



**Community Choice Schools Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

September 9, 2025

Zoom Webinar

**Call to Order** – (Recording Time Stamp) 00:00:15

Chair Schreiber called the meeting to order at 8:13:42 a.m. The Chair led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance, Cathy Kincheloe took Roll Call, and the Chair read the Statement of Public Participation and welcomed guests.

Commission members present: Trish Schreiber, Chair; Jon Rutt, Treasurer; Katy Franklin; Chip Lindenlaub; Taylor Ramos; Commission Director of Planning, Cathy Kincheloe; Board of Public Education (Board) staff present: McCall Flynn, Executive Director, and Kris Stockton, Administrative Specialist.

Presenters: Alyson Murphy and Stephanie McKean, National Charter School Institute; Gina Post, Jay Whalen, and Elisa Westapher, National Association of Charter School Authorizers.

Guests: Mark Casazza, Lea Ann Munkres.

**Public Comment** – 00:03:11

Mark Casazza provided updates on the development of the Great Adventure Academy program. Board of Public Education Executive Director Flynn introduced the new Program Manager for the Public Charter Schools, Lea Ann Munkres.

**Item 1**      **Approve Consent Agenda** – 00:04:54

***Member Franklin moved to approve the Consent Agenda containing the June 17, 2025 Minutes. Motion seconded by Member Rutt.***

***No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.***

**Approve Agenda** – 00:05:57

***Member Rutt moved to adopt the agenda for September 9, 2025. Motion seconded by Member Lindenlaub.***

***No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.***

**Item 2**      **Chairperson Welcome Statement** - 00:06:50

Chair Schreiber opened the meeting thanking Members and Guests for their participation in the meeting then proceeded with an overview of the day's training presentations pertaining to the Commission's role to responsibly authorize Community Choice Schools. Chair Schreiber encouraged Members and the public wanting more training to view past meetings which are all posted on the Board of Public

Education's website. It was noted that this meeting commemorates two years of the Commission's existence.

**Item 3                      New Member Introductions - 00:08:33**

Chair Schreiber first thanked inaugural Commission Member Dee Brown for her service to the Commission and improving opportunities for public education in Montana. The chair welcomed Chip Lindenlaub as a Member, appointed by the President of the Senate for a three-year term. Member Lindenlaub thanked Senate President Regier and elaborated his support for education and his role in bringing chartering to Montana. The chair welcomed Taylor Ramos, appointed by the Governor, to fill the seat vacated by former Member Cathy Kincheloe for the remainder of the term through August 2027. Member Ramos shared her desire to bring more quality education options to the young people of Montana.

**Item 4                      Reports – 00:14:26**

**Member Rutt presented the Treasurer Report** and noted the balance to date which includes the revenue expenditure by fund, noting the existence of a General Fund as distinguished from the Grant Fund used to promote the work of the Commission as outlined in the grant agreement.

**Chair Schreiber gave the Fundraising Subcommittee Report** detailing the application for another round of grant funding to extend the Director of Planning position through 2026 with three purposes: to develop a Year Zero Program; to provide operational support for the Commission; and to promote public relations in regard to the Community Choice Schools Act. A response to the grant application is expected in late November. The Fundraising Committee is also working on a plan to bring in donations from private individuals and to register as an entity with the US Government, in anticipation of applying for public Charter School Program grant funds in the future.

**In the Chairperson Report, Chair Schreiber** announced the inclusion of the new Members in subcommittees, these appointments will last until the December meeting when the bylaws call for reevaluating the need for subcommittees. The December meeting will be held in Helena beginning in the early afternoon. Chair Schreiber detailed the development of an evaluation process for the Director of Planning. As called for in the contract with the National Charter Schools Institute, Chair Schreiber is receiving coaching to ensure leadership of a healthy and productive Commission.

**The Policy Making Committee Report was delivered by Member Rutt**, highlighting past meetings in which the Committee has been refining internal policies for discussion with the entire Commission.

**Member Franklin reported on the progress of the Special Education Consideration Subcommittee** by first noting the purpose of the subcommittee to serve students with special needs and ensure compliance with federal laws. The subcommittee is currently exploring resources for potential Choice Schools to build out their Special Education programs ensuring best practice and compliance with all applicable federal law.

**In the Director of Planning Report by Cathy Kincheloe**, Members were updated on progress building out the New School Application Policy and supporting procedures. Under direction of the State Procurement department, a Request for Proposal is underway for consulting services to identify a portfolio of recommended assessments Choice Schools may use as a performance indicator. Administratively, plans are underway to find a new lawyer to review policy to ensure full legal compliance. Updates were provided on professional development opportunities from national charter support organizations, the work of the State Interim Funding Commission as it pertains to Choice Schools, and contact with potential school founders.

**Break – 00:38:24**

**Item 5                    Presentation with Question and Answer: Epicenter Training with Alyson Murphy and Stephanie McKean, NCSI – 00:48:32**

Alyson Murphy and Stephanie McKean with the National Charter Schools Institute, trained the Commission on the essential functions of the Epicenter application and oversight platform.

**Item 6                    Break - 01:43:39**

**Item 7                    Presentation with Question and Answer: National Association of Public Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) Introduction – 01:57:37**

Gina Post, Director of Fundraising and Business Development, Elisa Westapher, Chief Development and Business Officer, and Jay Whalen, Director Authorizing and School Quality with NACSA presented an overview of NACSA services and recommendations for the new school application cycle.

**Break – 02:59:53**

**Item 8                    Discussion and Business: – 03:10:40**

1) NACSA Membership:

***Chair Schreiber made a motion for the Commission to purchase a NACSA membership. Motion seconded by Member Ramos.***

***Chair Schreiber opened discussion. Member Lindenlaub asked what the membership costs. Director of Planning Kincheloe confirmed the cost is \$500 for one year.***

***Chair Schreiber opened public comment. None stated.***

***Motion passed unanimously.***

2) Robert's Rules of Order Made Easy Training:

***Member Rutt made a motion for the Commission to purchase a license for Robert's Rules of Order Made Easy. Motion seconded by Member Lindenlaub.***

***Chair Schreiber opened discussion. Member Rutt asked why it is no longer free to the Commission. Chair Schreiber clarified it was only available to appointees made by the Governor. Member Rutt asked what it costs. Director of Planning Kincheloe confirmed the cost is \$497 for up to 10 Members. Chair Schreiber elaborated on future need for the training.***

***Chair Schreiber opened public comment. None stated.***

***Motion passed unanimously.***

3) Legal Services:

***Member Lindenlaub made a motion for the Commission to open discussion to authorize a contract for legal services. Motion seconded by Member Rutt.***

***Chair Schreiber opened discussion. Chair Schreiber elaborated as to the need for legal services. Chair Schreiber then asked Executive Director Flynn for clarification on the motion. Executive Director Flynn explained the process and offered suggestions for re-wording of the motion.***

***Chair Scheiber moved to amend the motion to, "Should the Commission allow Cathy & McCall to execute a contract with a lawyer for the Commission?" Motion seconded by Member Lindenlaub.***

***Amendment to the motion passed unanimously.***

***Chair Schreiber restated the amended motion.***

***Chair Schreiber opened discussion and requested public comment. None stated.***

***Amended motion passed unanimously.***

**4) Conflict of Interest Policy:**

***Member Lindenlaub made a motion for the Commission to approve the Conflict of Interest Policy as published in the agenda packet. Motion seconded by Chair Schreiber.***

***Chair Schreiber opened discussion. Chair Schreiber asked Director of Planning Kincheloe to provide any pertinent detail. Director of Planning Kincheloe provided updates made since the previous version reviewed by the Commission. Chair Schrieber provided further comment as to Members following the highest standards of conduct.***

***Chair Schreiber opened discussion and requested public comment. None stated.***

***Motion passed unanimously.***

**5) Background Check Policy:**

***Chair Schreiber made a motion for the Commission to accept the Background Check Policy as presented in the agenda packet. Motion seconded by Member Ramos.***

***Chair Schreiber opened discussion. Member Lindenlaub referenced the paragraph regarding convictions, asking if it would be appropriate to publish with the new application. Chair Schreiber deferred to Director of Planning Kincheloe to provide any pertinent detail. Director of Planning Kincheloe stated it would be included in the new application packet. Chair Schreiber elaborated the Background Check process occurs before applications are due. Director of Planning Kincheloe provided information as to the status of the Commission's application with the Department of Justice to be a provider of background checks as well as the training process prior to conducting checks.***

***Chair Schreiber requested public comment. None stated.***

***Motion passed unanimously.***

**6) Member Handbook:**

Chair Schreiber asked Director of Planning Kincheloe to lead the discussion on the components of the Member Handbook. Chair Schreiber asked the new Members for feedback. Member Lindenlaub asked if the Open Meeting Law calling for meetings to be held in the impacted communities requires the Commission to travel for the meetings. Executive Director Flynn clarified, stating that Zoom participation complies with Open Meeting Law 2-3-111(2). The Member Handbook will be posted on the Commission's website once finalized.

**Public Comment – 03:42:59**

No public comment provided.

Chair Schreiber thanked Members for their participation in the meeting. She also thanked Executive Director Flynn and the staff of the BPE for their continued support. Special thanks were given to Kris Stockton for her participation in the Request for Proposals process. Chair Schreiber offered a final appreciation to Members for their service to the State and commitment to improving public school options in Montana.

**Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at - 03:44:33