

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

May 15-16, 2025
Montana School for the Deaf and Blind
3911 Central Ave
Great Falls, MT 59401

Thursday, May 15, 2025
8:30 AM

CALL TO ORDER – 00:00:05

Chair Tharp called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB) students led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance and Ms. Kris Stockton took Roll Call. The Chair read the Statement of Public Participation and welcomed guests.

Board members: Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair; Dr. Ron Slinger, Vice Chair; Ms. Madalyn Quinlan; Dr. Hannah Nieskens; Ms. Lisa Schmidt; Ms. Julia Maxwell; Ms. Renee Rasmussen; Mr. Gavin Mow, Student Representative. Ex Officio members: Dr. Angela McLean, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE); State Superintendent Susie Hedalen, Office of Public Instruction (OPI). Staff: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Specialist; Ms. Julie Balsam, Accounting Technician; Ms. Cathy Kincheloe, Director of Planning, Community Choice Schools Commission. Guests: Superintendent Paul Furthmyre, MSDB; Ms. Cedar Rose, OPI; Ms. Crystal Andrews, OPI; Ms. Marie Judisch, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI; Mr. Brenton Craggs, OPI; Ms. Tyler Capece, OPI; Ms. Christy Mock-Stutz, OPI; Ms. Kristi Steinberg, University of Montana, (UM); Mr. Chris Averil, Montana 250th Commission; Ms. Ashley McGrath, Smarter Balanced Assessment; Mr. Christyan Mitchell, Smarter Balanced Assessment; Ms. Kim Popham, Montana Federation of Public Employees, (MFPE); Ms. Katie Bloodgood, OPI; Ms. Lisa Sapp, School Liaison Malmstrom Air Force Base; Ms. Lydia Comstock, new Student Representative; Ms. Tammy Lacey, MSDB Foundation Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT – 00:04:11

No public comment

CONSENT AGENDA – 00:04:26

Vice Chair Slinger moved to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Board member Schmidt.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

ADOPT AGENDA – 00:05:01

Board member Rasmussen moved to adopt the Agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Board member Neiskens.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

BASICS OF AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE – Jennifer St. Pierre, ASL Mentor – 00:05:23

Superintendent Furthmyre introduced MSDB American Sign Language (ASL) Mentors who introduced themselves to the Board, discussed their positions, and taught Board members basic ASL signs.

❖ REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 1-5)

Item 1 CHAIRPERSON REPORT – 00:09:40 **Dr. Tim Tharp**

Chair Tharp discussed activities and meetings he had participated in since the March Board meeting including the Cognia accreditation review at a Las Vegas school, and mental health trainings he had conducted. Board

member Quinlan recognized Dr. Claudette Morton, former Executive Secretary for the Board, and advocate for public education. Chair Tharp introduced Ms. Lydia Comstock, the new Student Representative to the Board.

Item 2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – 00:17:05
McCall Flynn

Ms. McCall Flynn thanked Superintendent Furthmyre and the MSDB for hosting the Board and reviewed the 2025 Legislative Session. Ms. Flynn thanked the Board Legislative Committee for their work during the session and reviewed specific bills passed the Board will need to implement or that will affect the Board.

Item 3 STATE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – 00:29:59
State Superintendent Susie Hedalen

Superintendent Hedalen reviewed Legislation passed related to OPI including the STARS Act and described work OPI is coordinating with schools to implement the new law. The Superintendent reviewed reports OPI staff would be giving, updated the Board on work being done pertaining to the MAST Assessment, discussed Federal funding, and announced new staff at the OPI. Ms. Katie Bloodgood introduced Ms. Dawn Sievers, the 2025 Teacher of the Year, who discussed her experience teaching in a rural school and the application process for Teacher of the Year and then answered Board members' questions.

MIC3 Update: Ms. Lisa Sapp introduced herself to the Board and discussed the work she does to support military children and their families with their education related to the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission before answering Board members' questions.

Assessment Update and Information: Ms. Cedar Rose presented the Assessment Update to include the proposal to modify the Single System of Alternative Statewide Assessments and answered Board members' questions.

Content Standards Update: Ms. Marie Judisch presented an update of the Content Standards Revisions and answered Board members' questions.

Item 4 COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT – 02:05:54
Dr. Angela McLean

Dr. Angela McLean thanked Superintendent Furthmyre for hosting the Board, welcomed new Student Representative Ms. Comstock and thanked current Student Representative Mow for his service. Dr. McLean thanked Director Flynn for participating in the Higher Education roundtable, reviewed legislation passed related to higher education, and discussed work ongoing at the Commissioner's Office.

Item 5 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – 02:13:32
Gavin Mow

Mr. Gavin Mow presented his report to the Board, and introduced the newly elected Student Representative, Lydia Comstock to the Board. Mr. Mow announced that new members have been elected to the Montana Associated Student Council Board, reviewed student activities across the state, legislation passed, a meeting he participated in related to Military Academy appointments, and thanked the Board for their support during his tenure on the Board. Chair Tharp welcomed Ms. Comstock and thanked Mr. Mow for his service. The Chair announced that he and Director Flynn nominated Mr. Mow for the NASBE Student Recognition Award.

❖ **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Dr. Tim Tharp (Item 6)**

Item 6 UPDATE ON MONTANA 250TH COMMISSION – 02:22:24
Chris Averill

Mr. Chris Averill reported on work that has been completed by the Montana 250th Commission over the past year, and what to expect over the next year to prepare for the celebration. Mr. Averill answered Board members' questions.

❖ **MSDB LIAISON – Lisa Schmidt (Item 7)**

Item 7 MSDB REPORT – 02:34:50
Paul Furthmyre

Superintendent Furthmyre introduced Ms. Miranda Briggs who reviewed proposed changes to the Outreach Program at MSDB and answered Board members' questions. Superintendent Furthmyre reviewed the action items on the agenda before requesting the Board act on the items.

Board member Schmidt moved to approve the MSDB Out of State Travel Requests as listed in the agenda packet. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

Board member Quinlan asked if the Public Relations Conference had anything specific to schools for deaf and blind students and Superintendent Furthmyre responded it does not.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Schmidt moved to approve the MSDB Personnel Items as listed in the agenda packet. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Schmidt moved to approve the MSDB/Golden Triangle Co-op as listed in the agenda packet. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Schmidt moved to approve the MHSA Agreement and Concussion Insurance as listed in the agenda packet. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Schmidt moved to approve the MFPE Local #4027 STARS Act Agreement as listed in the agenda packet. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Superintendent Furthmyre introduced members of the MSDB Foundation Board and members thanked the Board for being at the school. The group discussed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Foundation Board and the Board of Public Education and reviewed potential revisions to the MOU. Ms. Flynn recommended the MSDB Board Committee work with Superintendent Furthmyre and the Foundation Board to draft a revised MOU to be presented at the July 2025 Board Meeting. Foundation Board Member Tammy Lacey thanked Board member Quinlan for her work with the Foundation and reviewed publications from the Foundation Board.

*****TIME CERTAIN AT 3:30PM*****

❖ **LICENSURE COMMITTEE – Dr. Ron Slinger (Items 8-10)**

**Item 8 ACTION ON THE NOTICE OF SURRENDER AND MOTION TO DISMISS OF BPE
CASE #2025-01, REGER – 00:01:35
Brenton Craggs**

Mr. Brenton Craggs reviewed the surrender of the educator license in BPE Case #2025-01 and the Motion to Dismiss.

Vice Chair Slinger moved to approve the Notice of Surrender and Motion to Dismiss BPE Case #2025-01. Motion seconded by Board member Nieskens.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item 10 INFORMATION ON PRAXIS REGENERATED TEST REVIEW AND QUALIFYING
SCORE FOR ELEMENTARY EDUCATION – 00:04:48
Crystal Andrews**

Ms. Crystal Andrews reviewed the new Praxis regenerated test for Elementary Education, the proposed score, and noted this will be an action item for the Board's approval at the July 2025 meeting. Ms. Andrews answered Board members' questions.

**Item 9 DISCUSSION ON THE COUNCIL FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF EDUCATOR
PREPARATION MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING - 00:20:29
Dr. Julie Murgel**

Dr. Julie Murgel reviewed the reasons that the Superintendent is not recommending signing a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. Dr. Murgel answered Board members' questions and concerns.

*****CLOSED SESSION*****

❖ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Dr. Tim Tharp (Item 11)

Item 11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION
Dr. Tim Tharp

*****OPEN SESSION*****

Meeting recessed for the day at 4:30 PM

Friday, May 16, 2025

8:30AM

CALL TO ORDER – 00:01:07

Chair Tharp called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. MSDB students led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance and Ms. Kris Stockton took Roll Call. The Chair read the Statement of Public Participation and welcomed guests.

Board members: Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair; Dr. Ron Slinger, Vice Chair; Ms. Madalyn Quinlan; Dr. Hannah Nieskens; Ms. Lisa Schmidt; Ms. Julia Maxwell; Ms. Renee Rasmussen. Ex Officio members: Dr. Angela McLean, OCHE; Ms. Tyler Capece, Deputy Chief of Staff, OPI. Staff: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Specialist; Ms. Julie Balsam, Accounting Technician; Ms. Cathy Kincheloe, Director of Planning, Community Choice Schools Commission. Guests: Superintendent Paul Furthmyre, MSDB; Ms. Crystal Andrews, OPI; Ms. Marie Judisch, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI; Ms. Christy Mock-Stutz, OPI; Ms. Cedar Rose, OPI; Ms. Kristi Steinberg, UM; Ms. Kim Popham, MFPE; Ms. Jordann Lankford Forster, Chair, Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE); Mr. Paul Taylor, OPI; Dr. Tricia Seifert, Montana State University; Superintendent Elliott Crump; Shelby Public Schools; Superintendent Heather Jarrett, Read Point Public Schools; Ms. Moffie Funk, Montanans Organized for Education.

BASICS OF WORKING VISUALLY IMPAIRED – Geri Darko, Orientation and Mobility Specialist – 00:05:19

Superintendent Furthmyre introduced Ms. Geri Darko who presented basics of communicating with blind and low vision individuals.

❖ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Dr. Tim Tharp (Item 12)

Item 12 ACTION ON THE K-12 PAYMENT SCHEDULE – 00:19:38
Paul Taylor

Mr. Paul Taylor presented the schedule for the K-12 payments to schools for the next year and answered Board members' questions.

Vice Chair Slinger moved to approve the K-12 Payment Schedule. Motion seconded by Board member Schmidt.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ MACIE LIAISON – Julia Maxwell (Item 13)

Item 13 MACIE REPORT – 00:23:18
Jordann Lankford Forster

Ms. Jordann Lankford Forster reviewed the Board's visit to Paris Gibson Education Center the previous day and discussed her work developing a Native American Literature course for students. Ms. Forster updated the Board on the most recent MACIE meeting and the upcoming joint meeting with the Board in July. Ms. Forster discussed work she will be doing assisting states to allow students to wear regalia at high school graduation ceremonies, then answered Board members' questions. Ms. Flynn previewed the Joint meeting in July and the topics which will be discussed and answered Board members' questions.

❖ **CHARTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE – Dr. Ron Slinger (Items 14-15)**

Item 14 UPDATE ON COMMUNITY CHOICE SCHOOLS COMMISSION – 00:45:19
Cathy Kincheloe

Ms. Cathy Kincheloe presented an update on the Community Choice Schools Commission, work she has completed, and answered Board members' questions.

Item 15 REVIEW OF REVISED PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION AND
EVALUATION CRITERIA – 00:54:29
McCall Flynn

Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed the revised application and evaluation criteria for the Public Charter Schools and answered Board members' questions.

❖ **ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE – Renee Rasmussen (Item 16)**

Item 16 ACTION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION FOR A MODIFICATION
TO THE SINGLE SYSTEM OF ALTERNATIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS –
01:07:05
Cedar Rose

Ms. Cedar Rose reviewed the proposed recommendations from the Superintendent to modify the single system of statewide assessments and answered Board members' questions.

Board member Rasmussen moved to approve the Superintendent's recommendation for a modification to the single system of alternative statewide assessments. Motion seconded by Board member Maxwell.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Kim Popham presented two finalists for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching Program to the Board. Ms. Popham reviewed the application process before introducing Mr. Michael Poser and Mr. Christopher Linhart, teachers in Hobson, who discussed their backgrounds and reasons for applying for the award and answered Board member's questions.

❖ **ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – Hannah Neiskens (Items 17-21)**

Item 17 INFORMATION ON THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS AND FEEDBACK – 01:45:43
Crystal Andrews; Superintendent Elliott Crump, Shelby Public Schools;
Superintendent Heather Jarrett, Reed Point Schools

Ms. Crystal Andrews, Superintendent Elliott Crump, and Superintendent Heather Jarrett discussed the Accreditation process, successes, challenges, trials, and areas for improvement. The group answered Board members' questions.

Item 18 ACTION ON ACCREDITATION THREE-YEAR CYCLES – 02:26:56
Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews presented the proposed three-year accreditation cycles and answered Board members' questions before requesting the Board act on the new schedule.

Board member Neiskens moved to approve the accreditation three-year cycles as the following: Year 1 Group A, Year 2 Group C, Year 3 Group B. Motion seconded by Vice Chair Slinger.

Chair Tharp spoke to his experience with the accreditation process.

Ms. Andrews clarified that any school in deficiency will remain on a one-year cycle until the deficiency is corrected.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 19 ACTION ON THE ACCREDITATION STATUS OF ALL SCHOOLS – 02:36:06

Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews reviewed the 2024-2025 Accreditation Status of All Schools Report and answered Board members' questions.

Board member Neiskens moved to approve the 2024-2025 Accreditation Status for All Accredited Schools as recommended by the State Superintendent. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

Vice Chair Slinger thanked Ms. Andrews and the OPI team for working with the schools with the process.

Chair Tharp noted the positive shift from compliance based to evidenced based reporting and the move to three-year cycles for accreditation.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 20 INITIAL REVIEW OF SUPERINTENDENT'S PROPOSED REVISIONS TO ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 53, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY CONTENT STANDARDS – 02:45:54

Marie Judisch

Ms. Marie Judisch reviewed the proposed revisions to the English Language Arts and Literacy Content Standards as proposed by the Superintendent and answered Board members' questions.

Item 21 INFORMATION ON THE RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT INCREASING PK-12 ATTAINMENT IN READING AND READING PROFICIENCY – 03:15:15

McCall Flynn

Ms. Flynn reviewed the proposed resolution to support PK-12 Reading and Reading Proficiency, which the Board will act on at the July 16-18, 2025 meeting and answered Board members' questions.

Ms. Flynn reviewed the July 2025 Board meeting and items scheduled for the agenda.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS July 16-18, 2025, Helena, MT

Strategic Planning Meeting

MACIE Update & Recommendation Work Session

Reflection and Review of Chapter 56 Assessment Standards

Review Public Charter School Annual Report (20-6-809, MCA)

Assessment Update

Federal Update

OPI Staffing Report

Accreditation Report

Content Standards Revision Update

Indian Education for All Report

PUBLIC COMMENT – 03:32:03

Board member Schmidt thanked Dr. McLean and the OCHE team for their work collaborating with the Great Falls CORE Elementary School.

ADJOURN – 03:32:55

Meeting adjourned at 12:02PM.

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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 beginning and end of each meeting.

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