Closure Conservator	A consultant on the ground to oversee all of the operational and financial requirements (especially the handling of student records and assets on behalf of the school).	Commission Director		
Within 10 business days		Notifications	The school must satisfy statutory and regulatory obligations to ensure a smooth transition for students. Check requirements under state statute and regulation. Notifications may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school finance; • grants management; • federal programs office; • staff retirement system; • local school district superintendent(s); • state auditor/county treasurer/budget office (depending on revenue flow); • assessment and testing; • data reporting (student information); • child nutrition; and • transportation 	Commission Director & School Leadership		



Closure Protocol School Tasks

Forming a Closure Transition Team						
Timeframe from Closure Determination	Due Date	Task	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible	Status	CHECK WHEN DONE
Within 48 hours		Closure Planning Meeting	<p>Review the School Closure Protocol and establish a plan specific to the school including identifying a Transition Team dedicated to ensuring the smooth transition of students, staff and close down of the school's business populated by authorizer staff in conjunction with board members and staff of the closing charter school.</p> <p>Team to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead person from Commission Staff; • Choice School Board chair; • Lead Administrator from the Choice School; • Lead Finance person from the Choice School; • Lead person from the Choice School Faculty; and, • Lead person from the Choice School Parent Organization (if applicable). 	Commission Director, School Leadership, & Governing Board Chair		
Within 48 hours		Establish Communication Schedule with Commission Director	Set weekly status update meetings between Transition Team Leader and Commission Director			
Within 48 hours		Assign Transition Team Action Item Responsibilities	Distribute contact information to all transition team members, set calendar for meetings and assign dates for completion of each charter school closure action item.	Transition Team Leader		

Communications Tasks						
Timeframe from Closure Determination	Due Date	Task	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible	Status	CHECK WHEN DONE
Until the end of the scheduled school year		Continue Current Instruction	Continue instruction under current education program per charter contract until the end of the school calendar year.	School Leader		
Within 24 hours		Convene a Staff Closure Process Meeting	Gather staff for a face-to-face meeting to address any questions & concerns Board Chair to communicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commitment to continuing coherent school operations throughout closure transition; • plan to assist students and staff by making closing as smooth as possible; • reasons for closure; • timeline for transition details; • compensation and benefits timeline; and • contact information for ongoing questions. Provide the authorizer copies of all materials distributed	School Leadership, Governing Board Chair & Commission Director		
Within 72 hours		Convene Parent Closure Process Meeting	Plan and convene a parent closure meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make copies of “Closure FAQ” document available; • Provide overview of authorizer board closure policy and closure decision; • Provide calendar of important dates for parents; • Provide specific remaining school vacation days and date for end of classes; • Present timeline for transitioning students; • Present timeline for closing down of school operations; 	School Leader, Governing Board Chair & Commission Director		
Within 10 days		Staff Closure Transition Letter	Outline transition plans and timelines for staff, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commitment of school’s board to transitioning staff; • commitment to positive transition of children into new educational settings; • any transition to new employment assistance board anticipates providing (such as job fairs); • timelines for compensation and benefits; • timelines for outstanding professional development issues; • COBRA information; • pertinent licensure information; • faculty lead contact information; and • transition team member contact information. Provide the Commission with a copy of the letter and any accompanying materials.			

Within 10 days		Parent Closure Transition Letter	Distribute letter with detailed guidance regarding transition plan. Notification should include, but not be limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • date of the last day of regular instruction; • cancellation of any planned summer school; • notification of mandatory enrollment under state law; • date(s) of any planned school choice fair(s); • listing of the contact and enrollment information for charter, parochial, public and private schools in the area; • information on obtaining student records pursuant to the state Freedom of Information Law before the end of classes; • contact information for parent/guardian assistance/questions. Provide the authorizer with a copy of the letter.			
Within 10 days		Notifications	The school must satisfy statutory and regulatory obligations to ensure a smooth transition for students. Check requirements under state statute and regulation. Notifications may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school finance; • grants management; • federal programs office; • staff retirement system; • local school district superintendent(s); • state auditor/county treasurer/budget office (depending on revenue flow); • assessment and testing; • data reporting (student information); • child nutrition; and • transportation 	Commission Director & School Leadership		

Operations Tasks						
Timeframe from Closure Determination	Due Date	Task	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible	Status	CHECK WHEN DONE
Within 48 hours		Secure Student Records	Ensure all student records are organized, up to date and maintained in a secure location.			
Within 48 hours		Parent Contact Information	Create Parent Contact List to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student name; • address; • telephone; and • email, if possible. Provide a copy of the parent contact information to the Commission.			

Within 48 hours		Faculty Contact Information	<p>Create Faculty Contact List that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • name; • position; • address; • telephone; and • email. <p>Provide a copy of the list to the authorizer.</p>			
On-going until closure complete		Maintenance of Location and Communication	<p>Establish if the school will maintain the current facility as its locus of operation for the duration of closing out the school's business, regulatory and legal obligations. In the event the facility is sold or otherwise vacated before concluding the school's affairs, the school must relocate its business records and remaining assets to a location where a responsive and knowledgeable party is available to assist with closure operations. The school must maintain operational telephone service with voice message capability and maintain custody of business records until all business and transactions are completed and legal obligations are satisfied. The school must immediately inform the Commission if any change in location or contact information occurs.</p>			
Within 15 days		Notification of Management Company/Organization and Termination of Contract	<p>The school must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notify management company/organization of termination of education program by the school's board, providing the last day of classes and absence of summer programs; • provide notice of non-renewal in accordance with management contract; • request final invoice and accounting to include accounting of retained school funds and grant fund status; and • provide notice that the management company/organization should remove any property lent to the school after the end of classes and request a receipt of such property. <p>Provide a copy of this notification to the commission.</p>			
One week from end of classes		Final Report Cards and Student Records Notice	<p>The school must ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all student records and report cards are complete and up to date; • parents/guardians are provided with copies of final report cards and notice of where student records will be sent (with specific contact information); and • parents/ guardians receive a reminder letter or post card reminding them of the opportunity to access student records under Freedom of Information law. <p>Provide the authorizer with a copy of the notice.</p>			
One month from end of classes		Transfer of Student Records	<p>According to state protocol, the school must transfer all student records to students' new schools, a state agency or another entity. Student records to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grades and any evaluation; • all materials associated with Individual Education Plans; • immunization records; and • parent/guardian information. 			

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school must contact the relevant districts of residence for students and notify districts of how (and when) records—including special education records—will be transferred. In addition, the • school must create a master list of all records to be transferred and state their destination(s). 			
Within 1 month of end of classes		Documenting Transfer of Records	<p>Written documentation of the transfer of records must accompany the transfer of all student materials. The written verification must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of general education records transferred; • the number of special education records transferred; • the date of transfer; • the signature and printed name of the charter school representative releasing the records; and • the signature and printed name of the district (or other entity) recipient(s) of the records. <p>Provide copies of all materials documenting the transfer of student records to the authorizer.</p>			
Within 1 week of end of classes		Transfer of Testing Materials	<p>The school must determine state requirements regarding disposition of state assessment materials stored at the school and return as required.</p> <p>Provide Commission with a letter outlining transference of testing materials.</p>			

Finance Tasks						
<p>NOTE: 20-11-11(5)(c) In the event a choice school closure for any reason, the nonrestricted distributable assets of the choice school must be distributed first to satisfy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outstanding payroll obligations for employees of the choice school; 2. Creditors of the choice school; 3. Resident school districts of students previously attending the closed choice school on a per-pupil basis; 4. State general fund. <p>If the assets are insufficient to pay all obligations, the prioritization of the distribution of assets may be determined by a court of law.</p>						
Timeframe from Closure Determination	Due Date	Task	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible	Status	CHECK WHEN DONE
Within 48 hours		Secure Financial Records	Ensure all financial records are organized, up to date and maintained in a secure location.			
Within one week		Establish Use of Reserve Funds	If a school is required to maintain closure reserve funds, identify acceptable use of such funds to support the orderly closure of the			

			school.			
On-going until all business related closure is complete		Insurance	<p>The school's assets and any assets in the school that belong to others must be protected against theft, misappropriation and deterioration. The school should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain existing insurance coverage until the disposal of such assets under the school closure action plan; • continue existing insurance for the facility, vehicles and other assets until 1) disposal or transfer of real estate or termination of lease, and 2) disposal, transfer or sale of vehicles and other assets; • negotiate facility insurance with entities that may take possession of school facility (lenders, mortgagors, bond holders, etc.); • continue or obtain appropriate security services; and • plan to move assets to secure storage after closure of the school facility. <p>If applicable under state statute, the school should maintain existing directors and officers liability (D&O) insurance, if any, until final dissolution of the school.</p>			
Within 45 days		Notification of Employees and Benefit Providers	<p>The school should establish an employee termination date and: notify all employees of termination of employment and/or contracts; notify benefit providers of pending termination of all employees; notify employees and providers of termination of all benefit programs; terminate all programs as of the last date of service in accordance with applicable law and regulations (i.e., COBRA), including (if applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health care/health insurance; • life insurance; • dental plans; • eyeglass plans; • cafeteria plans; • 401(k) retirement plans; and • pension plans. <p>Specific rules and regulations may apply to such programs, especially teachers' retirement plans, so legal counsel should be consulted. Provide the Commission copies of all materials.</p>			
Within 15 days		Notification of Contractors Agreement	<p>The school must formulate a list of all contractors with contracts in effect and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notify them regarding school closure and cessation of operations; • instruct contractors to make arrangements to remove any contractor property from the school by a certain date (copying machines, water coolers, other rented property); • retain records of past contracts as proof of full payment; and • maintain telephone, gas, electric, water and insurance (including Directors and Officers liability insurance) long enough to cover the time period required for all necessary closure procedures to be complete. <p>Provide the Commission written notice of such notification.</p>			

Within 1 month		Notification to Creditors	Solicit from each creditor a final accounting of the school's accrued and unpaid debt. Compare the figures provided with the school's calculation of the debt and reconcile. Where possible, negotiate a settlement of debts consummated by a settlement agreement reflecting satisfaction and release of the existing obligations. Provide the Commission a written summary of this activity.			
Within 1 month		Notification to Debtors	Contact all debtors and demand payment. If collection efforts are unsuccessful, consider turning the debt over to a commercial debt collection agency. All records regarding such collection or disputes by debtors regarding amounts owed must be retained. Provide the Commission a written summary of this activity.			
Within 2 months		Disposition of Records	If the school's governing board has a records retention policy, or if records retention is governed by state law, follow the appropriate policy and/or law. In all cases, the governing board shall maintain all corporate records related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loans, bonds, mortgages and other financing; • contracts; • leases; • assets and asset sales; • grants (records relating to federal grants must be kept in accordance with 34 CFR 8042.) • governance (minutes, by-laws, policies); • employees (background checks, personnel files); • accounting/audit, taxes and tax status; • employee benefit programs and benefits; and • any items provided for in the closure action plan. If the school does not have a records retention policy, and no state law governs records retention in charter schools, or if the school's board abdicates responsibility for records, the Commission shall seek to take possession of personnel, non-student and non-personnel records and should consult legal counsel about liabilities.			
Within 1 week of end of classes		U.S. Dept. of Education Filings	File Federal form 269 or 269a if the school was receiving funds directly from the United States Department of Education. See 34 CFR 80.41.			
TBD by IRS		IRS Status	Since the school has 501(c)(3) status, it must take steps to maintain that status including, but not limited to, the following according to state law: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notification to IRS regarding any address change of the School Corporation; and • filing of required tax returns or reports (e.g., IRS form 990 and Schedule A). If the school corporation proceeds to dissolution, notify the IRS of dissolution of the education corporation and its 501(c)(3) status, and provide a copy to the authorizer. 			

Within 1 month		UCC Search	The school should perform a Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) search to determine if there are any perfected security interests and to what assets security interests are attached. Provide a copy of the search to the Commission. See MCA Title 30 Trade and Commerce.			
Within 3 months of end of classes		Audit	The school must establish a date by which to complete a final close out audit by an independent firm or state auditor as determined by statute. Provide a copy of the final audit to the authorizer.			
Within 45 days		Vendors	The school must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create vendor list; and • notify vendors of closure and cancel or non-renew agreements as appropriate. Provide the Commission with a copy of all documents.			
Within 45 days		Inventory	The school must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a fixed asset list segregating state and federal dollars; • note source codes for funds and price for each purchase; and, • establish fair market value, initial and amortized for all fixed assets. Provide the authorizer with a copy of all documents.			
Within 45 days		Disposition of Property	Check with the state department of education regarding proper procedures for the disposition of property purchased with federal funds.			
Within 45 days		Disposition of Inventory	Establish a disposition plan (e.g., auction), and establish a payment process (e.g., cash, checks, credit cards) for any remaining items. Provide the Commission with a copy of all documents.			
Within 60 days		Property Purchased with Charter School Program (CSP) Funds	Establish under state or individual school agreements required disposition of property purchased with CSP funds. Generally, property purchased with CSP funds must first be offered to other charter schools within the same region in which the closing school is located, with requisite board resolutions consistent with the purpose of the CSP. If no schools want the property, an auction must be held to dispose of the CSP assets. The school must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure public notice of the auction is made widely; • price items at fair market value, as determined from inventory and fixed assets policy; and • determine with the state education department how to return funds if any remain. Provide the Commission resolutions and minutes of any transfer of assets with a dollar value of zero (0) to another school.			
Within 45 days		Disposition of Real Property (i.e., Facilities)	Determine state requirements for real property acquired from a public school district to determine right of first offer and other applicable requirements for disposition.			

Plan complete within 45 days & activity on-going until complete		Payment of Funds	The school should work with the authorizer to prioritize payment strategy considering state and local requirements. Using available revenue and any funds from auction proceeds, pay the following entities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retirement systems; • teachers and staff; • employment taxes and federal taxes; • audit preparation; • private creditors; • overpayments from state/district; and • other as identified by Commission. Provide the Commission with a copy of all materials associated with this action.			
Within 45 days from end of classes		Expenditure Reporting	Ensure that Federal Expenditure Reports (FER) and the Annual Performance Report (APR) are completed. Provide the Commission a copy of all materials.			
Within 30 days from end of classes		Itemized Financials	Review, prepare and make available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fiscal year-end financial statements; • cash analysis; • list of compiled bank statements for the year; • list of investments; • list of payables (and determinations of when a check used to pay the liability will clear the bank); • list of all unused checks; • list of petty cash; and • list of bank accounts. Additionally, collect and void all unused checks as well as close accounts once transactions have cleared.			
Within 30 days of end of classes		Payroll Reports	The school must generate a list of all payroll reports including taxes, retirement or adjustments on employee contracts. Provide the Commission with copies of all materials.			
Within 15 days		List of Creditors and Debtors	Formulate list of creditors and debtors and any amounts accrued and unpaid with respect to such creditor or debtor. The list should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contractors to whom the school owes payment; • lenders; • mortgage holders; • bond holders; • equipment suppliers; • secured and unsecured creditors; • persons or organizations who owe the school fees or credits; • lessees or sub-lessees of the school; and • any person or organization holding property of the school. 			



School Closure Frequently Asked Questions for Website

Why Would the Commission Decide to Close a Community Choice School?

The Commission is obligated to follow state statute ([20-11-118](#)) as outlined below. In addition, the Commission is held to their Promise as stewards of the public trust to do what is best for every student including the difficult decision to close a school.

As duly appointed Members of the Montana Community Choice Schools Commission, we embrace our responsibility to serve as stewards of educational opportunity and the public trust. We are committed to helping realize the full promise of our Constitution for every student, in every community.

20-11-118. Charter contract revocation and school closure or charter contract nonrenewal. (1) A charter contract may be subject to nonrenewal or revocation if the authorizer determines that the community choice school:

- (a) committed a material and substantial violation of any of the terms, conditions, standards, or procedures required under this part or the charter contract and from which the choice school was not exempted;
- (b) failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward the performance expectations set forth in the charter contract;
- (c) failed to meet public safety standards; or
- (d) failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.

What are the Procedures for Determining School Closure?

The Commission adheres to two policies for closure. Closure resulting from the Choice School charter renewal process and charter revocation resulting from the Corrective Action Intervention Process and/or a violation of any provisions of the Community Choice Schools Act. Final determination in either policy follows a Revocation Hearing.

1. **Revocation Hearing:** The Commission will provide the charter contract holders an opportunity to submit documents and testimony at a hearing to challenge the rationale for the revocation recommendation and in support of the continuation of the school. The charter contract holders may be represented by counsel and call witnesses on their behalf. Recording of the proceedings is permitted as are all open meeting laws. The Director and Choice School governing board will arrange the date of the hearing within 5 business days of the Commission's decision to open a hearing.
2. **Final Determination:** The commission will deliberate and take action as the final step in the hearing. The hearing will abide by Montana's (MCA) open meeting laws.

How do I Learn Specifics as to My Child's School Closure?

Within 24 hours of the determination to close a school, the Commission Director and school leaders will meet to outline a plan to ensure a responsible closure. You will be invited to a parent meeting to be held within 3 days of the closure decision to hear details of the plan including resources for transitioning your child into a new school for the next school year.



[DATE]

Dear [FIRST NAME],

The Commission wants to thank you for your hard work and professionalism this year on behalf of the children at [CHARTER SCHOOL NAME]. As you know, the Community Choice Schools Commission recently voted to deny the school's application for charter renewal OR revoke the school's charter. As such, the school will continue to serve students through [DATE].

The decision to close a school is never easy, and always a last resort. The [CHARTER SCHOOL NAME] board is fully committed to seeing this school year through successfully. In partnership with school leadership [and MANAGEMENT COMPANY, IF APPLICABLE], the Commission is committed to helping the staff complete the remainder of the school year successfully.

The Commission Director, [NAME], will be meeting with your board and school leader to outline a plan for closure ensuing clear communication to you, your colleagues, and parents. A Closure Transition Team will be established to ensure a smooth transition for everyone allowing you to focus on your students and finding your next career opportunity. Within the next two weeks, you will receive specific details as to wrapping up the school year including compensation and benefits information.

Understanding your need to seek out new employment opportunities for the next school year, please provide your school leadership advance notice for time off needed for job interviews in order to make arrangements to accommodate your schedule to the best of their ability.

Your Closure Transition Team will be in contact about a meeting to discuss all aspects of the closure process. While the day-to-day operations of the school won't change between now and the end of the school year, you will receive communication containing important dates and information related to the winding down of operations following the last day of classes on [DATE].

Please also be aware that the Commission's primary concern is the wellbeing of the school community. The Transition Team will be hosting a series of parent meetings to assist students and parents with the transition to their new school next year. The first meeting will be held within the next few days. We strongly encourage you to attend to show your support for the students and the community.

The Commission thanks you for your commitment and dedication to your students. Plans are in place to ensure a smooth transition allowing you to make the most of the time you have together with your school community staying focused on preparing your students for academic success after this year.

Sincerely,

[AUTHORIZING STAFF NAME]

Community Choice Schools Commission



[DATE]

Dear [SCHOOL NAME PARENTS AND GUARDIANS],

Behind every charter school is an authorizer. Authorizers ensure charter school leaders have the freedom and flexibility needed to innovate and meet student needs, while also ensuring the school is succeeding and open to all. As the authorizer of [SCHOOL NAME], The Community Choice School Commission writes to you with a heavy heart to inform you of our decision to close the school, whose last day of operation will be [DATE].

The closure of a school is not an easy decision and always a last resort, the process was extensive and thoughtful following MCA 20-11-118 and the Community Choice Schools Renewal and Revocation Policy. Our decision was made final after a thorough evaluation of evidence that demonstrated [ISSUE, e.g., poor financial health and concerning academic results].

The Commission's primary concern is making sure every child has a smooth transition to their new school. You and your family are encouraged to attend one of several parent information meetings to assist your student(s) with the transition to their new school next year. Enrollment information and materials will be made available.

The first parent information meetings will be held [DATE, TIME, LOCATION].

The Commission Director, [NAME], will be meeting with your board and school leader to outline a plan for closure ensuing clear communication to you through all steps in the process. A Closure Transition Team will be established to ensure a smooth transition for everyone allowing your child's teacher to continue to prepare all students for academic success after this year. While the day-to-day operations of the school won't change between now and the end of the school year, you will receive communication containing important dates and information related to the winding down of operations following the last day of classes on [DATE].

The Community Choice Schools Commission is committed to seeing this school year through successfully. In partnership with the school leaders [and the MANAGEMENT COMPANY NAME, IF APPLICABLE], we are also committed to helping the teaching staff successfully complete the remainder of the school year.

A transition plan is in place allowing you, your child, and the whole school community to make the most of the time you have together and focus on ensuring students are prepared for academic success after this year.

Sincerely,

[AUTHORIZER STAFF NAME]

Community Choice Schools Commission



[DATE]

Dear Board of Public Education Chair [NAME],

I am writing to inform you that on [DATE], the Community Choice Schools Commission voted to close [SCHOOL NAME], effective at the end of the school year. The decision was made final after a thorough evaluation of evidence that demonstrated [ISSUE, e.g., poor financial health and concerning academic results]. The closure of a school is not an easy decision and always a last resort. The Commission followed MCA 20-11-118 and the Commission Revocation and Non-Renewal Policy to ensure the decision was made extensively and thoughtfully.

Please find attached a copy of the Notice of Revocation OR Non-Renewal, copies of the letters to notify parents and staff, and a copy of the School Closure Protocol Template. Per the Commission's closure protocol, we will be working with school leadership to ensure a smooth and transparent closure process for all. A School Closure Transition Team will be in place to work through the School Closure Protocol including handling all financial assets, student records, and ensuring both students and staff transition into new schools for the next school year.

We appreciate your support of a smooth closure and transition for the [SCHOOL NAME] community.

[AUTHORIZER STAFF NAME]

Community Choice Schools Commission

[AUTHORIZER STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION]



[DATE]

Dear Superintendent [NAME],

I am writing to inform you that on [DATE], the Community Choice Schools Commission voted to close [SCHOOL NAME], effective at the end of the school year. The decision was made final after a thorough evaluation of evidence that demonstrated [ISSUE, e.g., poor financial health and concerning academic results]. The closure of a school is not an easy decision and always a last resort. The Commission followed MCA 20-11-118 and the Commission Revocation and Non-Renewal Policy to ensure the decision was made extensively and thoughtfully.

The school will remain in regular operation until the end of the school year. Please continue with normal payments to the school through [DATE].

The Commission has established a closure protocol, we will be working with school leadership to ensure a smooth and transparent closure process for all. A School Closure Transition Team will be in place to work through the School Closure Protocol including handling all financial assets, student records, and ensuring both students and staff transition into new schools for the next school year.

We appreciate your support of a smooth closure and transition for the [SCHOOL NAME] community.

[AUTHORIZER STAFF NAME]

Community Choice Schools Commission

[AUTHORIZER STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION]



MONTANA
COMMUNITY
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[DATE]

Dear Superintendent [NAME],

I am writing on behalf of the Community Choice Schools Commission to notify you that the Commission has made a determination to close [SCHOOL NAME] effective at the end of the school year. The closure of a school is not an easy decision and always a last resort, the Commission followed policy to ensure the decision was made extensively and thoughtfully. Our decision was made final after a thorough evaluation of evidence that demonstrated [ISSUE, e.g., poor financial health and concerning academic results] over multiple years.

Per the Commission's closure protocol, we will be working with school leadership to ensure a smooth and transparent closure process for all. A School Closure Transition Team will be in place within a couple days to work through the School Closure Protocol including handling all student records, and ensuring both students and staff transition into new schools for the next school year. The school will remain under regular operations through [DATE].

Our goal is to ensure families and staff are properly supported with clear and timely communication as to their options for next school year which may include families enrolling their children in your schools. A member of the School Closure Transition Team will be reaching out to you shortly to discuss student enrollment and records transfer for the next school year, and possible proration of funds on a per-pupil basis.

We are grateful for your cooperation in support of a smooth transition for the [SCHOOL NAME] community.

[AUTHORIZER STAFF NAME]

Community Choice Schools Commission

[AUTHORIZER STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION]

For Immediate Release: [RELEASE DATE]

Contact: [NAME OF INFORMATION OFFICER OR MEDIA CONTACT, (XXX) XXX-XXXX]

Community Choice School Commission Votes to [REVOKE, CLOSE, ETC.] Charter of [CHARTER SCHOOL NAME].
Decision means school to close at the end of this school year on [DATE]

[CITY, STATE]—During the Community Choice Schools Commission [DATE] meeting, the Board denied the request made by [CHARTER SCHOOL NAME] to continue in operation after the close of the [XXXX-XX] school year. This decision means that the [CHARTER SCHOOL NAME] will close on [DATE] at the end of the current school year. The Community Choice Schools Commission will start working with the school leadership to ensure all students have a smooth transition to a new high-quality school.

The decision to close a school is never easy and always a last resort, the process was extensive, thoughtful, and made final after a thorough evaluation of evidence that demonstrated [CONCERNS, e.g., poor financial health and concerning academic results] over multiple years. Specifically, the Community Choice Schools Commission was unable to find the school had demonstrated the evidence of success necessary to earn renewal under the Commission’s Renewal Policy. The final decision of the Commission, the Commission’s policies, and other pertinent information are available online at www.bpe.gov under the Community Choice Schools tab.

Prior to the Board’s vote to deny the school’s renewal application, [CHARTER SCHOOL NAME] was afforded an opportunity on [DATE] to speak on their behalf. The Commission considered the appeal offered by the school. In addition members of the public including parents, governing board members, and staff representing the school were given the opportunity to speak directly to the Commission

[SCHOOL NAME], a Community Choice public charter school serving grades [XX to XX], is located in [CITY, STATE]. The school was founded in [YEAR]. The school states its mission is “[INSERT SCHOOL’S MISSION]. As of [MONTH YEAR], [SCHOOL] has a current enrollment of approximately [XX] students.

“Today’s difficult decision was made first and foremost with the interests of students, families, and taxpayers in mind,” said [AUTHORIZING SPOKESPERSON, TITLE]. “While we never set out to close a school when we grant a charter, we know we must act as stewards of the public trust making difficult decisions when we see [REASON FOR CLOSURE, e.g., severe deficiencies in academic performance and fiscal health]. We honor the dedication of the school’s board, leadership, and staff over the years and wish them the best.

“Our attention will now turn to ensuring each child has a smooth transition to their next school and to minimize disruption to families and the community,” [SPOKESPERSON] concluded.

Over the coming weeks, The Community Choice Schools Commission, [CHARTER SCHOOL], and community partners will be working closely together to provide the following supports to the students and parents of the school:

- An information meeting for [CHARTER SCHOOL NAME] parents on [DATE].

Charter schools are independently run public schools that are granted greater flexibility to meet children’s needs in return for greater accountability for meeting their promises to families and taxpayers. Each school is accountable to an authorizer, such as the Community Choice School Commission that decides who can start a new charter school, sets academic and operational expectations, oversees school performance, and decides whether a charter should remain open or close at the end of its contract. All charter schools must continually apply for and demonstrate that they have earned the right to continue the privilege of educating the children of this state.

This school year, the Community Choice Schools Commission oversees [XX] public charter schools serving more than [X,XXX] students across the state. [XX] new charter schools from the [DATE] application cycle are scheduled to open in fall [YEAR].