

Community Choice Schools Commission
Policymaking Subcommittee

December 5, 2024
Steering Committee Webinar
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Agenda Packet Contents:

1. Agenda
2. Community Choice Schools Commission Rating Rubric for Choice School Applications

Montana Community Choice Schools Commission
Policy Development Subcommittee Steering Committee
Meeting #3 Agenda

December 5, 2024: 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Steering Committee meetings are open to the public electronically on Youtube ([@montanaboardofpubliceducat5954](https://www.youtube.com/@montanaboardofpubliceducat5954)). For those wishing to give public comment, please contact bpe@mt.gov to request the zoom link for the meeting.

	Estimated Time	Details
Item 1	9:00 a.m.	<p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review Purpose: The Steering Committee will provide strategic feedback to support the Commission’s implementation of policies and documents that will enable high-quality Choice Schools and high-quality Authorizers to establish in the state of Montana.
Item 2	9:05 a.m.	<p>Brief Introductions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Around the Zoom screen for quick self-introductions ○ Welcome guests
Item 3	9:20 a.m.	<p>Scope of Work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review and provide feedback on the Application, Contract, Performance Framework, and the Proposal Review and Approval Policy for Choice Schools (Meeting 1). ○ Review and provide feedback on the Application, Contract, and the Proposal Review and Approval Policy for Authorizers (Meeting 2). ○ Review and provide feedback on the Commission’s Rating Rubric for Choice School Applications (Meeting 3).
Item 4	9:25 a.m.	<p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is the document clear, concise, and easy to read? ○ Does any of the information in the document seem redundant or unnecessary? ○ Does the sequence of information within the document make sense? ○ What could be better? ○ Is anything missing? ○ What questions might an Applicant still have about the rating process? ○ Potential pitfalls? <p>Discussions Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Open forum Q & A between the Steering Committee members to share experiences with authorizing, applying for authorization, and making difficult decisions under pressure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please come prepared with questions; no question is stupid! This is new for Montana, and this is an opportunity to help the Commission prepare. ▪ Attending guests are welcome to join the discussion. <p>Reference Community Choice Schools Act: 20-11-101-126, MCA</p>
Item 5	10:45 a.m.	<p><i>This time will be provided for public comment on items not listed on the agenda. For those wishing to give virtual public comment, please contact bpe@mt.gov to request the Zoom link for the meeting. Members of the public who have joined virtually on Zoom may “raise their hand” at the appropriate time to participate after being recognized. Written public comment may be submitted to the Executive Director of the BPE at bpe@mt.gov and will be shared with the Commission members and included as part of the official public record.</i></p>
Adjourn	11:00 a.m.	

Montana Community Choice Schools Commission Application Rubric

Per the Montana Community Choice Schools Commission (Commission)'s new community choice school (school) application process, this rubric will be used to evaluate each received application. Application approval will only be granted to applicants that have demonstrated competence in each element of the published approval criteria and are likely to open and operate a successful Community Choice School. Applicants should also demonstrate an understanding of the Commission's Performance Framework for Oversight and Evaluation.

Within each application section, please check the **Rating** that best describes the extent to which the Applicant met expectations for opening and operating a quality school.

- **Exceeds:** The response demonstrates a strong understanding of key issues and demonstrates capacity to open and operate a quality charter school. It goes above and beyond expectations with supporting evidence.
- **Meets:** The response demonstrates a thorough understanding of key issues and demonstrates capacity to open and operate a quality charter school. It addresses the topic with specific evidence that shows thorough preparation and presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate.
- **Partially Meets:** The response meets some of the criteria but lacks meaningful detail or requires additional information in one or more key areas.
- **Does Not Meet:** The response is significantly incomplete; lacks meaningful detail; demonstrates lack of preparation; and/or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the applicant's understanding of and ability to implement an effective plan, including if the applicant does not respond to the required section.

The Overall Section Rating should be used to provide a holistic evaluation of the section, including overall clarity of the plan presented within the section.

Starting and operating a quality Community Choice School requires elements both tangible and intangible on the part of the Applicant and the proposed plan. *The purpose of this rubric is to aid the evaluators in having a rigorous discussion about the application and providing feedback to the Applicant.* The Commission reserves the right to approve or deny applications, regardless of an Application's raw score.

Rating Scales

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A. Executive Summary

School Name: The proposed school's name is identified.

Rating: Does Not Meet Meets

School Mission: The proposed school's mission and vision are clearly articulated and realistic.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Target Population: The target population of the proposed school is identified. The applicant has provided a clear description of, and rationale for, the target student population.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Community Support: The applicant has provided evidence that there is sufficient need for the proposed school in the identified community. Applicant has provided evidence of community outreach activities that have resulted in support of the proposed school. Evidence can include completed intent to enroll forms, partnerships, business relationships, etc.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Pedagogy: The applicant has clearly and succinctly described the key design elements and approach to instruction and assessment for the proposed school. The pedagogy described supports the stated mission and vision.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Location: The proposed school's location is identified.

Rating: Does Not Meet Meets

Grades Served: The proposed grades served meet the needs of the identified community.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Planned Enrollment: The proposed minimum, planned, and maximum enrollment each year for the term of the charter contract is identified and reflect the proposed community.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Recommendation Narrative:

Overall Section Rating Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

B. Board Governance and School Leadership

Bylaws: The proposed governing bylaws, at minimum, address the board appointment/election process, board member criteria, board size, terms and term limits, board member duties and expectations, board meeting cadence, attendance and quorum requirements, procedures for board meetings and voting, board officers and their roles, board committees, board member removal, and board member succession plans.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Board Members: The board consists of a wide range of experienced members with the capacity to oversee a successful school and a commitment to do so. The applicant describes the nature and extent of parental, professional educator, and community involvement in the governance and operation of the proposed school.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Proposed Administration: The proposed school leader is an experienced school leader of student populations that are similar to those that the proposed community choice school will enroll.

OR

The applicant provides a sound and comprehensive process to recruit a qualified school leader, including criteria and timeline that will be used.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Proposed Administration: The proposed management team is experienced in operating schools (with similar student body makeup), and the applicant demonstrates the effectiveness of the operator in the following areas: academics, operations, and financial oversight.

OR

The applicant provides a sound and comprehensive process to recruit a qualified management team, including criteria to be used and a timeline.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Recommendation Narrative:

Overall Section Rating Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

C. Academic Program and Performance

Academic Program: The applicant identifies an academic program and includes research-based evidence that the program is effective in meeting the needs of the target population and is aligned with stated standards. For unique or innovative practices, the applicant presents a compelling rationale for effectiveness.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Academic Program: The application identifies a standardized assessment to formally measure student achievement and growth and provides rationale for the chosen assessment.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Curriculum and Instruction: The applicant identifies an instructional design and curriculum, and includes research-based evidence that they are effective in meeting the needs of the target population. The classroom size and structure are thoroughly explained. Teaching methods are explained and supported with research-based evidence.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Learning Environment: The applicant clearly defines student behavior expectations and a plan to teach and reinforce the expectations. The applicant includes discipline policies that align with federal requirements. The discipline policies are appropriate for all students and distinguish and support any policy differences for special education students. The applicant's approach to discipline is in alignment with the school's mission and is culturally responsive to the target student population.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Student Assessment: The applicant describes the student assessment plan beyond the annual standardized assessment, provides rationale for assessment plan, and clearly explains how it will evaluate student needs and measure the effectiveness of the academic program.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Students with Special Needs (1): The applicant demonstrates an understanding of legal requirements and has dedicated appropriate resources to implement high-quality services and supports for students with disabilities.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Students with Special Needs (2): The applicant demonstrates an understanding of legal requirements and has dedicated appropriate resources to implement high-quality services for students who are English Language Learners.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Students with Special Needs (3): The applicant demonstrates an understanding of legal requirements and has dedicated appropriate resources to implement high-quality services for gifted students.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

C. Academic Program and Performance (cont'd)

Students with Special Needs (4): The applicant demonstrates an understanding of legal requirements and has dedicated appropriate resources to implement high-quality services for students who are academically challenged and/or performing below grade level.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Professional Development: The applicant provides a detailed professional development plan for the preoperational year and the first year of operation. The plan articulates how it will support staff and ensure the proposed program is implemented with fidelity.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Extracurricular Programs: The applicant describes cocurricular or extracurricular programs, or future plans to implement such programs, including funding and the proposed delivery of the programs.

OR

The applicant describes why the proposed choice school has chosen to not offer cocurricular or extracurricular programs.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Recommendation Narrative:

Overall Section Rating Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

D. Financial Plan

Financial Policies: The applicant's proposed financial plan demonstrates that the applicant has personnel and/or a management company with governmental accounting experience in place and the plan follows generally acceptable accounting practices. The financial controls described by applicant ensure that adequate auditing and reporting procedures are in place.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Insurance: The applicant has a clear understanding of insurance requirements for community choice schools under Montana Law and has a plan in place to obtain all required coverage from a reputable provider.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Budget: The applicant's preoperational/start-up budget for years 0 through 5 is based on realistic assumptions for all revenues and expenditures and does not count on uncommitted funds for a balanced budget.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Budget: The applicant's budget includes reasonable and adequate costs for all staff, services, supplies, equipment, and technology included in the application and/or essential to the school implementing the proposed model with fidelity.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Cash Flow Projections: The applicant's start-up and first year cash flow projections are based on realistic assumptions.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Fundraising: The applicant includes evidence of fundraising contributions (e.g. letters of commitment from individuals and organizations), if mentioned in the financial plan.

Rating: Does Not Meet Meets

Recommendation Narrative:

Overall Section Rating Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

E. Operations Plan

Student Enrollment: The applicant demonstrates a clear description of the plan for student recruitment and enrollment of the target population. A lottery procedure is described that meets all legal requirements.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

School Schedule: The applicant includes a school calendar and proposed daily schedule that meets any statutory requirements and aligns with the proposed school's priorities and key design elements.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Organizational Structure: The applicant's organizational structure and staffing plan demonstrate compliance with statutory requirements. The applicant clearly delineates the roles and powers of the board, school administration, advisory bodies, and any additional external organizations.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

School Staff (Staffing Plan): The applicant's staffing chart for year one and staffing plan for the term of the charter contract demonstrate a priority on implementing the proposed school's identified education program with fidelity.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

School Staff (Recruiting and Development): The applicant's recruitment and professional development plan is based on evaluated teacher needs, is aligned to the proposed school's mission, and is designed to help teachers meet school goals.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

School Staff (Evaluation): The applicant describes a school leadership and staff evaluation plan that aligns with the school's mission and encourages continuous improvement.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Parent Involvement: The applicant clearly identifies opportunities and expectations for parents to be involved at the school. Applicant makes it clear that all student enrollment is not dependent on parental participation in activities or opportunities.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Contracts: The applicant identifies any contractual relationships that will be required for the proposed school to begin and maintain operations with an anticipated timeline for execution of the contracts. The contractual relationships described are free of any actual or perceived conflicts of interest between the applicant and the contractor.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

E. Operations Plan (cont'd)

Transportation: The applicant demonstrates that it has considered transportation needs of students and has developed an adequate policy and recommendations for parents to address those needs. The applicant describes the process for safe drop off and pick-up of students.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Food Service: The applicant demonstrates that it has considered the food service needs of students and has developed an adequate plan to address those needs. The applicant has a plan to meet the needs of students who meet free and reduced-price meal eligibility guidelines for both breakfast and lunch.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

School Facility: The applicant demonstrates a thorough understanding of the facility needs for the proposed school and includes plan that includes back-up and contingency plans should the facility not meet particular deadlines. The applicant includes plans for construction, including a timeline and anticipated cost. The applicant understands any legal requirements for school facilities in Montana.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Recommendation Narrative:

Overall Section Rating Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

F. Special Situations (if applicable)

School Conversion:
The applicant has included a petition of support.
Rating: Does Not Meet Meets

The applicant has included adequate evidence of past performance that is true and complete, and describes the school’s current capacity for growth that is realistic and evidence-based.
Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

If the proposed location will be within the geographical boundaries of a third-class elementary district or a third-class high school, the applicant provides the following evidence:

- The third-class district has elected to establish a community choice school;
- The third-class district has elected to convert a grade or grades to a choice school from an existing school;
- The choice school is a tribal choice school;
- The choice school is a virtual community choice school; or
- The governing board of the choice school has received approval, by a majority vote, of a memorandum of understanding from the third-class school district’s board of trustees.

Rating: Does Not Meet Meets

Educational Service Providers:
The proposed educational service provider has demonstrated success in serving student populations similar to the targeted population, including academic achievement and successful management of nonacademic school functions.
Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

The applicant provides a proposed duration of the contract with the educational service provider.
Rating: Does Not Meet Meets

The applicant clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the governing board, the school staff, and the educational service provider. The roles and responsibilities are appropriate under Montana state law, and will support the proposed school’s educational model.
Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

The applicant provides a detailed description of the services and resources to be provided by the educational service provider. The services to be provided are appropriate under Montana state law and will support the proposed school’s educational model.
Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

The applicant describes the method and timeline for evaluating the educational service provider.
Rating: Does Not Meet Meets

F. Special Situations (if applicable---cont'd)

The applicant describes the methods that will be used to oversee and enforce the contract with the proposed educational service provider.

Rating: Does Not Meet Meets

The applicant describes the investment disclosure and conditions for renewal and termination of the proposed educational service provider.

Rating: Does Not Meet Meets

The applicant includes disclosures and explanations of any existing real or potential conflicts of interest between the governing board and the proposed educational service provider, or any affiliated business entities.

Rating: Does Not Meet Meets

Virtual Schools:

The applicant has provided a description of the proposed school's system of course credits and how the proposed system compares with Montana law.

Rating: Does Not Meet Meets

The applicant includes a description of how the proposed school will monitor and verify full-time student enrollment, student participation in a full course load, credit accrual, and course completion. The plan is complete and demonstrates that the applicant has a thorough understanding of the considerations and requirements in developing and operating a virtual school.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

The applicant describes how the proposed school will monitor and verify student progress and performance in each course through regular, proctored assessments and submissions of coursework and parent-teacher conferences. The plan is complete and demonstrates that the applicant has a thorough understanding of the considerations and requirements in developing and operating a virtual school.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Recommendation Narrative:

Overall Section Rating (School Conversion) Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Overall Section Rating (Ed Service Provider) Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Overall Section Rating (Virtual School) Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

G. Out-of-State Providers (if applicable)

Applicant provides evidence of past performance of all schools currently in operation across the nation.

Rating: Does Not Meet Meets

The applicant identifies all schools that were closed or charters that were revoked or not renewed for any reason.

Rating: Does Not Meet Meets

The applicant describes the organization’s current capacity for growth and plans for developing capacity to support the proposed school in Montana. The applicant’s plan is well-reasoned and supported by evidence.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Recommendation Narrative:

Overall Section Rating Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

H. Start-up Plan

The applicant has provided a clear and detailed start-up plan. The plan identifies specific tasks, includes timelines, and identified responsible individuals for each task. The plan is realistic and lends itself to a successful community choice school opening.

Rating: Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

Recommendation Narrative:

Overall Section Rating Does Not Meet Partially Meets Meets Exceeds

I. Additional Information (Optional)

Pedagogical Approach:

Rating: Information Submitted

Indian Education for All:

Rating: Information Submitted

Board Training:

Rating: Information Submitted

Postsecondary Readiness:

Rating: Information Submitted

Mental Health/School Climate:

Rating: Information Submitted

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement:

Rating: Information Submitted

Facility:

Rating: Information Submitted

Recommendation Narrative:

J. Miscellaneous

Applicants showing a commitment to seek out and serve students at-risk of academic failure, academic disengagement, to advance Montana’s commitment to the preservation of American Indian cultural integrity, or to eliminate the American Indian achievement gap will be considered with greatest eagerness in the application process.

Rating: Information Submitted

Recommendation Narrative:

Overall Section Rating Information Submitted

K. Technical Requirements	Included and Complete	Not Included or Incomplete
Applicant Information Form (Appendix A)		
Projected Enrollment Chart (Appendix B)		
Board Governance Information (Appendix C)		
Board Member Identity Checks (Appendix D)		

OVERALL RECOMMENDATION

Application approval will only be granted to applicants that have demonstrated competence in each element of the approval criteria and are likely to open and operate a successful Community Choice School.

Recommendation Approve to Interview Phase Deny Application

Proposed Conditions (to be fulfilled before execution of the contract and based on identified weaknesses in the proposal)