

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

November 20-22, 2024
Willson School, Boardroom
404 W Main Street
Bozeman, MT

Wednesday, November 20, 2024
2:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER – 0:00:01

Chair Tharp called the meeting to order at 2:04 PM. The Chair 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; Ms. Susie Hedalen, Vice Chair; Dr. Ron Slinger; Ms. Renee Rasmussen; Ms. Madalyn Quinlan; Ms. Jane Hamman; Ms. Lisa Schmidt; Mr. Gavin Mow, Student Representative. Ex Officio members: Dr. Angela McLean, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE); State Superintendent Elsie Arntzen, Office of Public Instruction (OPI). Staff: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Specialist; Ms. Julie Balsam, Accounting Technician. Guests: Superintendent Casey Bertram, Bozeman Public Schools (BPS); Deputy Superintendent Mike VanVuren, BPS; Superintendent Paul Furthmyre, Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB); Ms. Calli Rusche Nicholson, Vice Chair, Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE); Mr. Gary Lusin, Bozeman School Board Trustee; Dr. Doug Ruhman, Salish Kootenai College (SKC); Ms. Kim Popham, Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE); Ms. Cedar Rose, OPI; Ms. Crystal Andrews, OPI; Ms. Marie Judisch, OPI; Ms. April Grady, OPI; Ms. Carrie Kouba, OPI; Ms. Christy Mock-Stutz, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI.

PUBLIC COMMENT – 00:02:02

Ms. Kim Popham thanked Chair Tharp's recognition of the teachers who received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

CONSENT AGENDA – 00:03:04

Board member Slinger moved to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

ADOPT AGENDA – 00:03:35

Board member Quinlan moved to adopt the Agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Board member Schmidt.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 1-4)

Item 1 CHAIRPERSON REPORT – 00:03:59 **Dr. Tim Tharp**

Chair Tim Tharp introduced Superintendent Bertram who welcomed the Board to Bozeman and reviewed facts and information about BPS. Chair Tharp reviewed the meeting between the Board and the Council of Deans of Education and the two positions that will be open on the Board and discussions he has had with potential applicants. Chair Tharp then discussed meetings and events he has attended on behalf of the Board since the September Board meeting and congratulated Vice Chair Hedalen on her victory as the State Superintendent Elect.

**Item 2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – 00:17:38
McCall Flynn**

Ms. McCall Flynn thanked Superintendent Bertram for hosting the Board, reviewed the discussion with the Council of Deans of Education, then asked Board member Quinlan to review a meeting she attended in Bozeman to discuss the systems of education in Montana. Ms. Flynn reviewed work of the Board staff since the September meeting as well as her attendance at all the regional Montana Association of School Superintendents meetings. Ms. Flynn discussed the Education Interim Committee and Education Interim Budget Committee meetings held in September and agency legislation they will be carrying related to the Board. Ms. Flynn briefly discussed items on the agenda and reviewed visits completed to several Public Charter Schools.

**Item 3 STATE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – 00:30:16
State Superintendent Elsie Arntzen**

Superintendent Elsie Arntzen reviewed upcoming education related legislation, announced the 2024 Montana Teacher of the Year, Ms. Dawn Sievers, and updated the Board on the progress of closing the ESSER funds, then turned the report over to OPI staff for updates.

Assessment Update: Ms. Cedar Rose updated the Board on the most recent MAST testlet administered in math, and feedback OPI received from teachers about the MAST Assessment. Ms. Rose answered Board members' questions.

Federal Update: Ms. Carrie Kouba discussed the Attendance Research Project and Teacher Mentorship Project at the OPI then answered Board members' questions.

Accreditation Report: Ms. Crystal Andrews updated the Board with information related to Accreditation since the September Board meeting and answered Board members' questions.

Content Standards Revision Update: Ms. Marie Judisch presented an update of the Content Standards Revisions and provided a status of where each content standard is in the revisions process.

Annual Data Collection: Ms. Anna Hoerner reviewed the most recent information related to the Annual Data Collection for 2024.

Data Modernization Update: Ms. Anna Hoerner reviewed progress of the Data Modernization Project at the OPI and answered Board members' questions.

**Item 4 COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT – 01:28:16
Dr. Angela McLean**

Dr. Angela McLean congratulated Vice Chair Hedalen on her new role as State Superintendent Elect and thanked the Board, Ms. Flynn, and the Board Accreditation Committee, for the proposed resolution to consider the addition of a 3rd year of Math to the graduation requirements. Dr. McLean noted that the Free Application for Federal Student Aid will open in December, reviewed topics discussed at the most recent meeting of the American Indian Minority Achievement Advisory Council, and reviewed work the Commissioner's Office is doing for the upcoming Legislative Session.

❖ MSDB LIAISON – Lisa Schmidt (Item 5)

**Item 5 MSDB REPORT – 01:34:14
Paul Furthmyre**

Board member Schmidt reviewed the October Special Board meeting pertaining to an MSDB request, then turned the item over to Superintendent Furthmyre for his report. Superintendent Furthmyre reviewed the action items listed on the agenda and requested Board approval. Superintendent Furthmyre noted the correct date on the National Student Life travel request is July 6-11, 2025.

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

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Mock-Stutz, OPI; Ms. Marie Judisch, OPI; Ms. April Grady, OPI; Mr. Rick Wootton, Attorney, OPI; Mr. Brenton Craggs, Attorney, OPI; Ms. Aislinn Brown, Board Legal Counsel; Ms. Kristi Steinberg; University of Montana (UM); Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI; Ms. Kim Popham, MFPE; Superintendent Bertram, BPS; Deputy Superintendent Mike VanVuren, BPS.

❖ **ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE – Ron Slinger (Item 7)**

Item 7 **ACTION AND PANEL PRESENTATION ON THE APPLICATION AND CRITERIA FOR THE LIST OF APPROVED EARLY LITERACY SCREENING TOOLS – 00:04:39**
McCall Flynn; Craig Buscher, EdD, Attain Education Consulting; Genevieve Thomas, Director of Professional Learning, School Services of Montana; Danielle ‘Nell’ Thompson, Ph.D. CCC-SLP, The Transformative Reading Teacher Group; Ms. Genevieve Thomas

Panel members introduced themselves to the Board and Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed the panel format. Board member Slinger asked questions of the panelists regarding the process used to select the screening tools for the List of Approved Early Literacy Screening Tools.

Board member Slinger moved to approve the list of applications and criteria for the list of early literacy screening tools. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ **REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 8-9)**

Item 8 **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – 00:39:28**
Gavin Mow

Mr. Gavin Mow reviewed the Montana Association of Student Councils Annual Conference and discussed a resolution students passed to encourage schools to ban cell phone use in class. Mr. Mow discussed his participation in the new Student Advisory Council to the National Association of State Boards of Education, then reviewed the student survey he has worked on over the past year. The survey will be conducted and completed prior to the Christmas break and results will be shared with the Board upon completion. Mr. Mow answered Board members’ questions.

Item 9 **ANNUAL HISET REPORT – 00:52:49**
Katie Madsen

Ms. Katie Madsen highlighted items in the Annual HiSET Report which included the transition to a new vendor, bringing the GED test back as a testing option, HiSET passing rate of 80%, and alternative pathways for non-traditional learners. Ms. Madsen answered Board members’ questions.

❖ **CHARTER COMMITTEE – Jane Hamman (Items 10-14)**

Item 10 **UPDATE ON COMMUNITY CHOICE SCHOOL COMMISSION – 01:13:56**
Trish Schreiber

Ms. Trish Schreiber updated the Board on work the Commission has completed since her report at the September 2024 Board meeting and noted that September marked the one-year anniversary of the Commission. Ms. Schreiber noted that the Commission is near the end of Phase III of the seven phases mapped out and announced the receipt of a \$300,000 grant for one year. The Commission will use the grant to implement the law and hire a staff person. Ms. Schreiber discussed next steps for the Commission and answered Board members’ questions.

Item 11 **INFORMATION AND REVIEW OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL 2024-25 FALL DATA REPORTING – 01:21:36**
Christy Mock-Stutz

Ms. Christy Mock-Stutz reviewed the enrollment counts from the 2024 Fall Data Report specific to the Public Charter Schools. Ms. Mock-Stutz reviewed numbers, the categories of data collected, and answered Board members’ questions. Mr. Paul Taylor provided clarification on the numbers reported and how the calculations for Average Number Belonging are calculated.

Item 12 **UPDATE ON PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATIONS AND SPECIAL MEETING**
– 01:39:19
Jane Hamman

Board member Jane Hamman discussed the eleven applications for new Public Charter Schools and the Special Board meeting that will be held December 11, 2024, when the interviews will be conducted.

Item 13 **REVIEW OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION AND CRITERIA** – 01:41:19
McCall Flynn

Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed the Application and Criteria for Public Charter Schools and discussed the review and evaluation process for the new applications ahead of the December 11, 2024, Special Board Meeting. Ms. Flynn reviewed the work that Ms. Jenny Murnane Butcher has done for the Public Charter School Program, particularly related to the reporting requirements for current schools and the Performance Framework schools have completed. Ms. Murnane Butcher added comments on other work she has completed related to the Public Charter School Program.

Item 14 **INFORMATION ON UPDATED PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**
FRAMEWORK – 01:54:24
McCall Flynn

Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed changes made to the Performance Framework to align with OPI updates to the Accreditation process and how the Framework was developed with input from schools and school officials.

❖ **LICENSURE COMMITTEE – Susie Hedalen (Items 15-19)**

Item 15 **INFORMATION ON THE ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT**
PROVIDERS LIST – 02:14:30
Marie Judisch

Ms. Marie Judisch presented the Annual Professional Development Unit Providers List and answered Board members' questions.

Item 16 **ACTION ON SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION ON EDUCATOR**
LICENSURE ANNUAL AND FILING FEE AMOUNTS – 02:31:08
April Grady

Ms. April Grady reviewed the Superintendent's recommendation for the Educator Licensure Annual and Filing Fees and explained that a balance remains in the account and that a decreased price has been negotiated for the licensing system. This has allowed the Superintendent to recommend removal of the \$25 technology fee and to leave licensure fees the same. Ms. Grady answered Board members' questions.

Board member Quinlan moved to remove the twenty-five dollar technology fee on the educator licensure annual and filing fee amounts for 2025. Motion seconded by Board member Schmidt.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 17 **NOTICE OF THE SURRENDER OF BPE CASE #2024-11** – 02:37:57
Rick Wootton

Mr. Rick Wootton presented the voluntary surrender of an educator license to the Board.

Item 18 **ACTION ON INITIAL REVIEW OF BPE CASE #2024-09, EVANS** – 02:39:17
Rick Wootton

Mr. Rick Wootton reviewed a request from a school district that requested the Board issue a letter of reprimand to an educator.

Board member Quinlan moved to approve moving BPE Case 2024-09 Evans, to a contested case hearing at the January 2025 meeting. Motion seconded by Board member Slinger.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 19 **ACTION ON INITIAL REVIEW OF BPE CASE #2024-10, MAHERAS** – 02:42:42

Brenton Craggs

Ms. Aislinn Brown noted that Mr. Maheras will not attend the meeting today and that he requests a contested case hearing. Mr. Brenton Craggs reviewed BPE Case #2024-10 and stated the reasons for the Superintendent's request the Board issue a letter of reprimand to the educator.

Board member Quinlan moved to approve moving BPE Case #2024-10 Maheras, to a contested case hearing at the January 2025 Board meeting. Motion seconded by Board member Hamman.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting recessed for the day at 4:06 PM.

Friday, November 22, 2024

8:30 AM

CALL TO ORDER – 00:00:54

Chair Tharp called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. The Chair 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; Ms. Susie Hedalen, Vice Chair; Dr. Ron Slinger; Ms. Renee Rasmussen; Ms. Madalyn Quinlan; Ms. Jane Hamman; Ms. Lisa Schmidt. Ex Officio members: Dr. Angela McLean, OCHE. Staff: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Specialist; Ms. Julie Balsam, Accounting Technician. Guests: Ms. Crystal Andrews, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI; Ms. Ellery Bresler, OPI; Ms. Michelle Price, OPI; Ms. Marie Judisch; OPI; Dr. Robin Clausen, OPI; Dr. Erica Allen, UM; Dr. John Matt, UM; Dr. Bill McCaw, UM; Dr. Liqin Tang, UM; Dr. Dan Lee, UM; Ms. Kristi Steinberg, UM; Dr. Doug Ruhman, SKC; Ms. Kim Popham, MFPE; Ms. Christy Mock-Stutz, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI; Deputy Superintendent Mike VanVuren, BPS.

❖ LICENSURE COMMITTEE (cont.) – Susie Hedalen (Items 20-22)

Item 20 ACTION ON THE SITE VISIT AND STATE EXIT REPORT OF SALISH KOOTENAI COLLEGE EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDER IN THE DIVISION OF EDUCATION – 00:04:09
Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews presented the Site Visit and State Exit Report for SKC which was an information item at the September Board Meeting. Ms. Andrews gave a high level overview of the report before Dr. Doug Ruhman made remarks regarding the accreditation process and answered Board members' questions.

Vice Chair Hedalen moved to approve the State Exit Report and Regular Accreditation Status of Salish Kootenai College Educator Preparation Provider in the Division of Education. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

Chair Tharp commended Dr. Ruhman on the success of the program.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 21 FOLLOW UP REPORT ON PRAXIS TEST SCORES IN HARD-TO-FILL ENDORSEMENT AREAS – 00:16:01
Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews presented a follow up report requested by the Board at the September Board meeting which provided additional information about the Praxis test scores in hard to fill endorsement areas. Ms. Andrews reported lower numbers of test takers and lower test scores, a trend that has been seen nationwide, and that the Elementary Education Praxis test used in Montana differs from the test used in most states. This finding was brought to the attention of the Praxis Working Group and Ms. Kristi Steinberg has presented the information to the Council of Deans for consideration to move to the more commonly used test. Ms. Andrews answered Board members' questions.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 26 INFORMATION ON UPATED ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT TO ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 53, MATHEMATICS CONTENT STANDARDS – 01:44:59
Marie Judisch

Ms. Marie Judisch reviewed the Economic Impact Statement related to the proposed revisions to the Mathematics Content Standards and noted that OPI sought additional feedback from schools. Ms. Judisch answered Board members' questions regarding the statement, and Ms. Flynn reviewed the accreditation statute that requires the Board present the statement to the Education Interim Budget Committee.

Item 27 ACTION ON AND RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS SUBMITTED ON REVISIONS TO ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 53, MATHEMATICS CONTENT STANDARDS – 02:06:54
Madalyn Quinlan

Ms. McCall Flynn noted that no public comments were received, and the Board will take action to approve the proposed revisions at the January 2025 Board meeting.

❖ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 28)

Item 28 INFORMATION ON FOUR DAY SCHOOL WEEK RESEARCH REPORT – 02:07:45
Dr. Erica Allen, University of Montana; Dr. John Matt, University of Montana; Dr. Bill McCaw, University of Montana; Dr. Liqin Tang, University of Montana; Dr. Robin Clausen, OPI

Dr. Erica Allen introduced herself and the panel members to the Board before the group presented the final Four Day School Week Research Report. Dr. Robin Clausen conducted a question and answer discussion with the panel members about their research and panelists answered Board members' questions. Chair Tharp thanked the panel members for their hard work, as well as Dr. Clausen and Dr. Murgel at the OPI.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – January 16-17, 2025 – Helena, MT

Exiting Board Member – Last Meeting and Recognition

MACIE Update

Review individual Community Choice Schools' Annual Reports

ABCTe Interim Report

Action on Authorizing Public Charter Schools

Transportation Report

Assessment Update

Federal Update

Accreditation Report

Teacher Licensure Report

Qualify Transformational Learning & Advanced Opportunity Grant Applications

Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program Report

Content Standards Revision Update

Action on MSDB Superintendent Contract Extension

MSDB Superintendent Performance Evaluation & Contract Extension Discussion

Dr. Tharp presented outgoing Board member, Vice Chair Hedalen with a gift from the Board, thanked her for her work in public education, and wished her well in her new role as State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Vice Chair Hedalen thanked the Board for their work and for the opportunity to work with each member. Board member Rassmussen echoed the Chair's remarks, and Dr. McLean extended congratulations on behalf of OCHE and thanked Vice Chair Hedalen for her leadership.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 11:55PM.

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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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