



Montana Board of Public Education

**Public Charter School Application
Billings Public Schools
Billings Early College School**

October 31, 2023

PUBLIC CHARTER APPLICATION COVER PAGE

Check One: ☒ New Public Charter under Existing Local School Board ☐ New Public Charter District

Name of Public Charter School - Billings Early College School

Local school district in which the public charter school will be physically located: Billings Public Schools,
School District #2, Lincoln Center, 415 North 30th Street, Billings, MT 59101

Contact Information for the Governing Board Chair

Contact Person: Scott McCulloch Billings Public Schools Board of Trustees Chair
Name Title

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Scott McCulloch

Contact Information for the Person Completing this Application

Contact Person: Dr. Jeril Hehn Director of Advanced Academics
Name Title

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Dr. Jeril L. Hehn

PUBLIC CHARTER APPLICATION

Name of Public Charter School: **Billings Early College School (BECS)**

Provide an executive summary with the general purpose and rationale for the creation of the public charter school.

Billings Public Schools (BPS) Community strives to inspire, educate, and empower students to be responsible and innovative global citizens to achieve their full potential. Based on community input in the spring of 2023, Superintendent Dr. Garcia identified four priority areas of concern for our stakeholders. One priority was the need to *Increase College, Career and Military Opportunities* for our students. While BPS has increased Dual Credit and Advanced Placement (AP) opportunities over the past several years, not all students are utilizing these opportunities or are aware of how earning college credit in high school may benefit them.

The Early College School concept gained momentum in the U.S. with the 2002 Early College High School Initiative. Today there are over 400 Early College Schools in our country, offering students the opportunity to earn a minimum of 12 college credits while most prioritize the goal of students earning both a high school diploma and an Associate Degree upon graduation. The rising cost of attending college partnered with the increased need for a workforce with post-secondary education beyond a high school diploma make this a critical time to expand opportunities for our students. Montana currently supports some college credit attainment with the 1-2-Free program through which the first two college courses a student takes are free, but our students and our state need more. Early College Schools improve relevance in secondary education as well as increase college access, affordability and completion. Billings Public Schools is excited to be the first district in Montana to raise the bar and create the Billings Early College School to increase opportunities for our students, families and community.

Opening Date: **August 2024** Public Charter Term Length: **5 years initially per HB549**

Grades to be served: **9-12**

Minimum Enrollment Per Year: **50**

Planned Enrollment Per Year: **125-500**

Maximum Enrollment Per Year: **500**

For each year of the public charter term, indicate the number of students the public charter school plans to serve in each grade.

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Year 1										125	0	0	0	125
Year 2										125	125	0	0	250
Year 3										125	125	125	0	375
Year 4										125	125	125	125	500
Year 5										125	125	125	125	500

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

We recognize that this section does not provide the space to fully and accurately respond to each of the questions below. Attachments and appendices are permitted. Please make sure to clearly state where corresponding responses are located.

1. State the public charter school's mission and vision and describe why this initiative is important to the community it will serve.

The mission of Billings Early College School (BECS) is to inspire, educate and empower students from diverse backgrounds through transformative educational opportunities to earn both a high school diploma and college credits toward an Associate Degree. The vision of BECS is that together we will cultivate a culture of excellence every day to prepare our students for success in our evolving global community. The primary principles of BECS are centered on academic, social, and emotional support as well as assistance in planning for and enrolling in college courses that align with our students' intended career pathways.

Billings Public Schools (BPS) has increased opportunities for students to earn both high school and college credit in three primary ways. Dual Credit classes are offered in our high schools through college partnerships for which students earn both high school and college credit. University Connections classes are offered at a local college for which students can earn both college credit and elective high school credit. Advanced Placement (AP) courses are offered in our high schools for which students can potentially earn college credit by scoring a 3 or higher on the corresponding AP exam. BPS has experienced a significant increase in AP enrollment and exam pass rates as well as college credits earned since the 2014-2015 school year while also maintaining historically low Montana University System (MUS) remediation rates for math and writing combined. The following data represent participation and success rates for our approximately 6600 high school students:

- 71 dual enrollment credits were earned by BPS students in 2014-2015
- 1347 college credits were earned by BPS students in 2022-2023
- 660 students were enrolled in AP courses in BPS in 2014-2015
- 1473 students were enrolled in AP courses in BPS in 2021-2022
- 320 AP exams were taken by BPS students in 2014-2015
- 977 AP exams were taken by BPS students in 2022-2023
- AP exams scoring 3 or higher in 2014-2015 was 55.3%
- AP exams scoring 3 or higher in 2022-2023 was 70.6%
- MUS remediation rate for the state was 28% in 2015–2016 and 13% in 2021-2022
- MUS remediation rate for BPS was 36% in 2015-2016 and 8% in 2021-2022

While these opportunities have benefited our students and local colleges with improved participation and success rates, there remains a need to increase targeted opportunities for more of our students. Our spring 2023 community survey results emphasized a need to prioritize more college, career and military opportunities for all of our students. Our current AP, Dual Credit and University Connections programs serve many of our high end students well, helping them prepare for college success, but typically result in only a few college credits by the end of their high school years. With the rising cost of college tuition and the research supporting the benefits of continuing education beyond high school, looking to meet the needs of more students to earn college credits and properly prepare for college and career pathways beyond high school will benefit our students, families and community in numerous ways.

Early College Schools are specifically designed to focus students on earning both a high school diploma as well as credits towards an Associate Degree in a more targeted manner. There are currently over 400 Early College Schools in the U.S. but none in Montana. Primary principles focus on academic, social, and emotional support as well as support in planning and enrolling in college courses that align with students' intended career pathway. Strong academic programming, college partnerships, and a culture of continuous improvement will be the foundation of BECS. The intent is not to supplant the opportunities currently available, but to expand those opportunities to include more students who may not yet have considered a college pathway. Early College Schools around the country have demonstrated positive impacts on college readiness and enrollment as well as degree completion. According to the College in High School Alliance,

"The research is clear: dual enrollment is an evidence-based practice that has broad positive impacts on student outcomes, including college enrollment and completion. It is prevalent nationwide, and widely supported by students, parents, and education policymakers and practitioners. If implemented thoughtfully, intentionally, and equitably, the benefits to students' college and career pathways can be significant." (<https://collegeinhighschool.org>)

2. Identify the targeted student population and the community the public charter school proposes to serve.

For the fall of 2024 and each year thereafter, all incoming 9th grade high school students in BPS will have the opportunity to apply for enrollment in BECS as they register for high school during the second semester of 8th grade. If the program does not fill from within our district, out of district students may apply for open seats. The primary target student population includes students who are traditionally underserved in our college preparation coursework and pathways, including first generation college students, to provide earlier preparation and support for success in college. Open enrollment is deliberately designed to encourage all students to consider the option for a college pathway. BECS is committed to serving a student population that is representative of our district as a whole and providing equitable access to all students, particularly populations not currently as visible in our college communities. This will include outreach to students who have not traditionally enrolled in our AP and Dual Credit courses.

3. Describe plans and timelines for student recruitment and enrollment, including lottery procedures.

BPS has already started communication with weekly community meetings as to the opportunities that an Early College program can offer to our students and community. Once approval of our charter school application is received, we will quickly move forward with a timeline for communicating and recruiting students as follows:

- November to December 2023: Development of a BECS handbook describing the school and its benefits, to include questions for families to use as a discussion guide when considering BECS enrollment as well as the application forms and process.
- January 2024: 8th grade class meetings at all of our feeder middle schools to describe BECS, recruit students, and answer questions.
- January 2024: 8th grade parent meeting to describe BECS, recruit students, and answer questions.
- February 2024: Registration for all 8th grade students for their freshman year of high school.
- March 1, 2024: Application Deadline for BECS
 - Review applications to inform staffing and course offerings planning
 - Determine if a lottery is needed due to receiving over 125 applications

- April 2024: Develop Master Schedule for BECS
- May 2024: Notification of students selected for BECS

If more than 125 students apply for BECS, a lottery system will be used to ensure equitable representation from our three BPS comprehensive high schools.

- Incoming 9th grade registration numbers will be determined for Senior, Skyview and West High Schools per school and as an aggregate total.
- Percentages will be awarded per school to equitably represent this opportunity for all students.
- If one of the three high schools does not utilize their full percentage allotted, those seats will first be shared with the other two high schools proportionately. Any remaining seats will be opened for application from students outside of BPS.

4. Describe the public charter school's academic program, specifically focusing on why it is innovative in your school district. Include plans to formally assess student achievement on an annual basis.

Billings Early College School will offer strong academic programming in a supportive environment through a defined and structured program that allows students the opportunity to earn both their high school diploma and an Associate Degree. Teachers, counselors and administrators will be certified through the State of Montana as highly qualified. While there are over 400 early college schools in the United States, there are currently no early college schools in the State of Montana. This innovative program will set a new standard for expanding college opportunities to all students in a targeted way to benefit students, families, our community and our State.

The structure for BECS will be a hybrid school that allows students to spend half their day (three class periods) in 9th and 10th grade as a cohort of BECS students focusing on their core graduation requirements and the other half of their day on their home high school campus. The purpose of this structure is to allow students to maintain access to high quality Music, World Languages, Career and Technical Education (CTE), Visual and Performing Arts (VPA), athletics and activities, as well as direct instruction support for special needs students, in addition to the opportunity to participate in BECS. Most early college schools across the country do not offer this expanded access, thus students must choose between all of the opportunities their district has to offer and enrollment in the early college program. We believe in the importance of these opportunities for our students and want to support them in pursuing enrollment in BECS without having to forego the varied courses and extracurricular opportunities a comprehensive high school can offer. BECS will offer an AM cohort where students attend periods one through three at BECS and periods four through six at their home high school. In the PM cohort, students will attend their home high school for periods one through three then attend BECS periods four through six. There is power in place and the establishment of a cohort, thus BECS will be located off site from the home high schools where all students can come together to participate as a distinct cohort with a common goal of both a high school diploma and college credits up to an Associate Degree. In 11th and 12th grade, the goal will be for students to take as many courses as possible on the actual college campus and supplement with courses offered at BECS or their home high school as needed to meet their current educational and post-secondary pathways.

Classes at BECS will focus on content, standards and skills that prepare students for success in achieving both high school and college credits. Students in 9th and 10th grade will focus on their core high school graduation requirements. Inclusion of college readiness skills through both daily instructional experiences as well as targeted opportunities for related instruction, academic and social-emotional support will be part of the BECS cohort expectations. Higher level thinking and problem solving skills will be embedded in all courses to attain higher levels of student

engagement and learning. Having its own class schedule and location will allow for flexibility to bring in college partners to assist students in planning for and applying to college as appropriate, as well as address academic, social and emotional support.

In order for students to earn the appropriate credits for both a high school diploma (21) and a college degree (60), the following recommended course schedule will support students in staying on track for both goals:

- 9th Grade 6.0 High School Credits
 - 4.0 core (English, Math, Science, Health Enhancement)
 - 2.0 elective (CTE, VPA, World Languages, Music)
- 10th Grade 6.0 High School Credits
 - 4.0 core (English, Math, Science, World History)
 - 2.0 elective (continue CTE, VPA, World Language, Music and/or start taking dual credit options at the high school or on the college campus)
- 11th Grade 6.0 High School Credits
 - 2.0 core (English and U.S. History, both of which have college credit options)
 - 4.0 elective (classes on the college campus)
- 12th Grade 3.0-6.0 High School Credits
 - 2.0 core (English, Government, and a Social Studies elective, all have college credit options)
 - 1.0-4.0 elective (classes on the college campus)

Each college course is worth three credits toward an Associate Degree and 0.5 credits towards a high school diploma. The above outlines how a student meets their 21 credits required for their high school diploma. Students can start taking some college credit courses in 10th grade, then utilize summer course offerings as well as up to 15 college credits each semester in 11th and 12th grade to achieve the 60 credits required for most Associate Degrees. Upon successful completion, students will be issued a high school diploma from BPS as well as an Associate Degree from the partnering college.

Annual formal assessment of student achievement will primarily focus on tracking the following:

- Each semester and annually, track the number of credits earned, Grade Point Averages (GPA), and attendance in high school classes to assess progress toward a high school diploma.
- Each semester and annually, track the number of credits earned and GPAs in college classes to assess progress toward an Associate Degree.
- Design and implement annual student and parent surveys to inform school and program design and focus on continuous improvement.

5. Describe any variances to existing standards that the public charter school requires to enhance educational opportunities.

BECS does not require any variances at this time. Students will meet the Montana requirements for graduation as outlined in 10.55.905 of the Administrative Rules of Montana.

6. Describe the instructional design, including the type of learning environment, class size and structure, curriculum overview, and teaching methods.

BECS will run a traditional six period day to allow students to access elective offerings at their home schools within BPS and maintain participation in extracurricular activities. Students will attend either as part of the AM Cohort (periods one through three) or PM Cohort (periods four through six) taking core and elective courses toward meeting their graduation requirements. Students in 11th and 12th grade will take most of their classes on the college campus, requiring collaboration with college partners to

ensure any required courses through BECS do not conflict with college courses and pathways. BPS is exploring formal partnerships with Montana State University Billings and Rocky Mountain College, both located in Billings and accessible to our students.

Curriculum overview and teaching methods will follow BPS Curriculum development guidelines and expectations, including the incorporation of Professional Learning Communities and Visible Learning as well as opportunities for Advanced Placement and Dual Credit courses. Curricular focus will include teaching practices that cultivate critical thinking, creative expression, ethical decision-making, informed citizenship, and professional and academic excellence. Class sizes at BECS will average 25 students for the three periods they attend as a cohort. A proposed schedule follows.

	Time M, Tu, Th, Fr	Time (Wednesday)
Period 1	8:00-8:57	8:00-8:47
Period 2	9:00-9:57	8:50 - 9:37
Period 3	10:00 -10:57	9:40 -10:27
Shuttle Transportation, Lunch at home high schools	11:00 -11:45	10:30 -11:15
Period 4	11:50-12:47	11:20-12:07
Period 5	12:50-1:47	12:10 - 12:57
Period 6	1:50-2:47	1:00 -1:47 PLC 2:15-3:15

7. Describe plans for identifying and successfully serving students with disabilities, students who are English Language Learners, students who are academically challenged, and gifted students, including compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

BECS is designed specifically for students wishing to pursue both a high school diploma and significant college credits toward an Associate Degree. Within that student demographic, there may be students in need of special education services and 504 accommodations as well as gifted students. BECS is being designed to support all academic levels with accommodations as outlined in their IEPs and 504 plans. Students in need of direct support services will maintain access through existing Billings Public Schools programs as well.

8. Describe student discipline policies, including those for special education students.

All Billings Public Schools student expectations and discipline policies/procedures will be implemented at BECS. The BPS high school student handbook, district policies and procedures, and classroom information will be shared directly with students and parents to review.

BECS commits to providing a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students, including those with unique special needs. The same policies, procedures, rules, and handbooks apply to students with disabilities as to regular education students unless otherwise indicated in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) to ensure they are afforded the protections and opportunities they rightfully deserve.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

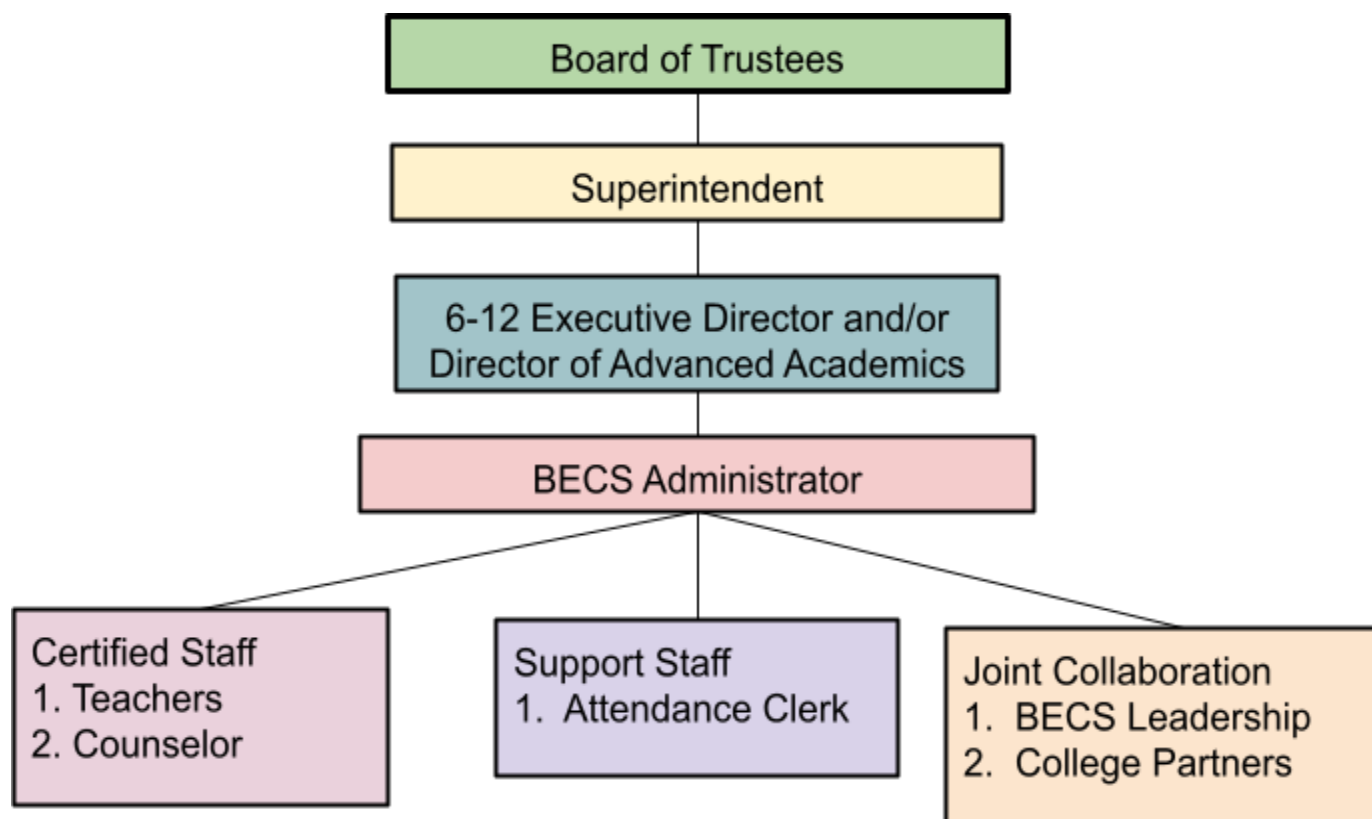
We recognize that this section does not provide the space to fully and accurately respond to each of the questions below. Attachments and appendices are permitted. Please make sure to clearly state where corresponding responses are located.

9. **Describe the public charter school’s organizational chart that clearly presents the proposed organizational structure, including lines of authority and reporting between the governing board, staff, related bodies such as advisory bodies or parent and teacher councils, and external organizations that will play a role in managing the public charter school.**

The Billings Public Schools (BPS) Board of Trustees and Superintendent serve as the governing authority for the school district. Billings Early College School (BECS) will function under the authority of the Board, which consists of nine members, each of whom represents a different geographic area in the district. Daily oversight of BECS will be provided by the BECS school administrator under the direction of the Executive Director of Secondary Education and the Director of Advanced Academics, both of whom serve under the Superintendent. To ensure transparency and accountability, quarterly reports will be presented to the Board of Trustees by students and staff, detailing the ongoing activities and progress within the school. This practice allows the Board to stay informed about the developments and achievements taking place at BECS..

Creating, implementing and sustaining an Early College School requires strong community partnerships as a key priority. Joint collaboration between BECS and its college partnerships will be vital to the success of its students. Regularly scheduled meetings between BECS leadership and representatives from our college partners will allow for a collaborative approach to ensure the educational priorities, policies and procedures of all partners and stakeholders are understood and honored. Annual student and parent surveys will be implemented to empower stakeholder voice and data will be analyzed for continuous improvement. This collaborative approach ensures that the school's direction is informed by the perspectives and aspirations of our students, their families and our community.

Together, through collaborative leadership, transparent reporting, active engagement, and strategic partnerships, we will create an environment that equips our students for success and empowers them to shape their futures.



10. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the governing board, the proposed leadership management team, and other entities shown in the organizational chart.

BECS will operate under the governance of the Billings Public Schools Board of Trustees who will approve budgets, hiring staff, and the development of policies and procedures. The Superintendent will be responsible for the overall strategic direction and practices of BECS. An administrator will be hired to oversee effective day-to-day operations of the school, and report to both the Director of Advanced Academics and the Executive Director of Secondary Education for transparency, support and accountability in serving the needs of our students and community.

Additional staff will be essential to the success of BECS. An Attendance Clerk/ School Secretary will be available to support the day-to-day operations and needs of the students and staff. In year one, three teachers will lead students in their core educational classes and college preparation through academic programming and instructional delivery, and a counselor will be shared with another program to ensure students have access to the academic and social-emotional support they need. In year two, three more teachers will be needed to meet the needs of the growing BECS cohorts.

11. Provide a staffing chart for the public charter school's first year and a staffing plan for the term of the public charter school.

BECS teachers and counselors will be certified through the Montana Office of Public Instruction. With 125 students the first year, three teachers will provide staffing for 5 periods of instruction and one period for preparation, leading classes with an average of 25 students per class. The addition of 125 more students in the second year will require three additional teachers to maintain those class averages. In subsequent years, students will primarily be served on the college campus thus no additional teachers will be required. Secretarial support and administrative leadership will also be crucial to BECS's success.

Staff	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	5th year
Teachers	3 FTE	6 FTE	6 FTE	6 FTE	6 FTE
Counselor	.5 FTE	.5 FTE	.5 FTE	.5 FTE	.5 FTE
Administrator	.5 FTE	.5 FTE	.5 FTE	.5 FTE	.5 FTE
Attendance Clerk/Secretary	.5 FTE	.5 FTE	.5 FTE	.5 FTE	.5 FTE
Custodian/Maintenance	.25 FTE	.25 FTE	.25 FTE	.25 FTE	.25 FTE

12. Detail the public charter school startup plan, identifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals.

Timeline

1. October 16, 2023 - Charter School Application Submission Approval - Billings Public School Board of Trustees
2. November 1, 2023 - Charter School Application Submission - Dr. Jeril Hehn, Director of Advanced Academics
3. November and December 2023 - Dr. Jeril Hehn
 - a. Continued collaboration to pursue partnerships with Montana State University Billings and Rocky Mountain College, identify information parents and students will need to know up front on the college process and requirements; this step will continue as needed throughout the planning, opening and sustaining of BECS
 - b. Development of a BECS Handbook outlining programming, parent and student information, application process, timeline and expectations
4. January 2024 - Charter School Application Approval Notification
 - a. Board of Public Education
5. January 2024 - 8th Grade Parent and Student Meetings - Dr. Jeril Hehn
6. February 2024 - 8th Grade Registration for High School and Applications for BECS - Dr. Jeril Hehn, High School Counselors
7. March 1, 2024 - Application Deadline for BECS - 8th Grade Students and Parents
8. March 2024 - Dr. Jeril Hehn
 - a. Review applications to inform staffing and course offerings planning
 - i. Post for open positions
 - ii. Finalize decisions regarding classroom space at Lincoln Center (to include planning with the BPS Superintendent, Executive Director of Secondary Education, Executive Director of Facilities, and other leadership as needed)
 - b. Determine if a lottery is needed due to receiving over 125 applications
9. April 2024 - Dr. Jeril Hehn
 - a. Develop Master Schedule for BECS
 - b. Finalize interviews and hiring of BECS administration, certified and classified staff
10. May 2024 - Dr. Jeril Hehn and BECS Administrator
 - a. Notification of students selected for BECS

- b. Professional development plans for BECS staff
- c. Ordering of classroom and office supplies, technology, curriculum
- d. Coordination of transportation services
- 11. June 2024 - BECS planning and preparation - BECS Administrator
- 12. August 2024 - BECS Administrator
 - a. Teacher access to classrooms in preparation for the first day of school
 - b. Planning of Open House, Parent and Student Communication
 - c. Planning for Staff PIR Days
 - d. Teachers will formally return and students start school per the BPS 2024-2025 Calendar approval

13. Describe the plans for recruiting and developing school leadership and staff.

Once student registration for the 2024-2025 school year has been completed, BECS will work collaboratively with all Billings high schools to identify staffing needs through established processes and procedures. All hiring practices currently in place for BPS will be followed. Relevant, focused and specific training will be provided to staff members working in BECS as determined by school leadership.

14. Describe the proposed leadership and teacher employment policies, including performance evaluation plans.

Administration, teachers and staff will adhere to the approved policies of the BPS Board of Trustees which will be outlined in the district staff handbook and reviewed during the opening staff meeting in August of 2024. Policies include but are not limited to staff conduct and expectations; evaluation process; complaints; and federal / state notifications. Evaluations will follow the same policies and procedures currently in place for BPS under the direction of the Human Resources Department and aligned with current Collective Bargaining Agreements as appropriate.

15. State the proposed governing bylaws.

BECS will function inside the governing bylaws as established by the Board of Trustees for Billings Public Schools. School district policies as established by the Board of Trustees can be found at <https://www.billingsschools.org/about-us/policies-procedures>.

16. Explain any partnerships or contractual relationships central to the operations and mission of the public charter school.

BECS will continue to explore partnerships with our local colleges, Montana State University Billings and Rocky Mountain College, to serve the needs of our students, support them in meeting the requirements for both BECS and our college partners, and pursue a targeted path toward both a high school diploma and credits toward an Associate Degree. BECS will adhere to the mission and vision of BPS and seek alignment with our college partners as well.

17. Provide the proposed calendar and sample daily schedule.

The BECS school calendar will follow the same calendar as established by the BPS Board of Trustees (*see 23-24 calendar below*). Once students start taking courses on the college campus, there will be flexibility and variation to allow for alignment with their college schedule and individual student needs.

Below is a sample daily class schedule for BECS,

Daily Schedule - *SAMPLE*

	Time M, Tu, Th, Fr	Time (Wednesday)
Period 1	8:00-8:57	8:00-8:47
Period 2	9:00-9:57	8:50 - 9:37
Period 3	10:00 -10:57	9:40 -10:27
Shuttle Transportation, Lunch at home high schools	11:00 -11:45	10:30 -11:15
Period 4	11:50-12:47	11:20-12:07
Period 5	12:50-1:47	12:10 - 12:57
Period 6	1:50-2:47	1:00 -1:47 PLC 2:15-3:15

BILLINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2023-2024 SCHOOL CALENDAR
Updated 7.17.2023

JUNE 2023						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	P	P	7	8	9	10
11	P					

AUGUST 2023						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	P	P	19
20	P	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

SEPTEMBER 2023						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	*	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

OCTOBER 2023						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	*	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	P	P	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

NOVEMBER 2023						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
			PTC	PTC	PTC	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	*	*	18
19	20	21	*	*	*	25
26	27	28	29	30		

DECEMBER 2023						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	*	23
24	*	*	*	*	*	30
31						

JANUARY 2024						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	*	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	*	13
14	P	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

FEBRUARY 2024						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	*	20	21	22	23	24
25	*	27	28	29		

MARCH 2024						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	*	*	*	*	*	30
31						

APRIL 2024						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	P	*	10	11	12	13
14	15	*	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

MAY 2024						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	SD	*	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	*	28	29	30	*	

JUNE 2024						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	First Day of School
	August 22: K-6th, all new 7th/8th and 9th grade students.
	August 23: All K-12 students in session
	Vacation or Holiday
	Elementary End of Trimester

Graduation Date/Times	
Sunday, May 26	
West 10:00 am; Skyview 2:00 pm; Senior 6:00 pm	
Note: Nov. 1 is Parent Teacher Conferences for Elem. and PLC for MS & HS	



	Six-Week Grading Period for MS & HS
	Last Day of School - May 31 is early release for elementary, middle school and high school.
	Wed. Professional Learning Community Meetings - Dismissal 1 hour earlier than normal
P	PIR Days - Required
P	PIR/TRADE days - No school
SD	Snow Day - This will be a vacation day unless we are required to make up a school day lost due to poor weather earlier in the year. If we are required to make up a day, this vacation day will become a required day of attendance.
PTC	Elementary early release - November 1st and 2nd Parent Teacher Conference
	Middle School Early Release - October 5th Parent Teacher Conferences
	High School Semester Testing - HS early release
*	April 9th - No school for Freshman; ACT/PreACT/Career Fair 10th-12th grade

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

We recognize that this section does not provide the space to fully and accurately respond to each of the questions below. Attachments and appendices are permitted. Please make sure to clearly state where corresponding responses are located.

18. Describe plans for providing transportation, food service, and all other significant operational or ancillary services.

As a hybrid program, students will have access to both breakfast and lunch at their home high school, eliminating the need for duplication in these services. The BPS food service provider, Sodexo, already provides breakfast opportunities for existing student programming at the Lincoln Center and will allow BECS student access as well at no additional cost to the district.

To ensure transportation is not a barrier for students choosing to attend BECS, current district bus schedules will transport students to school at the beginning and end of each school day. Specific shuttles will run at the end of the AM Cohort and beginning of the PM Cohort from each of the three current high schools to BECS. Once students start taking classes on campus at one of our local colleges, they will have the option to transport themselves (as many high school students do), walk when feasible, or utilize our public MET bus transit system.

19. Describe co-curricular and extracurricular programs and how the programs will be funded and delivered.

As a hybrid program, all BECS students will have the same access as current high school students to participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities through their home high school at no additional cost to the district.

20. Describe the proposed financial plan and policies, including financial controls and audit requirements.

BECS is subject to existing school district policies, controls, and audit requirements. A budget will be finalized and adopted by the Billings Public Schools Board of Trustees adhering to state law and board policy. This budget will be under the control of the Billings Public Schools Chief Financial Officer and will follow audit requirements as outlined in state law.

BECS will adhere to all financial reporting requirements and policies as established by the Board of Trustees. The district clerk shall prepare and submit to the Board a financial report of receipts and disbursements of all school funds on an annual basis unless the Board requests such reports on a more frequent basis. The Board Clerk shall perform other duties as prescribed by state law or as directed by the Board.

21. Describe the insurance coverage that will be obtained.

BECS insurance coverage will be under the umbrella of Billings Public Schools which includes Montana Schools Property and Liability Insurance Plan administered by Payne West.

22. Describe the startup and five-year budgets with clearly stated assumptions.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
State Basic Entit. 44.7%	\$158,143	\$162,887	\$167,774	\$172,807	\$177,991
Local Basic Entit. 80%	\$124,887	\$128,633	\$132,492	\$136,467	\$140,561
Total	\$283,030	\$291,520	\$300,266	\$309,454	\$318,552
ANB	-	\$431,665 125 Students	\$887,590 250 Students	\$1,592,136 375 Students	\$2,341,946 500 Students
Quality Ed.	-	\$13,241	\$25,328	\$26,088	\$26,871
At-Risk	-	\$1,706	\$3,413	\$5,959	\$8,531
IEFA	-	\$4,050	\$8,341	\$15,007	\$22,130
DFA	-	\$1,579	\$3,252	\$5,849	\$8,625
SPED	-	\$21,251	\$43,776	\$78,733	\$116,106
Total	-	\$41,827	\$84,113	\$131,636	\$182,263
Overall Total	\$283,030	\$765,013	\$1,271,969	\$2,033,047	\$2,842,761
Certified	\$262,200	\$540,132	\$556,336	\$573,026	\$590,217
Counselor	\$43,701	\$45,012	\$46,362	\$47,753	\$49,185
Admin	\$66,125	\$68,109	\$70,152	\$72,257	\$74,424
Secretary	\$22,138	\$22,802	\$23,486	\$24,190	\$24,916
Custodian	\$15,250	\$15,708	\$16,179	\$16,664	\$17,164
Overhead 5%	\$20,471	\$34,588	\$35,626	\$36,694	\$37,795
Supplies & Technology	\$177,194	\$181,120	\$140,85	\$143,790	\$147,504
Total	\$607,078	\$907,469	\$888,325	\$914,374	\$941,206
General Fund Implications	(\$324,048)	(\$142,456)	\$383,645	\$1,118,672	\$1,901,556

23. Describe the startup and first year cash flow projections with clearly stated assumptions.

We recognize that there will only be basic entitlement funding the first year. The remaining funding will flow through the general fund for the Billings High School District. See chart above.

24. Describe anticipated fundraising contributions and evidence, if applicable.

The Billings Public Schools grant writer will continue to explore grant funding opportunities. Also, the Billings Education Foundation is a nonprofit partner with BPS that provides grants and financial awards to BPS programs. Potential college partners may also have foundations and grant opportunities to assist students with costs associated with college tuition, fees, etc.

25. Describe the facilities plan, including backup or contingency plans.

BPS currently has classroom space located on the third floor of the Lincoln Center, where central office staff reside, that will be made available to house cohort classes and staff. In the fall of 2024, BPS intends to run a High School Bond initiative that will not only update our existing high schools but add a new building to expand our CTE opportunities and increase classroom space.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND NEED

We recognize that this section does not provide the space to fully and accurately respond to each of the questions below. Attachments and appendices are permitted. Please make sure to clearly state where corresponding responses are located.

26. Describe the specific evidence of significant community support.

Our primary partners in making BECS a reality with the opportunity to earn college credits that are meaningful and transferable would best serve our students if they were right here in Billings. We are formally exploring partnerships with both Montana State University Billings and Rocky Mountain College to support our local community. Due to the tight timeline for initial Charter School applications, we have received the following letters of support from each college, understanding that they have requirements from their own governing authorities to satisfy prior to finalizing detailed agreements. Please see these attachments at the end of this application.

- Rocky Mountain College, Dr. Erin M. Reser, Academic Vice President
- Montana State University Billings, Dr. Stefani Hicswa, Chancellor

Local businesses and organizations in our community actively seek employees who have graduated with a high school diploma, and increasingly require college credits, an Associate Degree or higher degrees for preferred employment positions. The following community organizations have offered support for BECS as evidenced in the attached letters found at the end of this application:

- American Jobs for America's Youth Montana, Gabrielle Eklund Rowley, Executive Director
- Billings Chamber of Commerce, Cathay Grider, Workforce Development Manager
- Big Sky Economic Development, Marcell Bruski, Senior Director of Engagement

27. Describe the opportunities and expectations for parent involvement.

Active parental involvement in their student's education is an important element of any student's success. We are dedicated to collaborating and partnering with parents whenever possible. However, the reality is that some first generation college students may not have families who have experience navigating

the path to college, so requiring parent participation may be a barrier for some of our students. BECS commits to welcoming all students and their parents, regardless of their educational background, to learn and grow with us.

It is our goal to include multiple opportunities for parental involvement, including but not limited to the following:

- January Parent Meeting prior to 8th grade registration in February where parents can learn more specifically about BECS.
- Fall Open House within the first couple of weeks of school to welcome parents to our BECS classrooms, answer questions, share ideas and expectations.
- Winter Open House within the first couple of weeks of second semester to touch base with parents and students, seek to understand their questions, and share next steps to support their student's success.
- Regular communication via PowerSchool, Parent Square, email, websites and newsletters to keep parents informed about BECS activities and progress.
- Annual Parent Surveys to include parent voice in our continuous improvement process.

We firmly believe that parents are integral members of our educational team, and their insights and support are invaluable in helping their children thrive academically. Our commitment extends beyond the students to their families, ensuring that together, we create a supportive and empowering educational environment that paves the way for both academic success and personal growth.



ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

October 26, 2023

Dr. Jeril Hehn
Director of Advanced Academics
Billings Public Schools
415 N. 30th St.
Billings, MT 59101

Dr. Hehn, and the grant board:

Rocky Mountain College is exploring a partnership with Billings Public Schools for the Billings Early College School. Rocky has historically welcomed students from virtually every constituency and demographic and this program certainly could be in line with our mission and vision for the future.

Please contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Erin M. Reser
Academic Vice President
Rocky Mountain College
Billings, MT 59102
406.657.1127
erin.reser@rocky.edu



October 30, 2023

Dr. Erwin Garcia
Superintendent
Billings Public Schools

Dear Superintendent Garcia,

On behalf of Montana State University Billings (MSUB), it is my pleasure to write this letter of support for the grant opportunity you are pursuing. As you know, MSUB and Billings Public Schools (SD2) have had a very long tradition of productive collaborations and partnerships in support of students, teachers, and the community.

We are supportive of the planning that is currently underway by SD2 to provide college-level instruction to advanced high school students. MSUB is interested in exploring potential partnerships and strategies with SD2 in support of the goals outlined in your grant to the Montana Office of Public Instruction.

The strength of our partnership related to Dual Enrollment through our current High School Connections and University Connections programs serves as an outstanding example to build upon the processes currently in place and the experiences we have gained over the past several years. I have asked my team to work closely with you and your team to plan and implement necessary additional structure, policies, and processes.

I am confident that through our strong partnership and ongoing collaboration, we will be able to meet student needs together.

Sincerely,

Stefani Hicswa, Ph.D.
Chancellor

Office of the Chancellor

1500 University Drive | Billings, Montana 59101-0245 | Office: 406-657-2300 | Fax: 406-657-2299

Dear Members of the Montana Board of Public Education,

I am writing on behalf of American Jobs for America's Youth Montana (AJAY MT) to express our support for Billings Public Schools' initiative to establish an Early College High School via the public charter bill funding from the last legislative session. We believe that this initiative strongly aligns with our mission and core values to empower the youth of Montana with the skills, knowledge, and opportunities to secure meaningful employment and contribute to the economic growth and vitality of our state.

At AJAY MT, our mission is to facilitate the development of a skilled and work-ready labor force by preparing young Montanans for the workforce and connecting them with career opportunities that offer stability and growth. The establishment of an Early College High School in Billings Public Schools greatly advances this mission, and here are some key reasons why we enthusiastically support this endeavor:

Workforce Development: An Early College High School equips students with the education and training they need to be job-ready. The ability to earn college credits and work toward an associate's degree while in high school prepares students for the workforce with relevant skills and knowledge.

Economic Growth: By fostering a workforce that is well-prepared and highly educated, this initiative contributes directly to the economic growth and prosperity of our state. It helps to meet the needs of local employers by supplying a pool of skilled and talented workers.

Youth Empowerment: American Jobs for America's Youth Montana is committed to empowering young Montanans with the resources and support they need to thrive. Early College High Schools provide a pathway for students to achieve their full potential, ultimately benefiting the state and its economy.

Community Investment: The establishment of an Early College High School not only benefits the students but also strengthens the local community by preparing young individuals for success and empowering them to pursue their career goals right here in Montana.

Alignment with Our Values: Billings Public Schools' commitment to educational innovation and career development for students aligns closely with our values and objectives. We fully support this initiative and are eager to invest in the success of the Early College High School.

The establishment of an Early College High School in Billings Public Schools is a forward-thinking approach that has the potential to transform the educational and economic landscape of Montana. Thank you for your dedication to serving the education and development of Montana's youth.

Sincerely,



Gabrielle Eklund Rowley
Executive Director

Dear Montana Board of Public Education,

As the Workforce Development Manager at the Billings Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express my support for an Early College High School program in our community. The Billings business community recognizes the incredible work Billings Public Schools is doing to stay ahead of the curve providing an exceptional education and advanced opportunities students. Billings Public Schools is well positioned with the right tools and resources for this next step.

I have witnessed firsthand the pressing need for innovative educational opportunities that bridge the gap between high school and college for our local students. The concept of an Early College High School program offers numerous advantages that could significantly impact the future of our youth and our community. By integrating high school and college coursework, this program will create a supportive and challenging environment in which students can excel academically while gaining valuable college experience.

I believe the establishment of this program is essential for four key reasons:

Access to Higher Education: An Early College High School program will provide students, including those who may not have considered higher education as an option - the chance to experience college-level coursework and discover their academic and career interests.

Reduced Financial Barriers: By allowing students to earn college credits during high school, this program can alleviate the financial burden of a traditional college education, making it more accessible to a broader range of students.

Enhanced Workforce Development: Equipping our youth with the skills and knowledge needed for the modern workforce is crucial. Early College High School can help ensure that our graduates are well-prepared for the job market.

Community Engagement: The establishment of an Early College High School program can also foster stronger connections between educational institutions, local businesses, and the broader community. It can encourage collaboration and partnerships that benefit everyone involved.

I encourage you to support the creation of this program. The potential for positive change in the lives of our students and the growth of our community is tremendous.

Sincerely,

Cathy Grider
Workforce Development Manager



Dear Members of the Montana Board of Public Education,

I am writing on behalf of Big Sky Economic Development (BSED) and BillingsWorks to express our enthusiastic support for Billings Public Schools' pursuit of establishing an Early College High School utilizing public charter bill funding. We firmly believe that this initiative directly aligns with our mission to foster a skilled, educated, and adaptable workforce that drives economic growth and prosperity in Yellowstone County and the region at-large.

At BSED, we are champions of economic and workforce development in our region. Our BillingsWorks workforce development program is an award-winning, model program that underlines our commitment to developing local talent for local employers. BSED fully supports Billings Public Schools' pursuit of an Early College High School through the public charter funding because of the following benefits to our community:

Workforce Development: Early College High Schools provide students with the education, training, and practical experience needed to enter the workforce successfully. This directly supports the mission and goals of BillingsWorks, which includes developing a skilled and adaptable workforce that meets the evolving needs of local employers and industries.

Economic Growth: A well-prepared and highly educated workforce is a critical driver of economic growth. By creating a talent pool of young individuals with advanced education and skills, this initiative significantly contributes to the economic prosperity of our region, a core objective of Big Sky Economic Development.

Community Investment: The establishment of an Early College High School represents an investment in our local community and its economic vitality. It reinforces our mission to create a thriving economic environment where businesses can flourish and create job opportunities for the future workforce. It also represents our investment in providing affordable, equitable pathways for students in our community to pursue higher education while still in high school.

We are excited to collaborate with Billings Public Schools to ensure the success of this vision. Our organization is committed to fostering economic growth, supporting local businesses, and connecting the future workforce in our community with meaningful employment opportunities, and this pursuit of an Early College High School is a vital step towards achieving those objectives.

We appreciate your consideration of this innovative education initiative and look forward to witnessing the positive impact it will have on our workforce and our economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Marcell Bruski".

Marcell Bruski,
Senior Director of Engagement, Big Sky Economic Development