



**MONTANA  
COMMUNITY  
CHOICE SCHOOLS**

## Montana Community Choice Schools Commission Advance

October 10th, 2025 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

October 11th, 2025 8:30 a.m. to Noon

### Agenda Packet Contents:

1. Proposed Advance Agenda for 10.10 - 10.11.25
2. Commission Core Values Draft
3. Director of Planning Job Description
4. New School Application Policy



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Community Choice Schools Commission Fall Advance  
October 10<sup>th</sup> through October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Reeder's Alley Conference Center  
101 Reeder's Alley Helena, MT 59601

	Estimated Time	Details
<b>Call to Order</b>	10:00 a.m.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pledge of Allegiance</li> <li>2. Roll Call</li> <li>3. Statement of Public Participation</li> <li>4. Welcome Visitors: National Charter School Institute, Workshop Facilitators: Dr. Jim Goenner and Mary Bradley</li> </ol>
<b>Note to the Public</b>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Action may be taken on any item listed on the Choice Commission agenda. Per §2-3-103 MCA, <i>the Choice Commission encourages public comment on any item prior to final action.</i></li> <li>2. All times are approximate and may change as reasonably necessary.</li> </ol>
<b>Agenda</b>		<p><b>Theme:</b> Guardians of Opportunity. Stewards of the Public Trust</p> <p><b>Core Objective:</b> Align around a shared set of guiding principles and core values that will shape how we lead, govern, and fulfill our duties under the Montana Constitution and Community Choice Schools Law</p>
Item 1	10:10 a.m.	◇ Action: Agenda Adoption for 10/10-11/25
Item 2	10:15 a.m.	<p><b>Discussion: Strategic Advance—Chair and NCSI</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome &amp; Advanced Organizer (goals and expectations)</li> <li>• Why are we Advancing?</li> <li>• Why does it matter?</li> </ul>
Item 3	10:45 a.m.	<p><b>Engagement Activity: Identifying Our Whys—NCSI</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you say yes to serve on the Commission?</li> <li>• Why does the Commission exist?</li> </ul>
Item 4	11:15 a.m.	<p><b>Discussion: Duties of the Commission and the Commission Members—NCSI &amp; Chair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the Constitution, law and regulations (NCSI)</li> <li>• Oath, duties and responsibilities (Chair)</li> </ul>
<b>Recess</b>	12:00 p.m.	Lunch will be provided for the Commission and Workshop Facilitators
Item 5	1:00 p.m.	<p><b>Work Session: Review Draft Materials of Core Values—NCSI</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision and Purpose</li> <li>• Guiding Principles and Beliefs</li> <li>• Core Values</li> <li>• Commitments</li> </ul>
<b>Recess</b>	2:30 p.m.	Break
Item 6	2:45 p.m.	<p><b>Engagement Activity: Deep Dive—NCSI</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What resonates?</li> <li>• What feels unclear or missing?</li> <li>• What will it take to live these out?</li> </ul>

Item 7	3:45 p.m.	<b>Discussion: The Role of the Director, the Team Leader--NCSI</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples from other states <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Organizational Structure and where Commission fits in</li> <li>○ Expectations</li> <li>○ Duties of Director</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How will Montana do it?</li> <li>• What will it take to put this structure in place?</li> </ul>
<b>Public Comment</b>	4:30 p.m.	This time will be provided for public comment on items not listed on the agenda. This meeting is open to the public. Written public comment may be submitted to the Director of Planning at <a href="mailto:cathy.kincheloe@mt.gov">cathy.kincheloe@mt.gov</a> and will be shared with the Commission members and included as part of the official public record.
<b>Recess</b>	4:35 p.m.	<b>Recess until 8:30 a.m. on 10/11/25</b>
<b>Call to Order</b>	8:30 a.m.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pledge of Allegiance</li> <li>2. Roll Call</li> <li>3. Statement of Public Participation</li> <li>4. Welcome Visitors: National Charter School Institute, Workshop Facilitators: Dr. Jim Goenner and Mary Bradley</li> </ol>
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<b>Agenda Cont'd</b>		
Item 8	8:35 a.m.	<b>Discussion: Developing an Ecosystem for Excellence and Systems Change—NCSI</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating the conditions where excellence can thrive</li> <li>• Being guardians of opportunity and stewards of possibility</li> </ul>
Item 9	9:00 a.m.	<b>Engagement Activity: Flip the Phrases—NCSI</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What system conditions are needed to create an ecosystem where excellence thrives?</li> </ul>
Item 10	9:30 a.m.	<b>Discussion: Ensuring the Commission is Credible, Competent, and Courageous—NCSI</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing what we say we will do</li> <li>• Scenarios: Trust-building vs. Trust-breaking</li> </ul>
<b>Recess</b>	10:00 a.m.	
Item 11	10:15 a.m.	<b>Engagement Activity: Name it—NCSI</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What builds credibility with policymakers?</li> <li>• What builds credibility with boards?</li> <li>• What builds credibility with schools?</li> <li>• What builds credibility with communities?</li> </ul>
Item 12	11:00 a.m.	<b>Discussion: Looking Ahead from Vision to Implementation—Director</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When the Court says GO...</li> <li>• Timelines, Priorities, and Next Steps</li> </ul>
Item 13	11:30 a.m.	<b>Discussion: Closing Thoughts and Reflections—Chair</b>
<b>Public Comment</b>	11:55 a.m.	This time will be provided for public comment on items not listed on the agenda. This meeting is open to the public. Written public comment may be submitted to the Director of Planning at <a href="mailto:cathy.kincheloe@mt.gov">cathy.kincheloe@mt.gov</a> and will be shared with the Commission members and included as part of the official public record.
<b>Adjourn</b>	12:00 p.m.	
<b>Note to the Public</b>		<p>**Agenda items are handled in the order listed on the approved agenda. Items may be rearranged unless listed “time certain.” Public comment is welcome on all items listed as “Action” and as noted at the end of each meeting.</p> <p>**The Choice Commission will make reasonable accommodations for known disabilities that may interfere with an individual’s ability to participate in the meeting. Individuals who require such accommodations should make requests to the Director of Planning as soon as possible prior to the meeting start date. You may email: Cathy Kincheloe <a href="mailto:cathy.kincheloe@mt.gov">cathy.kincheloe@mt.gov</a> or phone at 406-407.0727.</p>



## Commission Core Values

### Our Vision

Develop the full educational potential of each student by fostering a diverse and dynamic public education landscape.

### Our Promise

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

### Our Core Purpose

1. To authorize, oversee, and hold accountable public community choice schools for fulfilling the terms of their contracts.
2. To approve, oversee, and evaluate the effectiveness of public community choice school authorizers.

### Our Guiding Principles & Beliefs

1. **Students First, Always:** Student success is our north star. We want every student to experience the transformative power of a great education.
2. **Stewards of the Public Trust:** We exercise our authority with transparency, discipline, and humility. Credibility is our currency—and we understand that trust must be earned, not assumed. We seek to build enduring trust with families, educators, communities, and policymakers through every decision we make.
3. **Authorizing for Systems Change:** We don't just authorize schools—we advocate for and help foster a more responsive, innovative, and effective public education system.
4. **Excellence is the Expectation:** Students deserve our best. That's why we set a high bar for schools, boards, authorizers, and ourselves.
5. **Community-Centered Innovation:** We listen and elevate local voices and context—especially in rural and tribal communities—in order to create the conditions where excellence can thrive.
6. **Clarity and Courage in Decision-Making:** We lead transparently and act with integrity. We face difficult decisions with moral clarity and constitutional conviction.

### Core Values & Commitments

These are the values and commitments that ground our decisions, shape our behavior, and define how we lead:

**Integrity** — We follow through. We are fair, honest, and grounded in principle.

**Respect** — We listen well. We honor the dignity of students, families, educators, and tribes.

**Courage** — We make bold decisions in the best interests of students, even under pressure.

**Transparency** — We share our rationale, invite public understanding, and welcome accountability.

**Learning** — We grow through reflection, data, feedback, and the wisdom of Montana's people.

**Service** — We act with urgency and humility. We exist to serve the people, not ourselves.

As the Members of the Community Choice Schools Commission, we accept our oath of office and responsibilities with humility, passion, and an unwavering belief in the potential of every Montana student.

SIGNATURES

# STATE OF MONTANA

## JOB DESCRIPTION

*Montana state government is an equal opportunity employer. The State shall, upon request, provide reasonable accommodations to otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities.*

**Job Title:** Temporary Director of Planning for the Community Choice Schools Commission

**Position Number:**

**Location:** Telework Eligible

**Department:** Board of Public Education

### **Job Overview:**

This position is the Temporary Director of Planning for the Community Choice Schools Commission, an autonomous commission under the general supervision of and administratively attached to the Board of Public Education. This position will temporarily manage multiple leadership and administrative functions on behalf of the Commission, executes Commission decisions, ensures consistency and fairness in the Commission's decision-making process, promotes successful implementation of the provisions of Title 20, Chapter 11, MCA, and carries out the Commission's strategic vision as a statewide authorizer of Community Choice Schools and statewide authorizer of other authorizers.

### **Essential Functions (major Duties or Responsibilities):**

- **Administrative Management (30%):**
  - Implement direction and action from the Commission and coordinate with the supervisor at the Board of Public Education.
  - Perform administrative tasks and supervisory duties including oversight and management of the Commission's meetings, projected budget, strategic planning, and software and data storage necessities.
  - Directly confer with the supervisor at the Board of Public Education at least weekly.
  - Prepare with the Commission Treasurer and Chair and coordinate the Commission's annual operating budgets with the supervisor at the Board of Public Education.
  - Ensure maintenance of Commission records as required by law and as requested by the Chair of the Commission.
  - Ensure the Commission's compliance with federal and state requirements, policies, and procedures.
  - Cultivate a strong, transparent relationship with the Board of Public Education and work in coordination with the Board's calendar and annual schedule.
  - Arrange professional development for self and Commission members.
  - Inform and advise the Commission regarding potential applications and various matters related to Choice School authorization.
  - Inform and advise the Commission regarding potential applications and various matters related to the authorization of authorizers.

- o Assist the Commission in contracting with national chartering experts and organizations to assist in building leadership capacity in Montana and implementing the Title 20, Chapter 11, MCA.
- **Program and Policy Development and Management (50%):**
  - o Research, develop, and write internal policies for the Commission, including the preparation of various annual reports of the Commission's work in accordance with Title 20, Chapter 11, MCA.
  - o Research, develop, and write procedural policies for the application, contract, oversight and renewal processes for Choice Schools and Authorizers, ensuring the evaluations of potential Choice School and Authorizer applications adhere to the law and are carried out in accordance with nationally accepted best practices.
  - o Prepare the state for the successful rollout of rigorous, pre-application and application cycles for potential Community Choice Schools and potential Authorizers.
  - o Research, develop, and implement tools, resources, workshops, and support mechanisms to ensure the Commission's potential portfolio of schools will be able to meet the performance measures set out by the Commission.
  - o Prepare a Choice School Accelerator Program for approved applicants to receive guidance in the design and execution of their start-up plan during the pre-operational year.
  - o Remain abreast of national trends, research, and best practices relevant to Choice School and Authorizer authorization.
- **Public Relations (10%)**
  - o Serve as an informational expert for the Choice School sector across the state to key stakeholders, including Commission members, the Board of Public Education, state agencies, the legislature, education associations, and organizations that have a vested interest in the success of Montana's Choice Schools.
  - o Establish support networks and workshops for potential Choice School founders, leadership, faculty, and classified staff to share best practices and resources, promote communication and problem-solving, and provide input for the Commission's strategic direction.
  - o Develop partnerships with local, state, and national charter school organizations, Community Choice School stakeholders, and the public at large.
  - o Promote potential Choice School innovation through a collection of national and statewide partnership building, data collection, and networking with charter management organizations, education management organizations, and potential founding boards across the state.
- **Fundraising (10%):**
  - o Identify resource and grant opportunities.
  - o Write, apply for, and manage grant opportunities.
  - o Actively identify potential donors and manage donor relationships.

## **Supervision**

The number of employees supervised is: 0

**Physical and Environment Demands:**

This position will primarily work remotely, and remote employees may be required to track their work progress through the State of Montana Remote Worker portal. Additionally, travel throughout the state will be an essential requirement of fulfilling the duties of the position, and out of state travel is likely for professional development, fundraising, and partnership building.

**Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:**

This position requires extensive knowledge of management principles, administrative oversight, fundraising practices, and nationally recognized chartering best practices. Knowledge of K-12 education principles and practices also required, including knowledge of nationwide charter school laws and systems. Ability to research and keep up to date with educational and chartering trends required. Excellent written and oral communication skills required. This position must be able to build positive working relationships with educational leaders and legislators to foster understanding of the Community Choice Public Schools sector and with the Commission's decisions and initiatives.

**Minimum Qualifications (Education and Experience):**

Experience working in business administrative and leadership capacity, excellent written and verbal communication skills, including public speaking and ability to compile and summarize complex material, ability to travel for: applicant workshops, applicant interviews, Commission meetings, and professional development purposes, strong working knowledge of Montana's Choice Schools law and federal education law, and familiarity with and willingness to learn state education law are required.



## Application Review and Approval Process Policy for Initial Community Choice Schools Applications

### May (prior to Application Deadline)

1. Application Launch Date Announced: The Community Choice Schools Application Deadline will be issued and posted by June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year on the [Board of Public Education's \(Board\) website](#) under the Community Choice Schools tab. The application will be broadly publicized statewide. All information related to the Application Process can be found on [bpe.mt.gov](#) under the Community Choice Schools tab.

### June-December (prior to Application Deadline)

2. On-going General Information Sessions: Potential Applicants will have an opportunity to engage in orientation sessions pertaining to the upcoming Application Cycle. Logistics about General Information Sessions will be posted on [bpe.mt.gov](#) under the Community Choice Schools tab.
3. Notice of Intent: Applicants are highly encouraged to send the Community Choice Schools Commission (Commission) a Notice of Intent to apply for a new Community Choice School.
4. Application Platform Access: Applicants may begin submitting requests to access the application platform in which they will be able to begin drafting their Application before final submission.
5. Pitch Meetings: Applicants are highly encouraged to sign up for a 30-minute Zoom meeting with the Commission's Application Review Subcommittee to present a pitch of their school model and ask clarifying technical questions.

### January

6. Applications Due: Applications can be submitted to the Commission on (XX/XX/XX) until 5:00 p.m., Mountain Time. All Applications must be submitted electronically via the Application Platform.
7. Receipt of Application: The Commission will notify each Applicant by email within 24 hours of receipt of the Application and provide an outline of the application review timeframe.
8. Public Posting: Each complete Application and Executive Summary will be published on [bpe.mt.gov](#) under the Choice Schools tab, allowing the public to read each Application before the Commission takes official action in April.
9. Interview Scheduling: The Commission's Application Review Subcommittee will schedule interviews, in-person or by webinar, with each applicant team, including but not limited to: Governing Board, Charter Management Organization, Education Service Provider, proposed school leader, and legal counsel. The interviews will be open to the public.

### February

10. Application Review: The Commission's Application Review Subcommittee will evaluate each Application based on the Community Choice Schools Application Evaluation Criteria, a policy that guides the Commission's decision to approve or deny a Choice School Application.

### March

11. Applicant Interviews: The Commission's Application Review Subcommittee will conduct an interview with each Applicant Team. The interview allows the Commission to seek clarification on content submitted in the Application, and it also is an opportunity to go deeper into the Applicant Team's capacity, connection with community, and ability to problem solve via challenge scenarios. The



interviews are open to the public and will provide local residents, along with all members of the public, the opportunity to provide input on each Applicant Team.

12. Provide Executive Summaries to the Board: Board of Public Education Application Review: Within **45 business days** of (XX/XX/XX—Application Deadline), the Commission will send a condensed packet containing an Executive Summary of each application to the Montana Board of Public Education's Charter Committee for presentation at the Board's regularly scheduled March meeting. The Board Charter Committee will have **15 calendar days** from receipt of the Executive Summary to review the information, share it with the full Board, and provide the Commission with written input e.g., questions or concerns to inform the Commission's final communications with the applicants before the Commission convenes for action. These 45 business days may be extended and adjusted with the Board of Public Education if the Commission receives more than three applications.

#### **April**

13. Director's Summary to Members: The Commission's Director will provide a Director's Summary of each Application and Interview to Commission Members.
14. Application Deliberation: The Commission will convene within **60 business days** of (XX/XX/XX—date of the Application Deadline). This timeframe may extend to 120 business days if more than 3 Applications have been received. Each Application will be deliberated individually in an open meeting. The Board's Charter Subcommittee members, the Chair of the Board, or the Board's Executive Director may join the Commission in formal deliberations about each Application, but only Commission Members may vote.
15. Application Approval: Applicants will be notified via phone and in writing of the approval. Approved Applications will advance to the Contracting stage.
16. Application Denial: Denied Applications will be provided with a written explanation as to why the Application was denied, and Applicants may re-apply in any future Application Cycle.

#### **May**

17. Contracting: Contracts will be signed within 45 business days of approval, provided the Applicant agrees to the terms of the Commission's proposed contract.

*This Application Cycle is for Community Choice Schools opening not before (XX/XX/XX—date).*