BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

January 18-19, 2024 Montana State Capitol Building, Room 152 Helena, MT

<u>Thursday, January 18, 2024</u> 8:30AM

CALL TO ORDER 08:30:23

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

Board members present: Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair; Ms. Susie Hedalen, Vice Chair; Ms. Renee Rasmussen; Dr. Ron Slinger: Ms. Jane Hamman: Ms. Anne Keith: Ms. Madalvn Quinlan: Mr. Gavin Mow. Student Representative. Ex Officio members: Dr. Angela McLean, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE); Mr. Dylan Klapmeier, Governor's Office. Staff present: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Assistant; Ms. Julie Balsam, Accounting Technician. Guests: Dr. Daniel Sybrant, Cognia; Ms. Jordann Lankford-Forster, Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE) Chair; Mr. Lance Melton, Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA); Dr. Christine Lux; Montana State University (MSU); Ms. Marie Judisch, Office of Public Instruction (OPI); Principal Anne Penn Cox Winans Elementary School, Livingston; Ms. Crystal Andrews, OPI; Mr. John Melick, MSU; Dr. Rob Watson, School Administrators of Montana (SAM); Mr. Brenton Craggs, Attorney, OPI; Mr. Chad Vanisko, Board Legal Counsel, Agency Legal Services, Superintendent Paul Furthmyre, Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB); Mr. Larry Crowder, Montana Rural Education Association (MREA); Principal Brett Zanto Capital High School: Ms. Melina Pyron, Polaris Classical School: Superintendent Pete Joseph, Corvallis Public Schools; Superintendent Tony Biesiot, Darby Public Schools, Superintendent Rick Duncan, Powell County Public Schools; Dr. Dan Lee, University of Montana (UM); Superintendent Dan Rispens, East Helena Public Schools; Ms. Jenny Murnane Butcher, Montanans Organized for Education (MOFE); Mr. Alex Rotzal, Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS); Mr. Austin Amestoy, Montana Public Radio; Ms. Christine Kolczak; Dr. Jeril Hehn, Billings Public Schools (BPS); Ms. Jenn Gilbert; Ms. Carrie Kouba, OPI; Mr. Brad Weaver, Cognia; Ms. Barbara Frank, MCPS; Ms. Elizabeth Kaleva, Kaleva Law Firm; Mr. Gary Meyers, Helena Public Schools (HPS); Mr. Rick Wooten, OPI; Mr. Gordon Klasna, BPS; Dr. Chris Olszewski, BPS; Ms. Cedar Rose, OPI; Mr. Caleb Swanson, Glendive Public Schools; Mr. Rob Stutz, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Legal Counsel, OPI; Superintendent Dan Grabowska, Park City Schools; Ms. Kim Popham, Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE).

PUBLIC COMMENT - 08:32:21

Ms. Melina Pyron, founding member of the Polaris Classical School, commented on charter schools and concerns she has with the process the Board has taken in opening Public Charter Schools in Montana.

CONSENT AGENDA - 08:40:46

<u>Board member Quinlan moved to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented.</u> Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

Board member Rasmussen thanked the Board for the time stamps and the work taken to complete the minutes.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

<u>Board member Slinger moved to adopt the agenda as presented</u>. Motion seconded by Board member Hamman.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 1-2)

Item 1 CHAIRPERSON REPORT – 08:42:00 Dr. Tim Tharp

Chair Tharp thanked members for the work they have put in since the November meeting related to Public Charter School applications, noting that for a volunteer Board there has been a dramatic increase in work for Board members.

Item 2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – 08:44:44 McCall Flynn

Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed work completed by Board staff since the November meetings, thanked Board members for scoring the applications for Public Charter Schools, and asked for ideas to streamline the process for the next application cycle. Ms. Flynn reviewed recent meetings of the Community Choice School Commission and discussed work completed by the Early Literacy Advisory Council to create the Early Literacy Targeted Intervention program standards. Ms. Flynn noted the Board will act on the proposed standards at this meeting, then concluded her report with a summary of work for HB 338 pertaining to Indian Education for All. Chair Tharp reviewed the implementation process for HB 338 and stated the Board, MACIE, and OPI are working together to implement the new legislation. Ms. Flynn answered Board member questions.

❖ ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE - Madalyn Quinlan (Item 3)

Item 3 PRESENTATION ON THE CROSSWALK BETWEEN COGNIA AND ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 55, ACCREDITATION STANDARDS – 08:54:40 Dr. Daniel Sybrant

Mr. Daniel Sybrant presented an overview of the Cognia accreditation process and it's alignment with the Montana accreditation standards. Superintendent Paul Furthmyre, Principal Brett Zanto, Superintendent Pete Joseph, Superintendent Tony Biesiot, and Superintendent Rick Duncan all discussed their experience with the Cognia accreditation process and how it aligns with the Montana Accreditation Standards. Board members asked questions of the group.

❖ CHARTER COMMITTEE – Jane Hamman (Item 4)

Item 4 WORK SESSION ON THE APPROVAL AND DENIAL OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS – 10:00:50

Jane Hamman

Chair Tharp opened the item highlighting work done by the Board to review the 26 applications received for the Public Charter School program. Board member Hamman, Chair of the Charter School Committee, thanked the Board for their work, and discussed the process the Board held to review and score the applications, and the interview process that took place during the special Board meeting on November 30, 2023. Board member Keith explained the scoring process and how the numbers were calculated to give each application a final score. Ms. Flynn noted that education partners were asked to review the applications and submit their scores to the Board. Board member Hamman reviewed the number of public comments for each application and whether the comments were in support of, or opposed to, the

proposed public charter school. The Committee created a list of 15 schools to be recommended for approval via resolution the following day, and asked if any Board member would like to remove a school from the list. No requests were made, and Board member Hamman requested Ms. Flynn to prepare a resolution to approve the 15 schools: Billings Early College School, Great Falls Core Elementary Charter; Kalispell Rising Wolf Charter; Missoula TEACH Academy; Billings Multilingual Academy; Bozeman Bridger Charter; Bozeman Charter School; East Helena 227 Academy; Frenchtown Bronc Fast Track Public Charter; Hamilton Bitterroot Polytech; Helena Mount Ascension Learning Academy; Helena Project for Alternative Learning Academy; Kalispell Flathead PACE Academy Charter; Corvallis Distance Learning Center; Corvallis Transformational Learning Charter.

Schools that did not meet the minimum score required for approval were read: Missoula CONNECT Academy; Billings Opportunity School; Boulder Jefferson Academy; Helena Montessori Charter School; Kalispell Rocky Mountain Academy; Park City Montana Connections Academy; Corvallis Gifted Learning Charter; Liberty Elementary Charter; Kalispell Community Partnerships Charter K-3; Kalispell Community Partnerships Charter 3-5. The Chair stated that any of the schools could be moved for discussion. Board members moved Missoula CONNECT Academy, Liberty Elementary Charter, Boulder Jefferson Academy, Park City Montana Connections Academy, Helena Montessori Charter School, and Billings Opportunity School to discussion and held a work session to discuss the six applications. At the conclusion of the work session the Board moved the following schools to the approval category: Missoula CONNECT Academy, Boulder Jefferson Academy, Helena Montessori Charter School, and Billings Opportunity School. Liberty Elementary Charter and Park City Montana Connections Academy remained in the denial category.

Chair Tharp noted that any school can be removed or added during action on Friday, and public comment would be taken at that time.

❖ MACIE LIAISON – Susie Hedalen (Item 5)

Item 5 MACIE REPORT – 13:01:00 Jordann Lankford Forster

Ms. Jordann Lankford Forster thanked the Board for signing on as a supporter of the letter MACIE sent to the National Education Association. Ms. Lankford Forster recapped the January 3, 2024, MACIE meeting announcing the next meeting will be held in person in Billings and will be in conjunction with the OPI Indian Education for All Best Practices Conference. Ms. Lankford Forster asked for approval of the MACIE nomination of Mr. John Well-Off-Man for the Class 7 Representative.

<u>Vice Chair Hedalen moved to approve the nomination to MACIE for John Well-Off-Man for the Class 7 Representative.</u> Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Item 6)

Item 6 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – 13:07:10 Gavin Mow

Mr. Gavin Mow began his update by reviewing the State Student Conference held in October and discussed resolutions approved at the Conference. Mr. Mow announced his continued efforts working with student representatives to assist them in obtaining student membership on their local school boards. Mr. Mow will continue to work on a student questionnaire, and hopes to visit student groups across the state, sharing the questionnaire and learning about their communities. Mr. Mow shared the list of questions with the Board and stated he will share the results with the Board at a future meeting. Mr. Mow answered Board members questions.

❖ ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE - Anne Keith (Item 7)

Item 7

INITIAL REVIEW AND WORK SESSION OF EARLY LITERACY ADVISORY COUNCIL'S RECOMMENDATIONS PERTAINING TO EARLY LITERACY TARGETED INTERVENTION RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 63, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STANDARDS – 13:18:27

Lance Melton, Executive Director, Montana School Board Association; Dr. Christine Lux, Professor of Early Childhood Education, Montana State University; Marie Judisch, Senior Manager of Teaching and Learning, OPI; Dr. Anne Penn Cox, Principal, Winans Elementary School – Livingston

Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed work the Early Literacy Advisory Council completed pertaining to the implementation of HB 352, Early Literacy Targeted Interventions, the recommendations the Council has made to the Board, and work related to create new standards. Ms. Flynn briefly reviewed the proposed standards recommended by the Council then asked panel members to introduce themselves. Board member Keith began the questions for the panel and upon conclusion of the panel thanked the members for their work.

❖ LICENSURE COMMITTEE – Susie Hedalen (Items 8-12)

Item 8

WORK SESSION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 57, EDUCATOR LICENSURE STANDARDS AND EXPERT PANEL — 13:54:41 Crystal Andrews, Director of Accreditation and Licensure, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, Chief Program Officer, OPI; John Melick, Director of Field Placement and Licensure, Montana State University; Rob Watson, Executive Director, School Administrators of Montana

Vice Chair Hedalen opened the item for the Board and asked Ms. McCall Flynn to introduce the panel members. Vice Chair Hedalen and Board members asked questions of the panel pertaining to the proposed revisions to the Educator Licensure Standards, and Ms. Flynn noted the Board will act on Friday to approve the notice and called for questions.

Dr. Tharp closed the meeting for Executive Session at 2:38 PM for the evaluation of the MSDB Superintendent.

Item 14 MSDB SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION Dr. Tim Tharp

Executive Session ended at 2:57 PM.

Item 9 NOTICE OF THE SURRENDER OF BPE CASE #2023-07 – 15:03:02
Brenton Craggs, OPI Legal Counsel

Mr. Brenton Craggs notified the Board of the surrender in BPE Case #2023-07.

Item 10 ACTION ON INITIAL REVIEW OF BPE CASE #2022-13, HARNING – 15:05:16
Brenton Craggs, OPI Legal Counsel

Mr. Brenton Craggs reviewed the Superintendent's request for revocation in BPE Case #2022-13, Harning and answered Board member questions.

<u>Vice Chair Hedalen moved to approve moving BPE Case #2022-13, Harning to a contested case hearing.</u> Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 11 ACTION ON INITIAL REVIEW OF BPE CASE #2023-08, RAUSCH – 15:09:07 Brenton Craggs, OPI Legal Counsel

Mr. Brenton Craggs reviewed the Superintendent's request for a six month suspension of the educator's license in BPE Case #2022-13, Rausch and answered Board member questions.

<u>Vice Chair Hedalen moved to approve moving BPE Case #2023-08, Rausch, to a contested case hearing.</u> Motion seconded by Board member Hamman.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 12 ACTION ON APPEAL HEARING OF BPE CASE 2023-06, SWANSON – 15:15:17

Chad Vanisko, Board Legal Counsel

Mr. Chad Vanisko opened the hearing and the parties made opening statements to the Board.

Mr. Swanson testified and was cross examined by Mr. Craggs, followed by questions from Board members.

Mr. Craggs presented the case on behalf of the Superintendent and called Ms. Crystal Andrews, Educator Licensure Manager, and Dr. Julie Murgel, Chief Program Officer, as witnesses.

Mr. Swanson waived closing arguments, and Mr. Craggs presented his closing arguments.

Board members asked questions of Mr. Swanson prior to deliberating their decision.

<u>Vice Chair Hedalen moved to uphold the Superintendent's decision to deny a Class 3 License in BPE Case #2023-06, Swanson.</u> Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ MSDB LIAISON – Renee Rasmussen (Items 13-14)

Item 13 MSDB REPORT – 16:23:10 Paul Furthmyre

Superintendent Furthmyre reviewed the personnel report, the proposed 2024-2025 MSDB calendar, the Out-of-State-Travel request, and the final approval of MSDB polices which have been under review. Superintendent Furthmyre stated MSDB is nearing completion of the AER Accreditation review, and it should be finalized by mid-February. Superintendent Furthmyre reviewed the presentation by MSDB at the Education Interim Committee the previous week and discussed a new committee the school has created to define the "portrait of a graduate" for MSDB. Superintendent Furthmyre answered Board members questions.

Board member Rasmussen moved to approve the personnel actions for the MSDB as listed in the agenda packet. Motion seconded by Board member Hamman.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

<u>Board member Rasmussen moved to approve the Out-of-State-Travel Request for the MSDB as listed in the agenda packet.</u> Motion seconded by Board member Keith.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

<u>Board member Rasmussen moved to approve the 2nd Reading of MSDB Policies as listed in the agenda packet: 2050, 1000, 1100, 1310, and 1401.</u> Motion seconded by Board member Hamman.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board recessed for the day at 4:54 PM.

<u>Friday, January 19, 2024</u> 8:30AM

CALL TO ORDER – 08:30:06

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

Board members present: Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair; Ms. Susie Hedalen, Vice Chair; Ms. Renee Rasmussen; Dr. Ron Slinger; Ms. Jane Hamman; Ms. Anne Keith; Ms. Madalyn Quinlan. Ex Officio members: Assistant Superintendent Christy Mock-Stutz, OPI; Dr. Angela McLean, OCHE; Mr. Dylan Klapmeier, Governor's Office. Staff present: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Assistant; Ms. Julie Balsam, Accounting Technician. Guests: Ms. Sarah Swanson, Commissioner, Department of Labor and Industry (DLI); Ms. Jacque Treaster, OCHE; Ms. Crystine Miller, OCHE; Dr. Lauren Fern, UM; Ms. Ciera Franks-Ongoy, OCHE; Ms. Krystal Smith, OPI; Mr. Jay Phillips, OPI; Ms. Genie Zeeck, OPI; Ms. Crystal Andrews, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI; Dr. Dan Lee, UM; Ms. Cedar Rose, OPI; Ms. Donnel Rosenthal, OPI; Ms. Wendi Fawns, OPI; Ms. Jenny Murnane Butcher, MOFE; Dr. Jeril Hehn, BPS; Ms. Marie Judisch, OPI; Deputy Superintendent and Chief Legal Counsel Rob Stutz, OPI; Mr. Gary Meyers, HPS; Ms. Kathleen Thatcher, MSU Billings; Ms. Judy Snow; Dr. Gordon Klasna, BPS; Mr. Patrick Cates, OPI; Mr. Larry Crowder, MREA; Ms. Barbara Frank, MCPS; Mr. Bob Funk; Ms. Elizabeth Kaleva, Kaleva Law Firm.

❖ REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 15-16)

Item 15 GOVERNOR'S OFFICE REPORT – 08:32:16 Dylan Klapmeier

Mr. Dylan Klapmeier announced Governor Gianforte will be resuming school tours soon, and that he recently hosted students and families for the Youth Hunting Reception. The Governor is seeking applications for the upcoming open seat on the Board and extended his thanks to Board member Keith for her service. Mr. Klapmeier thanked the Board and staff for their work implementing legislation passed during the 2023 session particularly the work surrounding Public Charter Schools. Mr. Klapmeier noted that the Department of Revenue recently opened the donation portal for the Innovation Education program and Big Sky Scholarship program.

Item 16 STATE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – 08:36:45 Assistant Superintendent Christy Mock-Stutz

Assistant Superintendent Christy Mock-Stutz announced that the Montana Purple Star Schools have been awarded, and Ms. Dani McCarthy has been selected as the Special Education Director at the OPI. Superintendent Arntzen recently met with the Montana High School Association (MHSA) which is ready for Charter Schools to participate in MHSA sanctioned sports and that a Native American representative will be appointed to serve on their board. OPI has consolidated to one building with 60 employees on site and 130 employees working remotely. Staff have been working to implement the Special Education Savings Account by creating a Parent Advisory Council and a new FTE to manage the program. Assistant Superintendent Mock-Stutz briefly reviewed the OPI reports that will be presented to the Board.

Assessment Update – Ms. Cedar Rose, Assessment Director, discussed the third MAST window opening, reviewed the Monitoring and Field Outreach, and highlighted upcoming Assessment Events. Ms. Rose answered Board member questions.

MAST Update – Ms. Krystal Smith discussed the MAST Assessment Pilot, gave an update on outreach to schools, and reviewed the completion data required for the Federal Flexibility Testing Waiver. Ms. Smith discussed recently held external focus groups made up of educators across the state to assist the OPI with MAST implementation and answered Board member questions.

ESSER Update – Ms. Wendi Fawns presented the Federal Report to the Board highlighting the annual data reporting to the Department of Education beginning in March, finalization of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act plans, ESSER Grant Funding Project Outcomes, and an update on the Extended/Expanded Education Learning Opportunity Program. Ms. Fawns answered Board member questions.

Accreditation Report – Ms. Crystal Andrews reported that the OPI continues to provide professional development to districts regarding the new accreditation process and she has been working with SAM to provide training opportunities for districts. The new accreditation platform is on schedule to be released January 31st, and testing is being finalized ahead of implementation. The Accreditation division will be traveling across the state assisting districts with meeting the March 29th reporting deadline for the new accreditation process. Ms. Andrews stated work sessions will be provided to districts in February and March, before answering Board member questions.

Rigorous Action Information – Ms. Carrie Kouba updated the Board regarding the Rigorous Action Plan, and the method to assist schools in correcting deviations to move out of Comprehensive Support.

Transportation Report – Ms. Donnel Rosenthal presented the Annual Transportation Report reviewing the annual Transportation Conference and discussed the ongoing statewide driver shortage. Ms. Rosenthal answered Board member questions.

Content Standards Report – Ms. Marie Judisch gave a brief report on the status of the Content Standards Revision updates and where each content area is in the review cycle.

Data Modernization Update – Mr. Chris Sinrud reviewed the most recent Data Modernization Report submitted to the Education Interim Committee and provided an update on the status of the Data Modernization project for the Board.

Indian Education for All Payments in 20-9-329, MCA – Mr. Jay Phillips provided an overview of the implementation of HB 338 and discussed the status of the implementation process at OPI stating that coordination with school districts is ongoing to follow the statute. Members of the Board Legal Committee commented on the effective date of the statute of July 1, 2024, and the OPI interpretation of the law being effective retroactive to July 1, 2023. It was requested that a resolution be brought forward at the March meeting regarding the effective date. Mr. Phillips answered Board member questions.

Assistant Superintendent Mock-Stutz thanked the OPI staff for their work and for the Board for their time.

❖ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 17-24)

Item 17 PRESENTATION ON DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY EDUCATION PROGRAMS – 09:44:53

Sarah Swanson, Commissioner, Department of Labor and Industry

Commissioner Sarah Swanson introduced herself and her Leadership Team to the Board. Commissioner Swanson discussed areas she is focusing on including building relationships across the state, working

with the Unemployment and Workers Compensation Units, focusing on Workforce Education Opportunities by identifying community and youth needs for entering the workforce or post-secondary education, and how the department can support communities. Commissioner Swanson reviewed the Post Secondary Education Workforce Report and work the department has done collaboratively with post-secondary education institutions and businesses to meet statewide needs. Commissioner Swanson highlighted additional programs within the Department of Labor and Industry that assist schools and communities with education training opportunities and apprenticeship programs. Commissioner Swanson answered Board member questions.

Item 18 COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT – 10:33:02 Dr. Angela McLean

Dr. McLean commended the Board on the previous day's work regarding the Public Charter School applications and thanked the Board and OPI for their collaboration with OCHE regarding educator licensure issues and early literacy efforts. Dr. McLean reviewed the upcoming presentations on the Perkins Program and Math Readiness, then updated the Board with the latest developments regarding the ACT for Juniors. The GEAR UP Grant which funds the ACT is up for renewal and historically OCHE has received a Department of Education waiver for the 50% scholarship requirement to cover the ACT testing fees. The waiver is no longer available and funding from OCHE for the ACT test will not be available after this school year. OCHE is actively seeking alternative funding, and Dr. Julie Murgel stated that the OPI has been communicating with schools regarding this issue as ACT is the assessment platform used for the 11th grade assessment.

Item 19 OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION PERKINS

UPDATE - 10:43:24

Jacque Treaster, Director of Dual Enrollment and Career and Technical Education, OCHE

Ms. Jacque Treaster presented an overview of the statewide Perkins Program and the grant that funds the program for the Board. Ms. Treaster answered Board member questions.

Item 20 OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION MATH

PRESENTATION – 11:06:37

Crystine Miller, Director of Student Affairs and Student Engagement, OCHE; Dr. Lauren Fern, Student Success Coordinator in Mathematics, University of Montana; Ciera Franks-Ongoy, Perkins Equity and Compliance Program Manager, OCHE

Ms. Crystine Miller reviewed work regarding math readiness in the Montana University System . Dr. Lauren Fern and Ms. Ciera Franks-Ongoy reviewed the Math Readiness Program which replaces traditional "remedial" coursework for incoming college freshmen needing additional math support, to a corequisite program which is seeing more success. Dr. Fern discussed the new practice of aligning a student's math coursework to the degree program the student is seeking leading to better student success and achievement. The group answered Board member questions.

Item 21 ACTION ON TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING GRANTS – 11:35:25 Krystal Smith

Ms. Krystal Smith gave a brief overview of the Transformational Learning Grant and the lottery system for applications. Ms. Smith answered Board member questions before requesting the Board approve the applications and the Annual Reports. Ms. Flynn reviewed the two actions being requested of the Board.

Board member Slinger moved to approve the qualification of the Transformational Learning Grant applications for FY2025. Motion seconded by Board member Hamman. Board member Keith noted there is still a question of what is transformational and what is innovative. Ms. Flynn stated that the statute defines what is transformational, the bill sunsets in 2025, and that in the future the Legislature may have other requirements.

Vice Chair Hedalen noted the increase in applications is the result of the work of OPI and DLI promoting the program.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

<u>Board member Slinger moved to approve the Transformational Learning Grant Annual Reports for 2023.</u> Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 22 ACTION ON ADVANCED OPPORTUNITY GRANTS – 11:42:18 Krystal Smith

Ms. Krystal Smith reviewed changes made to the Advanced Opportunity Grant program during the 2023 Legislature and stated that an increased number of districts have applied resulting in a waitlist of districts to receive funding. Ms. Smith reviewed the application process before answering Board member questions regarding the lack of an Annual Report for Grass Range. Ms. Smith stated that Grass Range has a new Superintendent who is working on the Annual Report, and that she has followed up with the Superintendent numerous times but has not received the report to date..

<u>Board member Slinger moved to approve the qualification of the Advanced</u>
<u>Opportunity Grant applications for FY2025.</u> Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Slinger asked Ms. Smith the best way to handle Grass Range not submitting an Annual Report. Ms. Smith replied that the district has received funding for two years, the Superintendent is working on the Annual Report, and suggested approving the reports that have been received and she will return at the next meeting with the Grass Range report.

Board member Slinger moved to approve the Advanced Opportunity Grant Annual Reports that have been received for 2023. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 23 INFORMATION ON THE QUALITY EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM – 11:51:27

Jay Phillips

Mr. Jay Phillips presented information on the Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program and reviewed the report of impacted schools, which the Board and OPI are required to post.

Item 24 PRESENTATION OF THE YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY REPORT –

13:00:12

Genie Zeeck

Ms. Genie Zeeck presented the 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey highlighting topics surveyed including drug and alcohol use, nicotine use, sexual behavior, driving behavior, seatbelt use, and more. Ms. Zeeck noted the survey is free to schools and answered Board member questions.

❖ ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – Madalyn Quinlan (Item 25)

Item 25

ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 53, ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY CONTENT STANDARDS, AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER – 13:16:12 Madalyn Quinlan

Board member Quinlan moved to approve the Notice of Public Hearing pertaining to rulemaking in ARM Title 10, Chapter 53, English Language Proficiency Content Standards, and authorized filing of the notice with the Secretary of State for publication in the Montana Administrative Register. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Flynn noted that implementation of these rules is not until 2025 to allow time for Professional Development.

❖ MSDB LIAISON – Renee Rasmussen (Item 26)

Item 26

ACTION ON MSDB SUPERINTENDENT 2024-2025 CONTRACT - 13:19:00 Dr. Tim Tharp

<u>Board member Rasmussen moved to approve the MSDB Superintendent 2024-2027 contract.</u> Motion seconded by Board member Vice Chair Hedalen.

Chair Tharp noted this is a 3-year rolling contract.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE - Anne Keith (Items 27-28)

Item 27

ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING PERTAINING RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 63, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STANDARDS AND TIMELINE, AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA ADMINSITRATIVE REGISTER – 13:21:02 Anne Keith

Board member Keith moved to approve the proposed Notice of Public Hearing pertaining to rulemaking in ARM Title 10, Chapter 63, Early Childhood Education Standards and Timeline, and authorized filing of the notice with the Secretary of State for publication in the Montana Administrative Register. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

Ms. Flynn reviewed the timeline to ensure they are completed prior to the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 28

ACTION ON AND RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS SUBMITTED ON REVISIONS TO ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 54, EARLY LITERACY TARGETED INTERVENTION STANDARDS – 13:23:25

Anne Keith

Board member Keith moved to disagree with Comment 1 and stated that the parental notification requirements are prescribed in the Early Literacy Targeted Intervention statute in 20-7-1803(4), MCA. Motion seconded by Board member Hamman.

Chair Tharp noted that the statute is clear, and the Board must follow the law, so the response is to disagree.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ LICENSURE COMMITTEE – Susie Hedalen (Items 29-32)

Item 30 PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL EDUCATOR LICENSURE REPORT – 13:34:31 Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews presented an overview of the 2023-2024 Annual Educator Licensure Report noting additions to the report particularly added endorsements and internships. Ms. Andrews noted the number of licenses granted under the Unusual Cases rule, number of applications denied, number of Emergency Authorizations granted, new licenses in fields of critical endorsements for a five-year period, and an increase in new applications from the previous year. Ms. Andrews answered Board member questions.

Item 29 ACTION ON PRAXIS TEST SCORE FOR AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE – 13:58:12

Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews reviewed the work to add American Sign Language (ASL) to the PRAXIS Assessment and work completed by the expert panel to determine a qualifying score. Ms. Lisa Colon Durham, Educational Testing Services (ETS) explained that ETS partnered with Galludet University to have their ASL assessment added to the PRAXIS Assessment for Montana. Ms. Andrews reviewed the process the expert panel used to determine the passing score, which was forwarded to the PRAXIS Working Group and the Montana Council of Deans of Education (MCDE) who both approved the score of 3+. Ms. Andrews noted that a new test for Special Education will be under review in the coming months.

<u>Vice Chair Hedalen moved to approve the American Sign Language Proficiency</u>
<u>Interview Assessment and the qualifying score of 3+.</u> Motion seconded by Board member Hamman.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 31

ACTION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION TO INITIALLY APPROVE ABCTe AS AN ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION AND ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM – 14:15:41

Dr. Julie Murgel and Crystal Andrews

Dr. Julie Murgel reviewed the legislation passed allowing alternative teacher certification programs in Montana. Dr. Murgel introduced Ms. Jessie Luther, who has been assisting with bringing on a new program, and Ms. Isabelle Welch from ABCTe. Dr. Murgel and Ms. Welch provided background information on ABCTe and answered Board member questions.

<u>Vice Chair Hedalen moved to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to initially approve ABCTe as an alternative teacher certification and endorsement program through January 2026.</u> Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

Board member Keith stated her concern that ABCTe does not require student teaching prior to certification, and asked if approval of this program could exclude Special Education certification due to concerns around classroom experience.

Board member Quinlan stated her concerns that current Educator Licensure Standards require classroom experience.

Dr. McLean asked how the pedagogy coursework is handled without actual classroom experience and Ms. Welch described how the test is designed to capture those areas.

Board member Rasmussen asked how long the Initial Approval is, and Dr. Murgel answered that for K-12 accreditation with new schools there is an initial timeframe before site visits occur and then recommendation for full approval for 5 years.

Dr. Dan Lee representing the MCDE gave public comment sharing MCDE's concerns with the ABCTe program and the approval process. MCDE requests the Board delay approval for further consideration.

Ms. Kim Popham commented regarding concerns about underprepared teachers struggling to succeed without classroom experience.

Ms. Jenny Murnane Butcher commented about concerns with teachers not having classroom experience, and the lack of Indian Education for All training within the program.

Chair Tharp asked for clarification from ABCTe regarding other states only allowing certain endorsement areas offered by ABCTe. Ms. Welch stated that some states only approve certain areas. The Chair asked what areas OPI is requesting, and Dr. Murgel referred to page 431 in the packet for a list of the endorsement areas being requested.

Chair Tharp asked ABCTe to respond to the issue that their teachers lack student teaching requirements. Ms. Welch replied that their long-standing existence is proof their program works and that their teachers are prepared.

Board member Quinlan asked how the endorsement areas were determined and asked for a response to the concerns surrounding Special Education. Dr. Murgel stated that ABCTe approached OPI after identifying the endorsement areas specific to Montana. Dr. Murgel stated that she sent ABCTe the Montana requirements for the endorsement areas they identified, then gave an example that currently if an individual wanted a Class 5 License and was enrolled through ABCTe they would not be able to be licensed because ABCTe is not an approved teacher certification program in Montana.

Board member Quinlan asked for a comparison between the ABCTe Reading Endorsement program and the recent approval of the Reading Endorsement program at Salish Kootenai College (SKC). Dr. Murgel stated the SKC requirements are very similar to those of ABCTe.

Board member Quinlan noted the heavy work the Board has done with Charter applications and asked if it would be problematic for the Board to delay action until the March meeting for more information and consideration could take place. Ms. Welch stated that it delays an individual's ability to be in the classroom though Dr. Murgel answered a delay would not impact OPI.

Board member Keith inquired about satisfaction of schools with ABCTe teachers. Dr. Murgel responded that surveys are sent to the EPP's about the teachers they have trained, and to employers about the teachers they have hired, to find out if teachers have been adequately trained. Dr. Murgel stated that would be the same expectation for teachers trained by ABCTe.

Board member Keith asked ABCTe how many states have tried ABCTe and have not kept them as an alternative program. Ms. Welch stated that has happened historically due to legislation passed outlawing alternative teacher programs.

Board member Rasmussen stated that any time a new process comes on board the public has concerns, but that she supports an initial two year process to determine the program's success.

Vice Chair Hedalen expressed her appreciation for many aspects of the ABCTe program particularly her interest in the Veteran's component offered by ABCTe, but has concerns with the lack of student teaching, the Special Education program, and the Reading Specialist Program. Vice Chair Hedalen stated she does not want to water down expectations, but that the state is experiencing a teacher shortage, and this program offers a solution to that problem.

Dr. McLean thanked everyone for their input and noted programs such as the Teacher Residency Program, Sprint Degree, Master of Art's in Teaching, and programs that decrease the time to earn degrees and get educators prepared, licensed, and in the classroom. Dr. McLean asked that the Board address the concerns regarding IEFA and Special Education, amend the motion, and let the BPE Licensure Committee gather more information before acting.

Chair Tharp referenced work done with the Constitutional Players regarding the changing face of education and noted that other professions have alternative pathways to be licensed for their profession. However, the Board is responsible for maintaining high quality education.

Vice Chair Hedalen noted she supports many of the components of ABCTe, has concerns with other components, but recognizes that as a whole there are questions and that taking the time to address those concerns seems appropriate.

<u>Vice Chair Hedalen amended the original motion to move Item #31 approving</u>
<u>ABCTe as an alternative teacher certification program to the March 2024 meeting.</u>
No second.

Back to the original motion. Chair Tharp restated the original motion.

Board member Slinger stated his support of ABCTe and that he would support a friendly amendment to pull Special Education, address teacher mentorship, and the IEFA concerns. He stated he would not support the original motion.

Board member Rasmussen asked if ABCTe certified teachers can take the IEFA course online to satisfy that requirement and Ms. Andrews stated they can complete the online course. Board member Rasmussen stated concerns about slowing the process down too much and that she would not support pulling Special Education after the Annual Licensure Report noted the increased number of teachers who have added Special Education as an endorsement.

Chair Tharp noted that he intends to vote against the motion on the table and if the motion fails he will direct staff to place this on the agenda for the March meeting and direct the Licensure Committee to meet in the interim.

No further discussion. Motion failed 5-2 with Board member Rasmussen and Vice Chair Hedalen voting in favor.

Chair Tharp requested Ms. Flynn to place this item on the March agenda and for the Licensure Committee to meet ahead of the March meeting.

Item 32

ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 57, EDUCATOR LICENSURE STANDARDS, AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER – 15:07:02 Susie Hedalen

Vice Chair Hedalen moved to approve the Notice of Public Hearing pertaining to rulemaking in ARM Title 10, Chapter 57, Educator Licensure Standards, and authorized filing of the notice with the Secretary of State for publication in the Montana Administrative Register. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ CHARTER COMMITTEE – Jane Hamman (Item 33)

Item 33

ACTION ON THE RESOLUTIONS TO APPROVE AND DENY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS - 15:24:19

Jane Hamman

Board member Hamman opened the item for the Board to act on the applications for Public Charter Schools noting some late public comment that came in regarding Billings Opportunity School, and a letter from Park City Schools withdrawing their application to create a public charter school.

Board member Hamman moved to approve the resolution to adopt the public charter proposals as listed in the resolution: Billings Early College School, Great Falls Core Elementary School, Kalispell Rising Wolf Charter, Missoula TEACH Academy, Billings Multilingual Academy, Bozeman Bridger Charter, Bozeman Charter School, East Helena 227 Academy, Frenchtown Bronc Fast Track Public Charter, Hamilton Bitterroot Polytech, Helena Mount Ascension Learning Academy, Helena Project for Alternative Learning Academy, Kalispell PACE Academy Charter, Corvallis Distance Learning Charter, Corvallis Transformational Learning Charter, Missoula CONNECT Academy, Boulder Jefferson Academy, Helena Montessori Charter School, Billings Opportunity School. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

Public comment from Ms. Bea Kaleva, thanking the Board for taking the time to go through all the applications, then commented on concerns raised by the Board the previous day regarding the issue of governance, and concerns regarding for-profit vendors.

Public comment from Superintendent Dan Grabowska who thanked the Board for their time reviewing the applications and for completing their due diligence. Superintendent Grabowska offered clarity regarding funding, partnering with a forprofit entity, and the issue with governance.

Public comment from Ms. Jenny Murnane Butcher thanking the Board for the transparency and careful consideration of the applications, before addressing the question of "what is innovative", and concerns MOFE has heard from parents that innovative programs may be part of budget cuts, which may be why schools are offering these through Public Charter Schools. Ms. Murnane Butcher noted the distinction between Education Management Organizations and for-profit entities.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Hamman stated 19 charter schools have been approved and that contracts will include a baseline for performance. The Governor's Office of Budget and Program Planning will determine the amount of funding schools receive and disburse the funds noting that the provisions in Title 20 will need to be followed.

Board member Hamman moved to approve the resolution to deny the public charter proposals as listed in the resolution: Kalispell Rocky Mountain Academy, Corvallis Gifted Learning Center, Kalispell Community Partnerships K-3, Kalispell Community Partnerships 3-5, Liberty Elementary Charter. Motion seconded by Board member Rassmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Tharp commended Charter Committee Chair Hamman and committee members for their hard work, as well as Executive Director Flynn and Board staff. Chair Tharp noted that the Board has received critique and criticism regarding the process and that changes will be made for the next application cycle. Chair Tharp also noted there are discrepancies in the law and conflicting areas of statute that need to be addressed.

❖ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Dr. Tim Tharp (Item 34)

Item 34 RECOGNITION OF EXITING BOARD MEMBER – 15:44:08 Dr. Tim Tharp

Ms. Flynn extended her thanks to Board member Keith for her work on the Board. Board members expressed their appreciation and admiration for Board member Keith and thanked her for her service to public education in Montana.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS March 18, 2024

MACIE Update
Approve MSDB School Calendar
Assessment Update
Federal Update
Accreditation Report
Annual School Food Services Report

Draft – CAEP MOU Content Standards Revision Update

PUBLIC COMMENT – 15:56:18

Dr. Rob Watson thanked Board member Keith for her work on the Board, as a colleague, and as a teacher to his own children. Dr. Watson invited Board members to upcoming SAM meetings, conferences, and monthly webinars which have covered subjects including AI and Accreditation, and upcoming webinars regarding open enrollment, and recording of school board meetings. Dr. Watson discussed concerns with the graduation requirements and implementing the new financial literacy requirements and asked for those areas to be considered if the Accreditation Standards are reopened.

Vice Chair Hedalen thanked Dr. Watson for his assistance to school districts.

Chair Tharp thanked Dr. Watson for the guidance pertaining to the new Accreditation Standards.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.

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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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