

PUBLIC CHARTER APPLICATION COVER PAGE

Check One: ☒ New Public Charter under existing local school board ☐ New Public Charter District

Name of Public Charter School Liberty Academy Charter School

Local school district in which the public charter school will be physically located: _____

Liberty Elementary School District #10

Contact Information for the Governing Board Chair

Contact Person: David Hofer Chair, Board of Trustees
Name Title

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Name Title

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Local Board of Trustee Evidence

Check One: ☒ Approved by existing local school board ☐ Refused approval by existing local school board

Provide copy of local school board minutes as evidence.

See attached Resolution Dated October 9, 2024

PUBLIC CHARTER APPLICATION

Name of Public Charter School: Liberty Academy Charter School

Provide an executive summary with the general purpose and rationale for the creation of the public charter school, and explain how the proposed public charter school is different from a program that you could operate or are currently operating without the public charter designation.

Opening Date: August 2025 Public Charter Term Length: 2025-2030
 Grades to be served: K-8
 Minimum Enrollment Per Year: 70
 Planned Enrollment Per Year: 90
 Maximum Enrollment Per Year: 130

During the proposed public charter 5-year term, indicate the specific grade-level programs that you plan to serve:

Check all that apply: ☒ Elementary Program ☒ Middle Grades Program ☐ High School Program

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

	Elementary							Middle		High School				Total
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Year 1	10	11	6	9	10	10	10	5	3					74
Year 2	9	10	11	6	9	10	9	10	5					79
Year 3	10	9	10	11	6	9	9	9	10					83
Year 4	14	10	9	10	11	6	6	9	9					84
Year 5	14	14	10	9	10	11	5	6	9					88

Executive Summary:

This public charter school application will address the following questions and requirements:

- Has the applicant established that there is a need for the proposed public charter school? **YES.**
- Does the proposed public charter school meet the needs of all its students? **YES.**
- Does the proposed public charter school incorporate principles and practices which are evidence that its programing will be of the highest academic quality? **Yes**
- Does the proposed public charter school outline how it will provide a healthy learning environment and positive school climate? **YES.**
- Does the proposed public charter school application demonstrate that the proposed governing board has the experience and capacity to implement the plan outlined in the application with fidelity? **Yes.**

- Has the applicant established that the proposed public charter school will provide an educational opportunity for students that they would not otherwise receive at the traditional school they are zoned to attend? **Yes.**

In alignment with the legislative intent originally outlined in HB 549, and now articulated in Title 20, Chapter 6, Part 8 MCA, to create high-performing public charter schools, by encouraging and inspiring the use of different models of teaching, governing, scheduling, and providing instruction in public schools to meet a variety of student needs; to develop the full educational potential of each person; to provide additional educational opportunities for all Montana students, parents and communities who wish to exercise their rights to choose and receive a constitutionally guaranteed, equitable public education through the creation of a public charter school model, and who wish to pursue an alternative learning environment for their children who are not thriving in a traditional school setting, and who ultimately believe that they have not received the services their children are statutorily entitled to from the district of residence, the Board of Trustees for the Liberty Elementary School District, does hereby state their intent to create a public charter school.

The new "Liberty Academy" Charter School is a familiar framework in that it is modeled after a "school within a school" structure, which similarly configured charter programs across the state have been previously approved by the BOPE. Not unlike those approved in the previous round of applications, the proposed Liberty Academy will be composed of a single public charter school operated within the established public school district structure. What is innovative, creative and in alignment with the stated objectives in the initiating charter school legislation, will be the Liberty Academy's use of a network of "remotely located" and "linked" classrooms, teachers, students, administrators and support staff all serving students at different physical locations around the area which together will make up the Liberty Academy campus and public charter school. In this regard, the Liberty Academy will operate in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives in relation to the unique needs of English Language Learners (ELL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) students, which have been articulated in the responses prepared in relation to specific application questions and stated charter program requirements. Students enrolled in the Liberty Academy and attending classes at any of the school's remote and linked classrooms will receive a combination of on-line and on-site (synchronous and asynchronous) instruction delivered, managed and monitored by credentialed teaching and support staff who have been specifically recruited as a result of having specific training in working with ELL or ESL students, or who themselves come from a ELL or ESL learning background. These highly qualified staff will be assigned to each of the Academy's combined on-site and virtual classrooms. This hybrid model of remote instruction which incorporates both on-site and on-line instruction is in alignment with the definition outlined in HB 214 and supported by 20-7-118 MCA which in essence states that remote instruction means pupil instruction that occurs through virtual learning processes incorporating distance and online learning methods that best prepare pupils to meet desired learning outcomes.

As defined in Section 3.(1) of HB 549, as an independent, established (1986), and accredited public school district, the Liberty Elementary School District #10 Board of Trustees, as "the local board of the located district" does clearly meet the criteria to be the Public Charter School Applicant under this legislation. Please note - Submission of this Public Charter School Application has been approved by the Board of Trustees at a Special Board held on October 9th, 2024 (See attachment). The applicant asserts that the intent of the proposed Liberty Academy Public Charter School is based upon an unmet need of students who many of which may well be at risk of imminent academic failure unless and until they are granted

access to educational programing that has been intentionally designed to address their unique and specific needs. In fact, the very premise of the proposed Liberty Academy Charter School program as detailed in this application, is to clearly demonstrate that the Hutterite Colony students who have historically attended classes under the supervision and management of school districts to which they have been historically bound, have been, and will continue to be chronically underserved, ignored or marginalized by the public school “districts of residence”, unless a mechanism is provided wherein parental choice and the needs of individual students to receive access to alternative high performing, personalized learning programs which emphasize “culturally rooted instruction” (HB 214) and that have been intentionally designed for ELL and ESL students, is provided.

The applicant is confident that the framework provided for in HB 549 and adopted into law through Title 20, Chapter 6, Part 8 MCA creates both the structure and the long-awaited opportunity for parents from these Hutterite Colony communities to have a right to choose the educational environment which best supports and encourages students to develop their full educational potential. In order for this opportunity to be fully realized across the State of Montana, parents must receive the institutional support that will be required for them as individuals to exercise this choice. As such, districts like Liberty Elementary School #10 that have the experience, capacity and sensibility necessary to create, manage and administer these innovative educational programs should be provided with an opportunity to do so.

As also provided for in HB 549, and in accordance with the definitions outlined in Section 3.(6), the applicant wishes to be recognized as the “located school district” within which, the new proposed public charter school is to be located. If, as indicated in HB 549 Section 4.(b)(vii)(viii), it is the objective and intent of the legislation to “encourage the use of different models of teaching and learning; and to provide students, parents, community members, and local entities with expanded opportunities for involvement in the public education system” then the applicant would encourage the review committee to look favorably on the structure, innovation and enriched instructional programing which is embedded in Liberty Academy Charter School model. The targeted student population this charter school proposal has identified as being both at risk and in need of an alternative model of education, have historically had few options in actively choosing an educational environment which provides them with a equitable educational opportunity.

Great effort has been expended by an entire team of professionals working with and through the Board of Trustees at Liberty Elementary School District as the applicant to detail all the working elements of the proposed Liberty Academy Charter School framework, and to provide appropriate and thoughtful responses to each of the areas identified through the application process. Beginning with the articulation of the mission and vision, the applicant has sought to convey to the reviewer that the proposed public charter school model is the result of years of research, data analysis, curriculum development, perfecting instructional methods, implementing meaningful proficiency based assessments, recruiting and retaining credentialed teachers and classroom assistants with the aptitude and skill to deliver instruction to ELL and ESL students, delivering focused training and professional development supports to classroom teachers and critical support staff, monitoring student performance and managing the educational programing that is required to provide the highest quality academic resources and social emotional learning supports for classrooms which serve the needs of English Language Learners (ELL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) students. All of these elements combine to ensure that the Liberty Academy Public Charter School will meet its goal of being a high performing system of public education.

Although the charter school structure being proposed herein has been adapted to fit the specific criteria and requirements outlined both HB 549, Title 20, Chapter 6, Part 8 MCA and the approved Public Charter School Application process, the foundational concepts which guide, inform and govern the implementation process have been in development and continuous practice within the existing Liberty Elementary School District operational model for nearly a decade. What is being proposed, has already been in place and has been yielding promising results. The necessity and urgency felt by all those associated with this process is growing daily in the face of recent developments and has acutely focused renewed efforts by the applicant and the students, parents, and communities most adversely impacted by the alarming trends to provide an opportunity through the Public Charter School framework and structure to support efforts to enrich the existing model of innovation and to scale up the existing best practices to accommodate the enrollment of a greater number of at risk and unserved students and to provide critical educational services to these vulnerable students, parents and families that have yet to receive the access to critical educational resources and strategic program supports to which they are entitled from the state's system of public school education.

Given recent changes in the ongoing challenges faced by a growing number of Hutterite Colony communities, the applicant feels compelled to provide some additional context into the sense of urgency felt and shared by the member colony communities who have voiced their overwhelming support for the immediate implementation of a new model of management, and educational services intended to meet the specific needs of their children. Since the passage of the parental choice legislation, six (6) additional colony public schools in the area around Liberty Elementary School District have been all but abandoned by their districts of residence. After more than thirty (30) years of continuous educational support through the delivery of on-site instructional services to each of these Hutterite Colony School locations, the local public school district's governing bodies and administration have repeatedly indicated that with the adoption of the new requirements outlined in HB 214 that these districts are not prepared, trained, staffed or financially capable of providing the necessary educational resources required to address the specific needs of ELL or ESL students in rural and remote locations. In conjunction with these alarming admissions, concerned parents and advocates for these students when pressing these districts to deliver the constitutionally required equitable education to these children, surprisingly, have received ultimatums from the districts of residence stating that they believe two "options" exist for these communities – either elect to bring your children to the schools located in town, many of which are at least an hour bus ride each direction away, or revert to home schooling through use of a private school model. Unfortunately, all six (6) of these additional schools were left with no choice but to privatize their community schools.

Although on-going efforts have been made by the Liberty Elementary School District to assist and support the private colony schools and parents where and when possible, these communities have been struggling to adopt alternative educational models having been effectively left with no viable or reasonable options for the continued public education of their children. Ultimately these six (6) additional colonies communities have been forced, against their wishes, to privatize and reluctantly relinquish their children's opportunity to a public-school education. The applicant shares this information in an effort to help illustrate the acute and deteriorating nature of the situation facing these Hutterite Colony communities, and to reinforce the real and measurable impact of the on-going challenges confronting these families, students, and communities. The unmet student need is real, palpable and growing.

As indicated in this specific example, situations like the one encountered by these Hutterite Colony communities are, unfortunately, all too common, and will likely become the pattern of failure by the local public schools to provide educational services to these communities unless and until dramatic changes are made to accommodate innovative solutions. As such, it is imperative that if parental choice measures like those outlined in HB 549 and the related Public Charter School Legislation are to have a meaningful impact on the ability of students, families, and communities to exercise their rights in seeking out additional educational opportunities for their children, then access to proven, innovative, and specialized programs and services delivered by experienced and committed teachers and staff, all supported by an administration and governing Board who shares the same sensibilities and priorities as the community they serve, must be given an opportunity to build capacity under these educational systems using different and pioneering approaches, resources, strategies, and operational structures like those outlined in the Liberty Elementary School District #10 application and Liberty Academy Charter School model. The applicant encourages the Board of Public Education to please give due consideration to the application submitted herein and to grant the applicant an opportunity to scale-up the conceptual framework and ELL and ESL student focused instructional model which has been in development for years through the implementation of the plan and proposal presented for the creation of the Liberty Academy Charter School in the following pages.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Q1. State the public charter school's mission and vision and describe why this initiative is important to the community it will serve.

It is the mission of the Liberty Academy Charter School to provide access to educational programs designed to meet the unique needs of multicultural and multilingual students. To ensure that the mission is implemented with fidelity, the Board of Trustees, administration and staff of the Liberty Academy will design and deliver innovative, flexible, and remotely delivered educational programming which incorporates personalized learning strategies aligned to transformational learning programs, and supported by performance and proficiency-based progress monitoring that will include the use of authentic assessments that are implemented to support the unique individual needs of ELL and ESL students, all of which is guided by a culturally rooted pedagogy that incorporates language, history, traditions, beliefs, values and the expression of authentic identity all of which are integral parts of life in their community.

It is the vision of the Liberty Academy to create a public charter school program which provides a model of instruction that is flexible and creative, that also promotes within each student a sense of identity and purpose (actualization), along with a belief in personal efficacy and advocacy, as well as instilling a lifelong passion for learning. The applicant is committed to designing, developing, and implementing enriched personalized educational programs which include a focus on the specific needs of individual ELL and ESL students, their families, and communities. This program will provide access to ELL and ESL educational programming designed to be delivered through a combination of both remote and on-site classroom instruction.

This initiative is critically important to the students, families and communities which the Liberty Academy is intentionally designed to serve. It is worth noting that as previously mentioned, at this time due to factors beyond their control, these parents, families, and communities have been left with no option but to adopt private educational systems and instructional programs in direct opposition to their preference

to exercise their rights to what the State's constitution promises them. Believing that they have been all but abandoned by the locally located public-school districts to which just two years ago they were all an integral part of, these parents and communities have had to scramble to adopt, implement and manage the operations of unfamiliar private educational programs and systems in an effort to keep their children on pace with their peers who are attending classes in the public education system. Unfortunately, despite a concerted effort over the past two years to expose the untold story of the contentious public education experience for students living in Montana's Hutterite Colony communities and attending schools on these sites which have traditionally been served through their association with local public school districts to which they are geographically bound, the reality remains that the educational needs of these children living in many of these locations continue to be ignored by the public education systems to which they theoretically "belong". In response to this unfortunate situation, the parents living in these communities who struggle to provide for the educational needs of their children, despite contributing hundreds of thousands of dollars in property tax support to local school systems, continue to demonstrate their unwavering support for the proposed Liberty Academy public charter school model. It should be noted that unlike other public-school districts in the area, Liberty Elementary School District #10, has consistently provided for the needs of students residing both within and when the opportunity was presented, outside the district. As an extension of this approach, the Liberty Academy model has been intentionally designed to address generations of educational malpractice and professional malfeasance by adjacent elected boards of trustees, administrators, teachers and elected county and state officials or agency leadership who year after year have placed little value on, committed inadequate resources to the support of, or who have expended minimal effort when providing schools in Hutterite Colony communities with an equitable allocation of educational resources including quality educators, individualized programing, appropriate up-to-date instructional materials, state-of-the-art technology, access to consistent staff training, or professional development and responsible data driven decision making in alignment with the governance and management models responsible for the oversight of these Hutterite Colony schools. The Liberty Academy Charter School model, when approved and given the opportunity to be implemented, will all but eliminate these ongoing deficiency issues.

Q2. Identify the targeted student population and the community the public charter school proposes to serve.

As required under statute, enrollment in the Liberty Academy will be "open to any student residing in the State of Montana" (HB 549 Section 8 (1)(a)). The Liberty Elementary School District Board of Trustees anticipates that the charter school will primarily serve a population that is almost entirely composed of students and families living in the surrounding Hutterite Colony communities located throughout North Central Montana. More specifically, the proposed Liberty Academy is structured to accommodate the initial enrollment of ELL and ESL students in grades K-8 who request admission and who likely reside in any of the following six (6) communities: Eagle Creek Colony, Riverview Colony, Cool Springs Colony, Sunny Brook Colony, Hillside Colony, and Rimrock Colony. Enrollment in the academy will be open to any student residing in the state of Montana, including students and families living both within and out of the Liberty School District. Admission to the academy will be managed by the Liberty Elementary School District #10 Board of Trustees using established student enrollment policies with preference given to ELL and ESL students from local Hutterite Colony communities located across North Central Montana who currently have been receiving educational programing through a separate private school structure, and whose children are not currently enrolled in any other district or attending a public school.

The targeted population of prospective students that will be served by the Liberty Academy Charter School share a common educational attribute in that they will include students who have been identified, through State of Montana recommended testing assessments, as meeting the criteria and characteristics as ELL and ESL students who are identified in accordance with school district policy and practice as having limited English proficiency. It is also worth noting when discussing the unique needs of the students which will be served through the new Liberty Academy Charter School that this student population of ELL and ESL students has been chronically underserved, ignored, or marginalized by the adjacent public-school districts of residence to which they have been previously enrolled. In order to address the deficiencies in basic educational supports, programs, and resources which have not historically been made available to this population of students, the proposed Liberty Academy Charter School instructional model is based upon the expansion of existing programing, processes, strategies, annual instructional assessments, and student performance metrics which have been intentionally designed, developed, and implemented by the board, administration, teachers, and support staff currently working as administrators, teachers, or classroom assistants in the Liberty Elementary School District.

Q3. Describe plans and timelines for student recruitment and enrollment, including lottery procedures.

Student recruitment efforts are underway by the applicant and will be ongoing in anticipation of approval of the public charter school application. Multiple community listening sessions, presentations before the Academy Advisory Board and follow-up conversations have been held over many months with parents and community leaders to discuss the likelihood that they would: (1) support the proposed operations of the Liberty Academy as a community funding partner should financial support be necessary to ensure adequate resources were available to meet the projected financial obligations and (2) make a commitment in advance to enrolling their children in the Liberty Academy in anticipation that educational services would be provided at each of the remote classroom sites, with the understanding that the governance, administration, operational management, supervision, instruction, and strategic support for each of these classrooms and sites within the Liberty Academy framework would be provided by and through the Liberty Academy Charter School management model. Not surprisingly, the response from these parents and community groups was an unqualified and overwhelming YES to both questions.

As outlined in Title 20, Chapter 6, Part 8, in the event that at any time during the initial charter school contract period (2025-2030) the enrollment capacity of the Liberty Academy Charter School exceeds the district's ability to accommodate additional students seeking enrollment in the district, the governing Board of Trustees and administration will adopt and administer a policy which provides for the selection of students through a lottery system. As also provided for in Title 20, Chapter 6, Part 8, the district administration, in accordance with state statute and district policy, may provide enrollment preference to: (1) students who are residents of the located school district; (2) students who were enrolled in the charter district the previous school year; (3) to siblings of students already enrolled in the charter district; and (4) children of members of a public charter school's governing Board and full-time employees.

The enrollment capacity of the Liberty Academy Charter School will be determined annually by the governing Board in consideration of the public charter school's ability to facilitate the academic success of all enrolled students, to achieve the objectives specified in the charter contract, and to ensure that its student enrollment does not exceed the financial resources or the capacity of its physical classrooms or sites.

Q4. 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.

The Liberty Academy's academic program has been designed to promote innovation, encourage adaptability of its academic programs, incorporate flexible instructional strategies, support personalized learning plans, and adopt related academic and social emotional learning supports that are aligned to the district wide transformational learning framework. The academic program also reflects the intentions and aspirations of the Liberty Academy Charter School's governing Board of Trustees, administration, teachers, and classroom support staff to design, develop, and implement a proficiency or performance-based program and pathway of instruction, assessment, and measurement (grading, and academic reporting) that meets the unique needs of ELL and ESL students who live within the local Hutterite colony communities.

The primary goal of the charter district's proficiency or performance-based instructional model and academic plan is to ensure that all students, grades K-8, have the opportunity to acquire the foundational knowledge and practical skills and abilities that are deemed to be essential to their individual success not only as measured in a public school environment, but most importantly access to a program of study based on a experiential learning model that emphasizes opportunities to learn by doing while promoting individualized pathways to acquiring hands-on practical knowledge and skills that will help them become valued and productive contributors to the Hutterite Colony Communities and world in which they live and will one day work. As students enrolled in the Liberty Academy likely will not attend a formal educational program beyond eighth grade, the focus on acquiring general knowledge through proficiency-based instruction in foundational educational concepts and applied knowledge are at the core of the innovation which is integrated into the transformational learning model. Recognizing the need to provide individualized or personalized learning programs which can be adapted to meet the students where they are in their personal learning process, the Liberty Academy teaching and support staff, working with administrators and educational specialists, will design and deliver differentiated instruction across a variety of content areas and grade levels that collectively are intended to authentically measure and assess student abilities.

Assessment of individual student performance at predetermined intervals will be in accordance with the following proficiency model and rubric wherein students will be awarded a grade of completion upon demonstrating their proficiency through the administration of a summative subject or skills assessment. Proficiency will be defined as mastering 70% of the content material or better and 60% or better of mastery of the assigned projects or skills acquisition. Students who struggle to initially meet expected individual learning outcomes or standards of performance will receive additional instructional support, focused tutoring, structured practice time, all through a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) to help them achieve proficiency or meet the expected individualized performance outcomes and standards by subject matter content area and grade level. The academic program includes instruction in all subject areas, including English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies. What makes this approach to instruction and individualized support innovative is that unlike your typical grade level classroom, instruction in the Academy model is intentionally designed and delivered in a classroom environment where students from all grades, K-8, simultaneously participate in instructional programming throughout the day that is delivered through a combination of whole-group, small-group and personalized teaching and learning modules. Grade level specific, performance based instructional modules are designed to accommodate multiage, multigrade level, and multilingual students across

classrooms, that incorporate the first language (German) of the ELL and ESL students as a key component of the content rich instructional materials. All students receive core instruction through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous online and direct instructional delivery from a certified teacher. The Liberty District will continue to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers that either have additional training in the instruction of ELL of ESL students or who are themselves former ELL or ESL learners.

Classroom teachers and support staff utilize a variety of textual materials (printed copy and electronic format) which integrate the student's first language (German) alongside traditional English based content resources and materials. Research examining the conditions under which ELL and ESL students retain the greatest amount of content information, formulaic knowledge, and subject area content application confirm that using teaching techniques and strategies which expose ELL and ESL students to foundational skills in both their native root language and English during the formative stages of their development (Grades K-3) dramatically improves student literacy, vocabulary, grammar, sentence construction, retention, and articulation.

Another innovative component of the classroom instructional model is the use of peer mentoring and student driven instructional support when older grade level students who, are more advanced academically provide mentoring and tutoring to their younger classmates. One of the many advantages of having a one-room school environment where age groups and grade levels are combined K-8, is that all students take an active role in the learning of each other and themselves. This collaborative approach to teaching and learning is novel in the public-school classroom but remains an essential component of the instructional models in use at each of the colony communities which also support private German culture and language immersion schools that operate alongside the western public-school model.

In conjunction with the proficiency – performance-based instructional model, which is an integral component of the academic plan and conceptual framework, individualized programs of instruction using an experiential learning model are structured to be progressive in design with the intent of advancing student achievement through a series of increasingly more complex learning tasks (projects and activities) along with associated benchmarks or measured outcomes. The integrated nature of instruction and student proficiency-based progress monitoring is supported using on-going authentic subject matter assessments intended to measure student progress and performance (proficiency) on a daily, weekly, quarterly and annual basis. Lesson, unit and project-based assessments are administered at predetermined intervals to provide both teachers and students with an opportunity to review individual progress towards content mastery. In addition, required MAST and WIDA assessments will be administered at the same time and intervals as all Liberty Elementary School District #10 students and as prescribed by the Office of Public Instruction. Although some state approved standardized assessments will be implemented in year one of the Charter contract, alternative assessments which are reflective of the adaptive instructional model being used in the Academy academic plan will be adopted into the weekly, monthly, and annual proficiency progress monitoring and assessment cycles for years two through five.

Q5. Describe any variances to existing standards that the public charter school requires to enhance educational opportunities.

The Liberty Academy Charter School seeks variances from the requirement of meeting aggregate hours as outlined in MCA 20-2-121 and ARM 10.55.906. In complying with Liberty Elementary School District #10 Board Policy #1005, the district may include in its calculation of ANB a pupil who is enrolled in a

program providing fewer than the required aggregate hours of pupil instruction required under Montana law if the pupil has demonstrated proficiency in the content ordinarily covered by the instruction as determined by the Board of Trustees using district designed assessments.

At the discretion of the district, a student may be given credit for a course satisfactorily completed in a period of time shorter or longer than normally required and, provided that the course meets the district's curriculum and assessment requirements, which are aligned with the content standards stated in the education program. Examples of acceptable coursework include, but are not limited to, those delivered through correspondence, extension, and distance learning courses, adult education, summer school, work study, specially designed courses, summative learning content/projects, and challenges to current courses.

In addition, Liberty Academy anticipates using the Liberty Elementary School District's membership in the Montana Small Schools Alliance to meet both the Library and Counseling Accreditation Standards. In the event these modified standards are not recognized for inclusion in the Liberty Academy's operational programming, then the applicant would also seek appropriate variances to these standards.

Q6. Describe the instructional design, including the type of learning environment, class size and structure, curriculum overview, and teaching methods.

Instructional Design: *The Liberty Academy is intended to promote a more inclusive and equitable educational experience by engaging all K-8 students in hands-on, real-world learning opportunities. Interactions among students, teachers, parents, and community form the network that supports learning. The educational model supported by the instructional design and conceptual framework is focused on experiential learning for equity and aims to provide a well-rounded and inclusive learning experience that prepares students for success in a diverse and dynamic world. Key components of the proposed instructional design include the following:*

Experiential Learning: *Experiential learning is at the core of this model. It involves learning through direct experiences, such as exploratory learning, service learning, simulations, fieldwork, and project-based activities. Students apply what they have learned in the classroom to practical, real-life situations.*

Personalized or Proficiency-Based Learning: *The instructional design incorporates a system of instruction aligned to assessment in which student progress is based on a student's demonstration of competence rather than on the basis of seat time or the age or grade level of the students.*

Collaborative Learning: *Collaboration is a fundamental component of this model. Students often work in small groups or teams to solve real-world problems. Collaborative learning encourages communication, cooperation, and the sharing of diverse viewpoints and experiences.*

Reflective Practice: *Reflective practice is a key element of experiential learning. Students are encouraged to reflect on their experiences, both individually and in group settings, to deepen their understanding of the material and their own growth. Reflective journals, discussions, and debriefing sessions are common tools.*

Feedback and Assessment: *Continuous feedback and assessment are integral to this model. Students receive feedback on their performance and are given opportunities to improve based on that feedback. Assessments are often authentic, reflecting the real-world tasks and challenges students will encounter.*

Type of Learning Environment:

Equity and Inclusion: In this model, special attention is given to addressing and reducing disparities in educational outcomes. Strategies for inclusion, diversity, and accessibility are integrated into every aspect of the educational process.

Flexible Learning Environments: To accommodate diverse learning styles and individual needs, flexible learning environments, both physical and virtual (remote instruction), are essential. These environments will be accessible to all students, including those with disabilities.

Class Size and Structure:

Manageable enrollment numbers and classroom size (10 to 20 students) at each of the school classrooms allows for a teacher to student ratio that is estimated to be at or near 12:1 which is favorable to providing all K-8 students with access to individualized teaching and personalized learning supports.

Curriculum Overview:

The curriculum designed and developed for use in the Liberty Academy Charter School is based upon the following core principles:

- Learning is developed within the personal, physical, social, and intellectual contexts of the ELL learners and ESL students.
- A strong ELL and ESL educational program should provide developmental continuity from one grade level to the next.
- The successful English Language Learner (ELL) and ESL student is motivated, strategic, knowledgeable, and interactive.
- Children who are identified as ELL or ESL learn best when they have real purposes and can make connections to real life (instruction is reflective of their lived experiences).
- Effective learning is a combination of student exploration and teacher and mentor modeling.
- Proficiency-based assessment is an ongoing and multidimensional process that is an integral part of instruction.
- Making reading and writing connections across multiple sources and curricula facilitates meaning.
- Literacy for the future means literacy in multiple applications and technologies.

Teaching Methods:

- Culturally Responsive Teaching: Culturally responsive teaching acknowledges and values the cultural backgrounds and perspectives of all students. Educators adapt their teaching methods and content to be inclusive and relevant to diverse student population of ELL and ESL students.
- Community Engagement: Engaging with the local community or broader society is often a central aspect of experiential learning for equity. Students work on projects and place-based activities that have a positive impact on their communities through which they gain a sense of civic responsibility.
- Professional Development for Educators: Teachers and educators will have access to professional development and training on a regular schedule in order to effectively implement this model. Through this process, they will learn how to design experiential learning opportunities, foster equity, and adapt their teaching strategies to meet the needs of a diverse, multicultural, and multilingual student body.

Q7. 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.

The Liberty Academy Charter School will utilize a contracted services model when identifying and providing appropriate services and support to students who have been, as a result of a preliminary screening and diagnostic process, determined to be in need of, or who can benefit from, district provided disability services. These contracted services will be provided in accordance with existing agreements administered by and through the Board of Trustees for the Liberty Elementary School District #10. Likewise, the Liberty Academy Charter School will adhere to all pre-existing federal and state requirements including U.S. Department of Education's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), FAPE, Montana Code Title 20 Chapter 7, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, along with any other appropriate agency level guidance, requirements and directives to LEAs.

Students who have been, as a result of the administration of appropriate academic assessment procedures (Home Language Survey and WIDA Screener tools), identified as ELL or ESL will be administered the WIDA ACCESS for ELL's assessment resulting in placement in the District ELL and ESL support programs in alignment with the development of individual language instruction educational programs (LIEPs) to determine the level, scope, and depth of English Language Learner instructional support.

Additional programming intended to address the needs of individual students who have been identified as facing academic challenges, and/or who, through appropriate assessment and screening procedures are likewise identified as gifted or talented students, will receive instructional supports that are integrated into their individual educational plans (IEP) which will be implemented alongside existing strategies, techniques, programs, and instructional supports designed and delivered in conjunction with programming intended to meet their specific needs. All programming and supports developed to address the needs of both of these groups of students will be aligned with existing best practices, state and federal regulations, and appropriate agency requirements. The identification of and instruction for students with learning disabilities follows the guidelines set forth by the state of Montana. Specifically, the district will utilize an instructional model of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), aligned to the district's framework for school improvement, that focuses on system level change across the classroom, school, and district to provide all students with the best opportunities to maximize achievement, both academically and behaviorally. The district has adopted the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) with the intent to provide all students, regardless of whether they have been identified as ELL, academically challenged, or gifted and talented with direct access to high-quality instruction and intervention, social and emotional learning, and positive behavioral supports necessary to ensure positive outcomes.

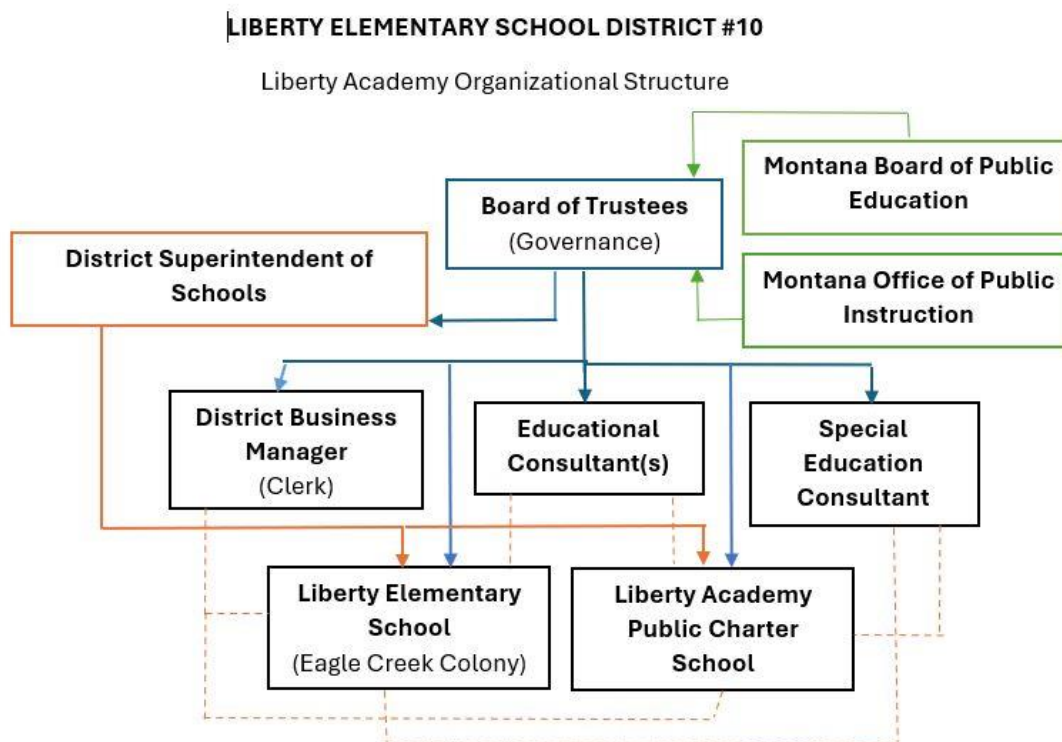
Q8. Describe student discipline policies, including those for special education students.

The Liberty Academy Charter School will adhere to student discipline policies, including those providing for the discipline of special education students enrolled in the Academy as provided for in [Liberty Elementary School District #10 Policy Manual](#).

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Q9. 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.

Liberty Elementary School District #10 – Liberty Academy Charter School Organizational Chart



Operational Overview

The Liberty Academy Charter School will be a K-8 educational system which operates according to the following organizational structure. Governance of all Charter School operations will be under the direction of the locally elected Liberty Elementary School District #10 Board of Trustees. In conjunction with the responsibilities of the Board, management and administrative services are provided by the Liberty District Administrative team including the district Superintendent of Schools. In addition to the Board and the District Superintendent, the district also employs a full-time business manager who also acts as the Board Clerk and is part of the administrative team, as well as a group of independent educational consultants who advise the Board on a variety of educational and operational issues. All related lines of authority and reporting between the governing board, staff, related bodies such as advisory bodies or parent and teacher councils, and external organizations shall be under the jurisdiction and authority of the District Board of Trustees.

District Advisory Council

In conjunction with the District Board of Trustees and Administrative team, the operations of the Liberty Academy Public Charter School will be guided by an advisory council that will report directly to the Board and which will be composed of an appointed representative from each of the six (6) colony communities whose students are enrolled in the Liberty Academy. It is the expectation of the governing Board of Trustees, that the advisory council will be consulted on a regular and routine basis about district operational issues and that the advisory council shall advise the Board on matters of culture and language integration into the district curriculum and instructional framework. Membership on the advisory committee will be renewed annually.

Q10. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the governing board, the proposed leadership management team, and other entities shown in the organizational chart.

The governing body of the Liberty Academy Charter School will be the Liberty Elementary School District #10 Board of Trustees. It is the intent of the applicant to utilize the present structure in place in the Liberty Elementary School District which is defined in HB 549 Section 3. (5) as a "local school board", which means a preexisting board of trustees exercising supervision and control of the schools and programs of a local school district pursuant to Article X, section 8, of the Montana constitution and the laws of the state of Montana. This governing Board for the newly established Liberty Academy Charter School has been provided for in HB 549 Section 3.(4) and defined therein, as follows, the "Governing board" means the local school board that is a party to the charter contract with the board of public education and that exercises supervision and control over a charter school pursuant to the charter contract. The elected Board of trustees in place in the summer of 2025 will oversee the transition and the implementation of the Charter district model. The district is very fortunate to have at the helm of this process a very experienced group of Trustees, including a board chair who is the longest continuous serving school board member in the State of Montana having been a member of the Board for 38 years. Other veteran Trustees include the vice chair who has served for 28 years and a newly elected member who is completing his third year. In addition to the Board of Trustees, the district management team who will oversee day-to-day operations of the Liberty Academy Charter School includes a full-time district Superintendent/Principal and a business manager/clerk that will serve as the district administrative team. Other members of the management team will include the contracted services of a group of educational consultants and specialists.

The role and responsibility of the Board of Trustees includes approval, by resolution, of a comprehensive and up-to-date district policy manual which is intended to provide guidance to all district personnel in their respective positions as they implement the Board's mission, vision and goals on a day-to-day basis. Updates to the district policy manual are approved by the Board on a regular and routine basis to ensure that the district remains in compliance with Montana Law, conforms to recommendations received from the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and the Board of Public Education (BOPE), and regularly adopts best practices which are part of the recognized standards of the education profession. In addition, the district employs the services of a professional education consulting team who advises the Board and Superintendent on a variety of policies, procedural, compliance, and student data reporting systems.

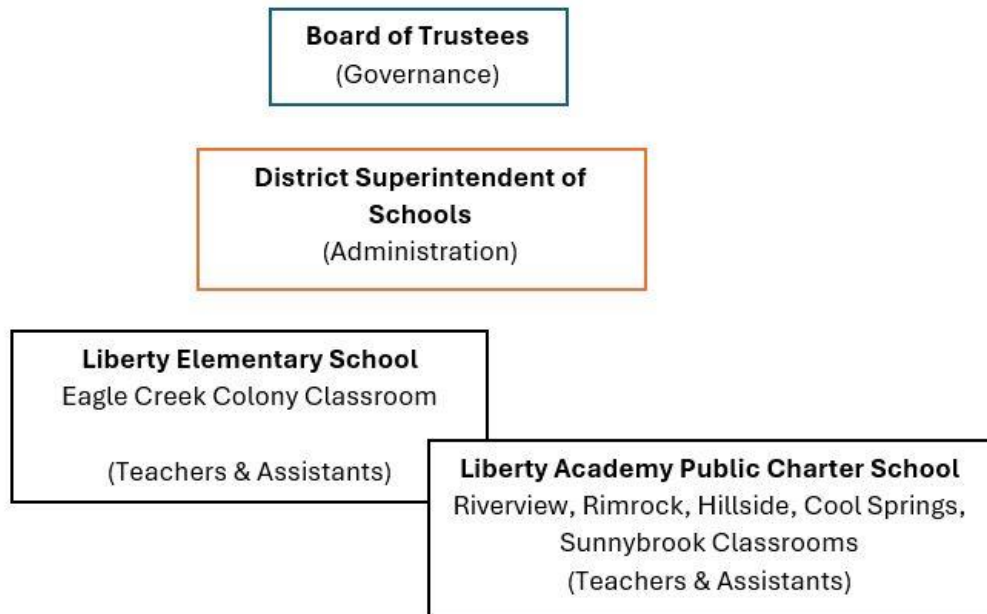
Q11. Provide a staffing chart for the public charter school's first year and a staffing plan for the term of the public charter school.

The Liberty Academy Charter School will begin in Fall 2026 with a teaching staff of 7 FTE and three paras. There will be a .75 FTE superintendent/principal for the charter school, and a .75 business manager/clerk.

The district is part of the Bear Paw coop that will serve the special education students. The charter school will be part of the Montana Small School Alliance for counseling and librarian services.

LIBERTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT #10

Liberty Academy Staffing Chart



The Liberty Academy Charter School staffing plan for years 1 – 5 of the initial charter contract, includes kindergarten through grade eight educational and classroom instructional services that will be provided to students attending classes and receiving remote instruction at all six (6) district managed classrooms located at Eagle Creek, Riverview, Hillside, Rimrock, Cool Springs and Sunny Brook Colony communities. Certified, licensed, and endorsed classroom teachers will be employed by the Liberty Elementary School District #10 Board of Trustees and will be assigned by the District Superintendent of Schools to a specific district classroom as part of the Liberty Academy staffing plan. Supporting the classroom teachers at each remote location will be trained, classified staff who will assist with the day-to-day needs of the students, and who, along with the classroom teacher, will work to promote greater understanding, retention, and completion of the instructional curriculum adopted by the district and implemented through the Academy. The district maintains a well-defined instructional curriculum which is in alignment with the standards and practices outlined by the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and the Montana Board of Public Education (BOPE).

Staffing requirements will be determined on an annual basis in relation to student enrollment numbers within the district and the Liberty Academy. Specifically, classrooms with K-8 enrollment that is 10 students or below, a single classroom teacher will be assigned. For classrooms where K-8 enrollment is over ten but less than 20 students, a single classroom teacher and one teaching assistant will be assigned. Finally, for classrooms with K-8 enrollment that is greater than 20 students, two classroom teachers will be assigned. The applicant anticipates that its total district student enrollment projections are very accurate and allow for preplanning of staffing services in alignment with teacher recruitment and retention plans well in advance of each academic year. Having the advantage of being able to calculate student enrollment numbers for each subsequent year of the charter contract period in advance of the start of each new calendar cycle provides an advantage to the Board and administration in setting annual staffing levels and coordinating teacher and classroom assistant recruitment plans. Teacher retention plans are also reflective of the district's anticipated investment in securing the services of certified, highly qualified, and experienced teaching staff for each of the classrooms which are under the direction of the Liberty Academy Charter School.

Q12. Detail the public charter school startup plan, identifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals.

The applicant's plan for start-up operations, associated timelines, tasks and critical personnel includes the following:

Upon notification of the final approval of the Public Charter School Application and Proposal submitted by the Liberty Elementary School District #10 and the signing of the five year charter contract with the BOPE, the Board of Trustees for the district, working collaboratively with the district Superintendent/Principal, Business Manager/Clerk, and professional educational consultants will design, develop, and draft an implementation plan based upon the structure identified in the Public Charter School application materials. The implementation plan will clearly set forth the academic and operational performance expectations and measures for the startup year, including timelines and critical personnel.

Drafting of the implementation plan will include identifying the specific tasks, priorities, short-term and long-term goals, associated objectives, and the identification of key personnel and the related duties to be assigned to critical team members in managing the transition to the new Charter School. It is worth noting that the sequence of implementation has already been identified in the months leading to this application process, and critical resources have been, and will continue to be staged, at the direction of the Board of Trustees in anticipation of the opportunity to scale up and implement this proven concept.

Q13. Describe the plans for recruiting and developing school leadership and staff.

Planning for the recruitment, retention, and development of critical district leadership personnel and staff will proceed according to the following internal process:

- *Board of Trustees participates in a series of Board development sessions, trainings and goal setting activities which provide resources on how to be effective school leaders.*
- *District Administration participates in professional development trainings, local and regional district administrator gatherings, and successfully completes required continuing education credentials.*

- *Board of Trustees adopts policies, procedures, and best practice models which encourage the recruitment, professional development and support of capable and experienced district leaders including administrators, lead teachers, and key support staff.*
- *District Administration works directly with teachers and classroom assistants to design and implement professional improvement plans, including continuing education opportunities provided or sponsored by the district or enrollment in college or university programs leading to endorsement in areas of specialization, credentialing, or school leadership.*
- *Board of Trustees and District Administration encourage and provide financial support for staff interested in participation and enrollment in the MT OPI Executive Leadership Academy and Teacher Leadership Academy.*
- *Board of Trustees and District Administration encourage and provide financial support for staff interested in participation and enrollment in the Leadership Montana program.*
- *Board of Trustees adopts policies which provide financial support and salary incentives to district staff interested in participating in professional development programs leading to development of leadership skills.*
- *Board of Trustees adopts a district Leadership succession plan identifying the development, training, recruitment, and retention of key and critical district staff.*

Q14. Describe the proposed leadership and teacher employment policies, including performance evaluation plans.

The Liberty Academy Charter School will adhere to the policies, practices and procedures outlined in the [Liberty Elementary School District #10 Policy Manual](#) when managing key leadership positions, teacher employment policies and performance evaluation plans.

Q15. State the proposed governing bylaws.

The Liberty Academy Charter School will adhere to the Governing model of the [Liberty Elementary School District #10 Policy Manual](#) including the adopted policy and procedure manual approved by the Board of Trustees. The foundation of the governing documents (by-laws) are the statutes, federal and state rules, regulations and requirements and agency guidelines will guide the Board, administration, and employees.

Q16. Explain any partnerships or contractual relationships central to the operations and mission of the public charter school.

The Board of Trustees for the Liberty Elementary School District has long standing partnerships with professional consultants who will continue to provide a variety of specialized services to the district and Liberty Academy Charter School in the area of Board and Administrative support – including board training, advising and professional development opportunities for both trustees and district administrators, or instructional coaching and professional development for teachers and classroom assistants, technical assistance with setting up and managing the district's IT network, computer systems and student information systems (Infinite Campus) and assistance with agency, federal and state reporting and compliance (TFS, Title Programs, Federal Grants).

Q17. Provide the proposed calendar and sample daily schedule.

Sample 2025-2026 Liberty Academy Charter School Calendar

2025-2026

Academic Year Calendar Liberty Charter School

July 25						
Su	M	Tu	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	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August 25						
Su	M	Tu	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	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September 25						
Su	M	Tu	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	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October 25						
Su	M	Tu	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	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November 25						
Su	M	Tu	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	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December 25						
Su	M	Tu	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	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

January 26						
Su	M	Tu	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
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February 26						
Su	M	Tu	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	25	26	27	28

March 26						
Su	M	Tu	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	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April 26						
Su	M	Tu	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	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May 26						
Su	M	Tu	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	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June 26						
Su	M	Tu	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	25	26	27
28	29	30				

July 26						
Su	M	Tu	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	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August 26						
Su	M	Tu	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	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Notes

August 13-15 PIR
August 18 First Day of School
Sept 1 Labor Day No School
Oct 16-17 PIR No School
Oct 21 End of Q1
Nov 4, 6 PIR No School
Nov 26-28 Thanksgiving
Dec 24-Jan 2 Christmas Break
Jan 7 End of Q 2
Feb 16 No School
March 12 End of Q3
April 3 - 8 Easter Break
May 20 Last day of School
May 21 Teacher Check out

Calendars by Vertex42.com

<https://www.vertex42.com/calendars/>

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Sample 2025-2026 Liberty Academy Charter School Daily Schedule

Liberty Academy Charter School Daily Schedule

Grades K-3

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:30	German Integration	German Integration	German Integration	German Integration	German Integration
8:30-9:30	Whole Group Reading	Whole Group Reading	Whole Group Reading	Whole Group Reading	Whole Group Reading
9:30-10:00	Writing	Writing	Writing	Writing	Writing
10:00-10:15	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
10:15-11:25	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
11:25-12:25	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:25-1:00	Individualized Learning	Individualized Learning	Individualized Learning	Individualized Learning	Individualized Learning
1:00-2:00	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies
2:00-2:30	Specials/ Projects	Specials/ Projects	Specials/ Projects	Specials/ Projects	Specials/ Projects
2:30-3:30	Science	Science	Science	Science	Science

Grades 4-8

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:30	German Integration	German Integration	German Integration	German Integration	German Integration
8:30-10:00	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
10:00-10:15	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
10:15- 11:30	Reading/Literature	Reading/Literature	Reading/Literature	Reading/Literature	Reading/Literature
11:30-12:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:30-1:00	Individualized learning	Individualized learning	Individualized learning	Individualized learning	Individualized learning
1:00-2:00	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies
2:00-2:30	Specials/ Projects	Specials/ Projects	Specials/ Projects	Specials/ Projects	Specials/ Projects
2:30-3:30	Science	Science	Science	Science	Science

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Q18. Describe plans for providing transportation, food service, and all other significant operational or ancillary services.

The Liberty Academy Charter School proposal includes provisions and programing to meet student needs. Each individual colony site will provide transportation, food service, and any other necessary operational or ancillary services.

Transportation – although the remote classrooms which make up the campus of the Liberty Elementary School and Liberty Academy are geographically separated from the located school district and the primary site of the Liberty School which is located at Eagle Creek Colony, there is no immediate need to provide transportation for students receiving instruction at these remote classrooms as they are located on the established colony sites. In situations where an event or related activity requires that students be transported from one particular site to participate in an activity, or project, accommodations for the attendance shall include transportation provided by the colony community at its own expense.

Food Service – At each of the remote classroom sites, the community provides students with meals for both breakfast and lunch at no additional expense to the students or families of the academy or the district. All costs for the food service are borne by individual colony communities and no payments are received from the school district in support of meals, snacks or beverages for the district or the academy's students.

Ancillary Services – As indicated in a prior response, additional ancillary services such as Special Education or support programs for students with disabilities will be provided to students enrolled in the Charter School through established programs and services secured and provided by the Liberty Elementary School District #10, working in collaboration with the required state agencies and in conjunction with partnerships with professional consultants, cooperatives, companies or specialists. In addition, the district will provide students and families enrolled in the Liberty Academy Charter School who request district assistance with access to mental health providers or organizations who specialize in these services. Other ancillary services will be provided at each of the individual classroom sites in conjunction with the availability of funding resources, technical support, trained staff, and student need.

Q19. Describe cocurricular and extracurricular programs and how the programs will be funded and delivered.

The Liberty Academy Charter School, working in conjunction with the District Board and administration, are committed to providing all students with the opportunity to explore their interests outside of the core classroom subject matter and content by participating in potential school-sponsored cocurricular programs. In order to provide these opportunities, the district and academy anticipate securing program funding and resources from external sources (non-profit foundations, philanthropists, or community partners) which provide financial support for the development of student centered cocurricular programs and activities. If successful in securing appropriate funding and financial support, it is the intent of the district to create a music program, an art program, and a vocational-technical education program. In addition, staffing for these programs would require contracting with specialists or experts in these areas or fields who could provide the appropriate level of K-8 instruction, course coordination, and delivery of cocurricular programing.

Q20. Describe the proposed financial plan and policies, including financial controls and audit requirements.

The Liberty Academy Charter School will adhere to the financial plans, policies, financial controls and audit requirements adopted by the Liberty Elementary School District #10 Board of Trustees as outlined in the [Liberty Elementary School District #10 Policy Manual](#). Annual budgets will be adopted by the District Board of Trustees per state law and board policy. The budget will be under the control of the Liberty Elementary School District #10 Clerk/Business Manager and will follow audit requirements as outlined in state law.

Q21. Describe the insurance coverage that will be obtained.

The Liberty Academy Charter School as a school operating under the governance and management of the Liberty Elementary School District #10 will secure insurance coverage in accordance with district policies, including property and liability insurance through MSGIA, worker's compensation through Montana State Fund, and unemployment insurance through the State of Montana.

Q22. Describe the startup and five-year budgets with clearly stated assumptions.

The projected Liberty Academy Charter School startup and five-year budgets are outlined below:

**5-Year Projected Expenditure
Budgets**

SY	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030
Total Staff	7 teachers, 3 paras	7 teachers, 3 paras	7 teachers, 3 paras	7 teachers, 4 paras	8 teachers, 2 paras
Salaries (Stated Assumption 1)	\$420,000.00	\$432,600.00	\$445,578.00	\$497,197.00	\$483,990.00
Fringe, at 15% (Stated Assumption 2)					
Other Costs	\$123,258.37	\$150,384.77	\$191,330.59	\$146,535.65	\$187,037.00
TOTAL PROJECTED EXPENDITURES	\$543,258.37	\$582,984.77	\$636,908.59	\$643,732.65	\$671,027.00

Stated**Assumptions**

(1) Salaries: In each classroom, one (1) teacher per location with 1-10 students; one (1) teacher and one (1) teaching assistant per location with 11-20 students; and two (2) teachers per location with 21+ students. Assumed Year 1 average salary of \$43,000 for 187-day annual contract for a teacher and \$30,000 for 187-day contract for a teaching assistant with an annual estimated salary increase of 3%.

(2) Fringe: Assumed at 15% of total salaries. Assumed that it will be levied via Retirement Fund so not included in "General Fund" expenditure calculations.

Q23. Describe the startup and first-year cash flow projections with clearly stated assumptions.**5-Year Projected Cash Flow**

SY	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030
ANB for Base Budget (Stated Assumption 3)	68	74	79	83	84
General Fund, Highest Budget w/out a Vote (Stated Assumption 4)	\$432,258.37	\$464,484.77	\$512,408.59	\$517,732.65	\$539,027.00
Anticipated Enrollment	74	79	83	84	88
Assumed External Contributions, estimated at \$1500 x current anticipated enrollment	\$111,000.00	\$118,500.00	\$124,500.00	\$126,000.00	\$132,000.00
TOTAL PROJECTED BUDGET	\$543,258.37	\$582,984.77	\$636,908.59	\$643,732.65	\$671,027.00

STATED ASSUMPTIONS:

(3) ANB:- Per email with Alivia Skeslien-Jenkins, OPI Budget Analyst on 10/17/2024, in Year 1 Liberty School District would likely be eligible for a "Significant Enrollment Increase Payment" due to a projected enrollment increase of 68 students.

(4) General Fund: Based on calculations inputted in "FY 2025 General Fund Budget Spreadsheet", version FY25_F4, dated 10/7/2024, <https://opi.mt.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ho98opOQrr8%3d&portalid=182>

Additional grant funding will be available, as provided for under the terms of each grant. General fund reserves are currently at legally allowed maximums, providing ample time for state and local funding associated with the charter school to become available. Other district funds are also available for interfund loans should it be necessary.

Q24. Describe anticipated fundraising contributions and evidence, if applicable.

As a clear indication of their support for the proposed Liberty Academy Charter School model each of the six (6) Hutterite colony communities who will provide the District with access to classrooms at their sites have also pledged annual financial support as their contribution toward the operating expenses of the charter school. Calculation of the annual contribution received from each participating colony community will be at the discretion of each community partner with a recommended annual contribution provided by the district. Please note that this contribution of financial resources is voluntary and is not based upon an assessment of tuition, nor are these contributions in any way assessed to parents or the communities as fees for student attendance. Rather, these annual charitable contributions reflect the colony community partner's understanding of the costs of operations and their willingness to provide onsite services and funding which will be used directly by the Liberty District in providing critical educational services to their children. In addition to an annual direct financial contribution, each of the colony communities have also indicated their intention to provide the classroom space at each remote location at no charge to the Liberty District, along with agreeing to provide a variety of support services at each

classroom site including custodial, maintenance, repairs, utilities, etc. at no charge to the Liberty Elementary School District #10. It is also worth noting that in addition to the pledge each colony is making in support of the Liberty Academy Charter School, each of the Hutterite colonies currently pay hundreds of thousands of dollars each year in local property taxes which a significant portion of actually goes towards supporting the costs of operations for “located districts” from which they should be receiving educational services, but, unfortunately, do not.

Q25. Describe the facilities plan, including backup or contingency plans.

At each of the charter school sites (classrooms) which are under the management and supervision of the Liberty Elementary School District #10 Board of Trustees, the Board anticipates that the use of each of the buildings, classrooms and school grounds, which make up the “campus” of the Liberty Academy Charter School, will be secured through individual “use agreements” executed between the Liberty district and individual Hutterite Colony community partners. Specifically, the terms and conditions of those use agreements will be drafted by district legal counsel in accordance with both district policy and State statute.

Q26. Describe the specific evidence of significant community support.

Evidence of specific community support for the Liberty Academy Charter School proposal which have been received from the parents, community members, local businesses and elected officials from the communities adjacent to each of the proposed classroom site sand are attached to this application.

Q27. Describe the opportunities and expectations for parent involvement.

When discussing the anticipated opportunities and expectations for parental involvement through the proposed Liberty Academy Charter School, it is imperative that to appreciate the commitment and investment by these communities that there is an understanding of the history of education in the colonies, and the related history of public education systems who have been responsible for providing services to students at the colonies who are living within their located district boundaries. As previously indicated in the narrative responses to this Public Charter School Application, the history of Hutterite Community Public Schools dates back several decades to the late 1940’s (Milford Colony – Aucher Creek School). The tradition of formal education through the establishment of German Culture and Language Immersion schools in the Hutterite Colony Communities themselves dates back multiple generations and literally hundreds of years. Interestingly, the concept of early education programs which are so common in our public-school systems across the state today, for example the concept of “Kindergartens” is the result of a rich history of formal education programs for German speaking students which were first introduced and established in the United States by Margarethe Schurz, who founded the first kindergarten in Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1856.

It may not be generally known that the demonstrated commitment to formal education for children living in Montana’s Hutterite Colony communities coincides with the founding of many of the state’s early, rural public-school systems. Beginning in the 1940’s, Hutterite Colony Communities began to appear in many of Montana’s central and eastern rural farming and ranching communities as families migrated from Canada. When established, many parents from these communities sought very early on in their founding to develop opportunities for public education for their children, in conjunction with their German culture and language immersions schools, by establishing public school districts and/or schools at these initial

colony sites. Today, these one room colony schools remain a part of the rich legacy of frontier schools in our state and remain a vestige of that early history where families and neighbors built, supported and sent their children to attend these community schools.

Although once a recognizable feature of the rural Montana landscape, few one room schools exist today outside of the thriving classrooms which are found in nearly 40 Hutterite colony community schools currently in operation. Across every Hutterite colony community in the state of Montana, colony students attend two full-time schools simultaneously, five to six days a week for over thirty-eight weeks each year. Colony students start each weekday by attending their German culture and language immersion school, beginning at 7am in the morning until it's time to start public school classes which typically begin somewhere between 8:15am and 8:30am. Following completion of the required public-school schedule which typically ends at 3:30pm, colony students then go back to the German Culture and Language Immersion school classrooms for instruction for another hour. Unlike other students enrolled in the public school system, which until recently operated on through Monday-Friday schedule, Colony students also attend German Culture and Language Immersion classes for an additional (2) hours each and every Saturday. By the end of a typical day and week, children attending school at any Hutterite colony location will complete nine (9) hours of instruction daily, and an additional 2 hours on Saturday, for a weekly total of forty-seven (47) hours of education per week. Certainly, this community commitment to both public and private German school participation is clear evidence of the value Hutterite colony students, parents, and communities place on their children having access to formal education programs.

Having demonstrated the value that they as parents and communities place on their children receiving an education, public combined with private, it is alarming that for generations, parents of these students have had little to no meaningful input into the operations of these colony located public schools. Specifically, very disturbing examples from across the state are all to common stories wherein parents of these Hutterite children have been denied a meaningful role in working with Boards, school district administrators, teachers, and locally elected officials who all profess to have the best interest of their colony children in mind when making decisions regarding the operations of these programs, but whose actions in managing the operations at these colony public schools, tell a very different and distressing story.

What the opportunity to enroll their children in a school district and in a charter, school really means for these parents is that not only are the Board of Trustees, administration and staff receptive to their meaningful involvement in their children's education, but the governing body encourages it and ultimately relies on their participation for the success of the collective enterprise. To this end, the Board of Trustees has already established a Liberty Academy Charter School Advisory Council whose membership is made up of colony-appointed representatives from each of the six (6) colony communities. This advisory Council will play a critical role in being the entity through which the voice of the parents with students enrolled in the Academy can be formally recognized. The role and responsibilities of the Advisory Council will be outlined in a guidance document to be developed in collaboration with the Board, administration, teachers and key Academy support staff to ensure that the structure for their participation in advising the district is clearly articulated, approved, and adopted. This document, like the process itself, will be the first opportunity parents of these Hutterite colony students have had to be formally recognized by a local school district as playing a key and critical role in the public education of their children.

Final Note:

Reversing decades of prejudice, discrimination, disrespect, and outright bigotry experienced by generations of Hutterite colony children who have had no choice in determining which public school they attended or what type of educational services they received, will not be accomplished overnight. But what can happen through the approval of this Liberty Academy Charter School application is that the opportunity to try an alternative approach can be realized. Support for a new model of public education allows the Liberty Academy administration and staff to implement innovative and promising instructional approaches to providing meaningful access to Hutterite colony students, families and communities, who are wanting to exercise their rights to choose the public-school systems and programs which meet the unique needs of the children. The long overdue opportunity to address the needs of ELL and ESL students should not be lost as the result of yet another unresponsive institutional process which leaves them without the right to choose or more likely, involves the self-interested expression of a local political agenda which seeks to marginalize them, ignore them and deny them the constitutional protections to which they and their children are entitled. Approval of this public charter school application is not only in the best interest of these children, parents, and communities, but is undeniably in the best interest of ALL Montanans who promote parental choice when advocating for the best possible public education for their children.

APPENDENCIES / ATTACHMENTS

1. Liberty Elementary School District #10 Board of Trustees Resolution – Approval of Submission of Liberty Academy Charter School Application 10/9/2024
2. Parental Requests for Student Enrollment – Liberty Academy Charter School
3. Evidence of Community Support – Letters from residents and businesses supporting the creation of the Liberty Academy Charter School

Liberty Elementary School District #10
Trustee Meeting Minutes
October 9, 2024
Liberty Elementary School Conference Room, Eagle Creek Colony

Present: Board Members – David Hofer (DH), Nathan Hofer (NH)

Trustee Eli Hofer was absent and excused.

Other Attendees – Jenine Synness (Business Manager/Clerk) via Zoom, Todd Hanson (Consultant) via Zoom, Dan McGee (Superintendent)

David Hofer called the meeting to order at 9:02 am.

The agenda was reviewed and approved with a motion from NH, seconded by DH, and a unanimous vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda, including the following items, was approved with a motion from NH, seconded by DH, and a unanimous vote.

- Approval of Minutes:
 - September 20, 2024, Regular Meeting
- Superintendent's Report – removed and verbal report given
- Claim Warrants and Payroll

Removed from Consent Agenda:

- Superintendent's Report – Superintendent McGee reported count day was on Monday. He is working on reporting count, as well as TEAMS/TOE. The ESSER III funds were completely expended. Superintendent McGee recommends the District transition to Schoolwide for Title grant funds, and he will work on that process. He will hold a Title I parent meeting next month.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Resolution to Sell/Dispose of District Property – a draft resolution to dispose of obsoleted playground equipment at Hilene Colony School was presented and discussed. Todd noted that disposal of property is in line with Policy 9261. 14-day notice to the public will be necessary and will be published in the Cut Bank newspaper, the district website, at the courthouse, and on the door of the school. The Board can determine "reasonable manner" for disposal unless the resolution is appealed by a taxpayer. NH made a motion to approve the resolution to sell obsolete playground equipment. DH seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Resolution to Approve Charter School Application Submission – a resolution to allow for submission of a Charter School application was presented and discussed. A committee consisting of the Board Chair, Superintendent, Business Manager/Clerk, and Consultant Todd Hanson have been meeting regularly and will have a final meeting on October 17. This resolution allows for submission of the application within the submission window at the end of the month. NH made a motion to approve the resolution to allow for submission of the application. DH seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

OPEN AGENDA – Public Comment – none.

ADJOURN – Seeing no other business, NH made a motion to adjourn the meeting and DH seconded. Motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:53 am.

Submitted: Jenine Synness, Business Manager/Clerk

Resolution of the Liberty Elementary School District #10 Board of Trustees

WHEREAS the duly elected Board of Trustees for Liberty Elementary School District #10 does hereby authorize and approve the submission of a public Charter School Application on behalf of the aforementioned school district as provided for in Title 20, Chapter 6, Part 8 of Montana Code Annotated, in accordance with the process which is under the management and supervision of the Montana Board of Public Education.

WHEREAS the Board of Trustees for Liberty Elementary School District #10 states that as an established Independent and Accredited Public School District recognized by the state's educational agencies (BOPE and OPI), that the district is an eligible applicant under the terms and conditions outlined in Title 20, Chapter 6, Part 8 MCA and as administer by the Montana Board of Public Education.

WHEREAS if the Liberty Elementary School District #10 is successful in its public Charter School application, that the Board of Trustees affirms that it will abide by all of the terms and conditions which are outlined in the Charter School Agreement or authorizing contract.

Date: 10/9/2024

Authorized Signature David Hofer

Printed Name: David Hofer

Title or Position: Chairman, Board of Trustees Liberty Elementary School District #10

Witnessed By: Jenine Synness

Printed Name: Jenine Synness

Title or Position: Board Clerk, Liberty Elementary School District #10

Request for Student Enrollment – Liberty Elementary Academy Public Charter School

We, the undersigned parents, are expressing our intent to exercise our constitutional rights as outlined in Title 20, Chapter 6, Part 8 of Montana Code Annotated, to have our children enrolled as students attending the Liberty Elementary Academy Charter School beginning SY2025-2026.

[illegible]

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Parent Name (Print)	Student(s) Grade Level	Classroom Location	Signature
Mary Wladawec	Grade 1 Kendall Wladawec	Room 101	Mary Wladawec
Mary Wladawec	Grade 3		

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Parent Name (Print)	Student(s) Grade Level	Classroom Location	Signature
Rebecca J. Hoyer	Grade 4 th	Cool Springs at Reliance & Hoyer	Rebecca J. Hoyer
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Parent Name (Print)	Student(s) Grade Level	Classroom Location	Signature
Diana Hoyer	Grade 4 th	Cool Springs	Diana Hoyer
Diana Hoyer	Grade 4 th	Cool Springs	Diana Hoyer

November 1, 2024


Re: Community Support for the Liberty School District – Public Charter School Application

To Whom It May Concern

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The proposed Liberty Charter Academy will provide an opportunity for the parents and children living in these communities to exercise their right to choose a public school system which best provides opportunities for students to develop their full educational potential. As advocates for public education systems that meet the needs of all of our children, we are voicing of support and encourage the Board of Public Education to approve the Liberty Elementary School District – Public Charter School Application.

Thank you.


Fort Benton MT

November 1, 2024

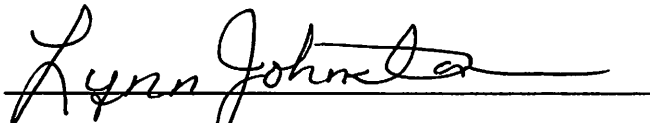
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Thank you.


Lt. Benton, MT

November 1, 2024

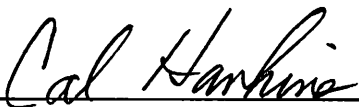
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November 1, 2024


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November 1, 2024

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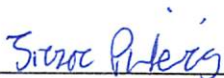
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November 1, 2024

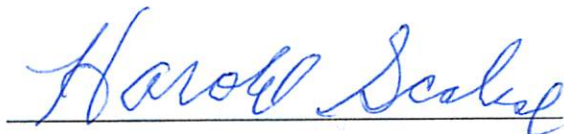
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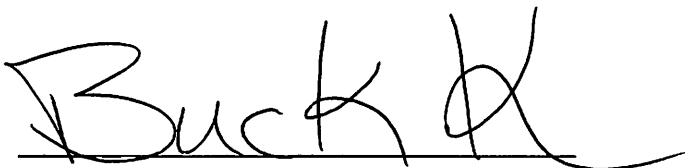
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Thank you.

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November 1, 2024

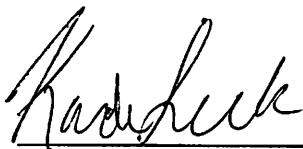
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Thank you.

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November 1, 2024


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Michelle Wickham

November 1, 2024

Re: Community Support for the Liberty School District – Public Charter School Application

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Thank you.

Lyle Benjamin
Sunburst School Board member

November 1, 2024

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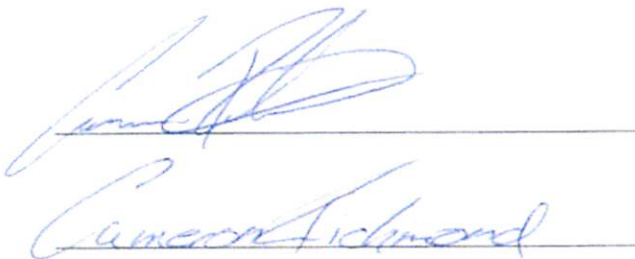
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Thank you.



The block contains two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature is stylized and appears to be 'John H. ...'. The second signature is more legible and appears to be 'Cameron Richmond'. Each signature is followed by a horizontal line, likely indicating the signatory's name.

November 1, 2024

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Thank you.

Joel Stoller

April Stoller

November 1, 2024

Re: Community Support for the Liberty School District – Public Charter School Application

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Thank you.

Krista Pulst Kristie Pulst

Nutrien AC Solutions

November 1, 2024

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Thank you.

A B Energy By Arnie Shood
Liberty County Res.

November 1, 2024

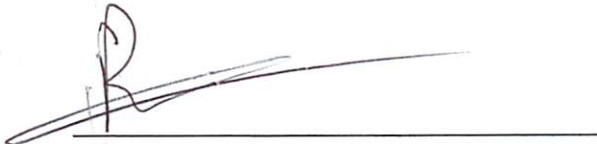
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Thank you.

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Chester Super Market

November 1, 2024

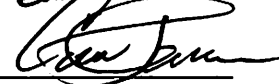
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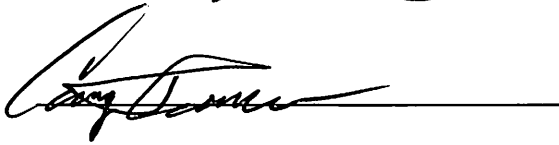
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Thank you.

Innocence, Chester, Gallop
Fraser's Oil Inc. 



November 1, 2024

Re: Community Support for the Liberty School District – Public Charter School Application

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Tiber Tractor Co.,

Ronald J. Dakler pres.,

November 1, 2024

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Richard A. Barrow
Liberty County Resident

November 1, 2024


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Thank you.

 Abby Aitken
Resident of Liberty County

November 1, 2024

Re: Community Support for the Liberty School District – Public Charter School Application

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Thank you.

Cathy G. Honebauch-Lake
Liberty County Resident

November 1, 2024

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Thank you.

Marie A Woods

Liberty County Resident

November 1, 2024

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Thank you.

Balvish Damm Liberty County Resident
10-15-24

Crystal Conrad and Kalli Olson
Teachers
Riverview Colony School
10/22/24

Dear Members of the Board,

We at Riverview Colony School want to share our heartfelt support for Liberty Elementary School District #10's public charter school application.

As educators, we are aware of the specific educational needs and interests of our students and their families within the local Hutterite colony communities. The Liberty Charter status would provide parents and children with a vital choice to enroll in a public school that aligns with their cultural values and educational aspirations. We believe this charter school will not only transform our community's educational landscape but also empower families to influence their children's education. It represents an opportunity for students to develop equitably within a framework that accommodates and values their culture.

Supporting this application is key to creating an inclusive public school system that serves all families in Liberty County. We hope the Montana Board of Public Education will approve the Liberty Elementary School District Public Charter School Application, ensuring our students and their community have access to the best educational experience possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Crystal Conrad

4-8 Teacher

Riverview Colony School

conradcrystal@hotmail.com

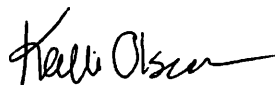
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Crystal Conrad', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Kalli Olson

K-3 Teacher

Riverview Colony School

hayneskallim@gmail.com

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kalli Olson', with a long, horizontal stroke at the end.

November 1, 2024


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November 1, 2024

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Thank you.

Krista Pulsf

Krista Pulsf

November 1, 2024

Re: Community Support for the Liberty School District – Public Charter School Application

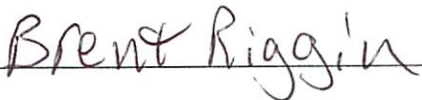
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November 1, 2024

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Thank you.

Wm. V. Cole

William V. Cole

November 1, 2024

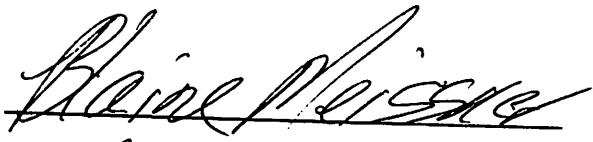

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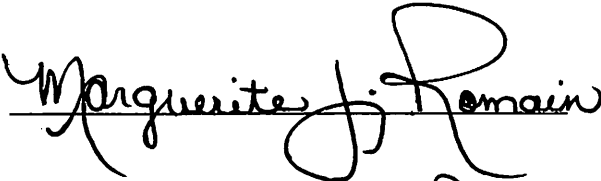
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Thank you.

 10/15/2024
Marguerite J. Romain
406-456-3262

November 1, 2024

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Thank you.

Kenneth L. Romain

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406-456-3262

10/15/2024

November 1, 2024

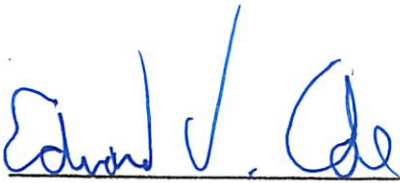
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Thank you.

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Edward V Pole

November 1, 2024

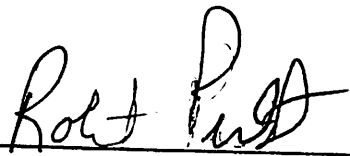
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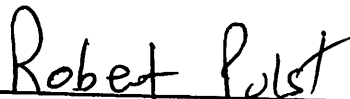
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Nutrien AG Solutions

Kristie Puls Kristie Puls

November 1, 2024

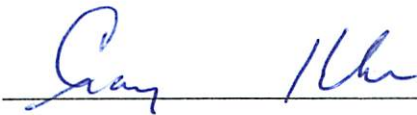
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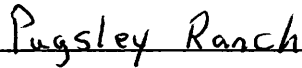
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Thank you.

Joey Cole

Joey Cole

November 1, 2024

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Thank you.

Fraser's O.I., Inc by Cory Annen

Nused by [Signature]

Sunburst Grain LLC [Signature]

November 1, 2024


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Thank you.

Dann Casperian


Robert B. Robin
Madeline Robinson

Paul Horn
Robin Grotzinger
William Inkepp

Mike Miller
L. L. Wilson
Edwin L. Williamson
Michael K. Brown

November 1, 2024

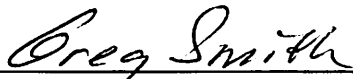
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November 1, 2024

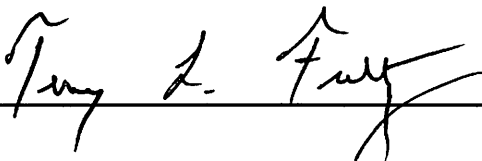
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Terry L. Fultz

November 1, 2024

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Thank you.

Col Harkins

Mr Kevin Coop

November 1, 2024

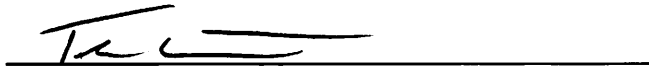
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TED KASTE - ILVER MARKET

November 1, 2024

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Thank you.

Frydenlund, LLC
MHR, LLC
Shelby, MT

November 1, 2024

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Ben Taylor Inc

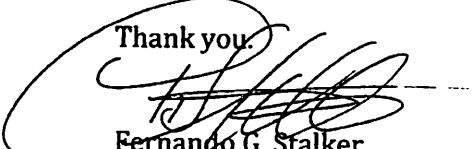
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Thank you.



Fernando G. Stalker
BHE Montana, LLC
VP of Asset Management