



Montana Board of Public Education

Public Charter School Timeline

2026-2027

June

- The Board shall issue and broadly publicize a request for proposal by June 1 of each year.
- Include the evaluation criteria that will guide the Board's decision to approve or deny a charter proposal.

November

- If a public charter school proposal does not contain all of the required elements, the Board shall consider the proposal incomplete and return the proposal to the applicant without taking action.
- In reviewing and evaluating public charter proposals, the Board shall use procedures, practices, and criteria consistent with nationally recognized best practices, principles, and standards. The proposal review process must include:
 - a thorough evaluation of each charter proposal;
 - an in-person interview with the applicant; and
 - an opportunity in a public forum for local residents to learn about and provide input on each proposal.

January

- In deciding whether to approve public charter proposals, the Board shall:
 - grant charters only to applicants that have met the requirements and are likely to open and operate successfully;
 - base decisions on documented evidence;
 - follow charter-granting policies and practices; and
 - heavily weigh the evidence of community support, projected student enrollment, and input received.
- The Board shall approve or deny public charter proposals within 90 business days after the filing. When approval is granted to a governing board other than a local school board, the approval constitutes corresponding approval of the creation of a separate public charter school district and its boundaries.
- The Board shall adopt by resolution all public charter approval or denial decisions in an open meeting. An approval decision may include reasonable conditions before a charter contract may be executed. For a charter denial, the Board must clearly state the reasons for denial.

March

- Within 45 business days of approval, the Board and the governing board of the approved public charter school shall execute a charter contract that clearly sets forth the academic and operational performance expectations and measures.
- A charter must be granted for a term of 5 operating years, commencing on July 1 of the first school year. An approved charter may delay their opening for one school year to plan and prepare. If the school is delayed in opening, the school shall request an extension from the Board, which may grant or deny the extension.
- The charter contract must be signed by the presiding officer of the Board and the public charter school's governing board.
- A public charter school may not operate without a charter contract approved in an open meeting by the Board.
- The Board may establish reasonable preopening requirements or conditions to monitor the startup progress to ensure the school is prepared to open smoothly and meets all building, health, safety, insurance, and other legal requirements.