

Montana Community Choice Schools Commission
Meeting Agenda
December 17, 2024
Montana State Capitol, Helena MT Room 472

Call to Order – 09:00:49

Chair Schreiber called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM. The Chair led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance, Ms. Kris Stockton took Roll Call, and the Chair read the Statement of Public Participation and welcomed guests.

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

Presenters: Dr. Jim Goenner, National Charter School Institute.

Guests: Ms. Jane Hamman, Board of Public Education, Heather Irving

Guests online: Mr. Chip Lindenlaub; Dr. Tom Parell; Ms. Cheryl Tusken, Frontier Institute; Mr. Mark Casazza.

Public Comment – 09:03:10

Mr. Chip Lindenlaub gave public comment and thanked the Commission for their work. Ms. Cheryl Tusken gave public comment and thanked the Commission for their work.

Item 1 Approve Consent Agenda – 09:05:25

Member Rutt moved to approve the September 25, 2025 Minutes. Motion seconded by Member Kincheloe.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Approve Agenda – 9:06:23

Member Kincheloe moved to adopt the agenda. Motion seconded by Member Rutt.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 2 Chairperson Welcome Statement - 09:07:02

Before giving her statement, Chair Schreiber noted that Board of Public Education Charter Committee Chair Jane Hamman was present and welcomed her to the meeting. Chair Schreiber opened the meeting and thanked Dr. Jim Goenner and the National Charter School Institute for the help they have extended over the last year assisting the Commission. The Chair also thanked the Commission Steering Committee members for their work, and Board of Public Education staff for their support of the Commission.

Item 3 Reports – 09:09:47

Member Kincheloe reported on the receipt of a \$300K grant from the Bradely Foundation and noted that additional grant opportunities are under consideration as new grant application cycles open. Member Rutt asked for specifics as to what the Bradley Foundation grant would be used for. The Chair noted that the only parameters of the Bradley Foundation grant are that the funds must be used within twelve months and cannot be used for lobbying.

Chair Schreiber gave the Policymaking Committee Report and noted the work that has been completed including meeting with the Steering Committee on December 5, 2024. The Chair noted that the Commission may choose to outsource the review of Choice School applications to an outside entity for approval or denial, an action which is considered industry best practices. The Chair answered Commission members' questions.

Member Rutt presented the Treasurer report and noted the balance to date which includes the most recent legal services bill. Member Rutt answered questions from Commission members. Chair Schreiber noted that with the receipt of the Bradley Foundation grant it may be helpful to begin making budget projections, and that the grant money will be tracked separately from other expenditures.

Chair Schreiber reviewed work completed by the Commission over the past year including training, a work session held in April, the development of Choice School and Authorizer Applications, Choice School and Authorizer Contracts, projected calendar of major activities, and the identification of seven phases to implement the law. The Chair reviewed subcommittees created, work the committees have completed, and items that still must be completed.

Item 4 Officer Elections – 09:28:30

The Chair noted that law requires yearly election of officers with the exception of the Chair position which is appointed by the Governor for two years. The Chair opened the floor for nominations for Treasurer:

Member Kincheloe nominated Member Rutt to continue as Treasurer. Motion seconded by Vice Chair Wright.

Member Rutt accepted the nomination.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

The Chair opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair:

Chair Schreiber nominated Member Wright to continue as Vice Chair. Motion seconded by Member Kincheloe.

Member Wright accepted the nomination.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 5 Discussion and Business – 09:23:07

Commission members reviewed the Application Rating Rubric for Choice Schools and discussed pieces of the document including the disclaimer, sections of the Academic Program and Performance rating, and how the rating scale items are aligned with the law. Members discussed the General Disclaimer specifically related to Special Education and what will be required of Choice Schools related to Special Education to comply with Federal law, and how Choice Schools can serve students with those needs. Member Rutt noted that once applications are received the Commission will know what aspects of the application may need to be revised. Members discussed classifications of types of schools and whether schools can convert from one class to another. Chair Schreiber checked the district classifications and noted that classifications are calculated by the population size of the area the school is located in. Ms. Flynn specified the statute defines classifications as the population of the district. The Commission discussed background checks and the requirements for that process which is contained in the application for a Community Choice School.

General Discussion – 10:09:12

1. The Commission reviewed the subcommittee's that have been established and discussed if the current structure is sufficient or if new committees need to be established.

Member Rutt moved to continue the Fundraising Committee for the year of 2025. Motion seconded by Chair Schreiber.

Discussion:

- ***The Chair noted that is important to retain this committee as additional fundraising will be necessary for 2026, and that the relationships the subcommittee has created are important to cultivate and take time to develop.***

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Member Rutt moved to continue the Policymaking Subcommittee for the year of 2025. Motion seconded by Member Kincheloe.

- ***Discussion: Vice Chair Wright stated that the Steering Committee created by the Policymaking Committee and the public relations that ensued from that subcommittee is important.***
- ***Chair Schreiber noted the heavy lift the Steering Committee was, and it was valuable but questioned if it's necessary to continue. Chair Schreiber noted the Commission may have a team employee who could organize the steering committee, making it easier to manage.***
- ***Member Franklin echoed those comments and that she would like reports from the Steering Committee to share with the Commission would be appreciated.***
- ***Vice Chair Wright noted her concerns are more with community relations and educating the public about Choice Schools and that an executive director can help with that in the future.***
- ***Chair Schreiber noted that the vote is only on the motion to develop a Policymaking Subcommittee, and that the Steering Committee needs to be its own motion.***

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously

Member Franklin moved to create a Special Education Consideration subcommittee. Motion seconded by Chair Schreiber.

- *Discussion: Chair Schreiber noted the commission has been assigning three members for each subcommittee and that could be difficult to sustain with three subcommittees.*
- *Member Kincheloe noted that the future staff person could help facilitate the work of the subcommittees and that could reduce the number of commission members required.*
- *Member Rutt noted that if a subcommittee has been created, but the work is not necessary, then the subcommittee does not need to meet.*

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Members discussed potential meeting dates for the 2025 calendar year and Chair Schreiber noted that the law requires a minimum of quarterly meetings. Member Kincheloe stated that continuing education for members is necessary. Chair Schreiber agreed but stated that the commission can add more meetings other than the quarterly meetings. Members discussed 2025 meeting dates of: March 4, 2025 via Zoom (8:00 a.m.), June 17, 2025 in Helena (9:00 a.m.), September 9, 2025 via Zoom (8:00 a.m.), December 9, 2025 (TBD).
3. Members discussed potential training opportunities and conferences members may like to attend or take part in.

Item 6 Presentation by Jim Goenner, National Charter School Institute – 10:44:13

Dr. Jim Goenner gave a presentation to the Commission and discussed a variety of topics which included: rethinking the concept, creating conditions where excellence thrives, expectations of authorizers from schools who are applying for a charter; the creation of a Performance Framework established for authorizers, how to educate the public on choice schools and what they do, how the Commission can help with public education beyond chartering schools, how assessments work and can be valuable, and next steps moving forward.

Chair Schreiber thanked the Commission members for their work and the Board staff for their support and wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Public Comment – 12:46:56

No public comment.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:47 PM.