

**Community Choice Schools Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
December 5, 2023  
Montana State Capitol Building, Room 102  
1301 E 6th Avenue, Helena, MT

**Call to Order**

Chair Schreiber called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM. The Chair led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance and Kris Stockton took Roll Call. The Chair read the Statement of Public Participation and welcomed guests.

Commission members present: Trish Schreiber, Chair; Katy Wright, Vice Chair; Jon Rutt, Treasurer; Dee Brown; Cathy Kincheloe; Katey Franklin. Board of Public Education (BPE) staff present: McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Kris Stockton, Administrative Specialist.

Presenters: Dr. Matt Ladner, EdChoice; Natalie Peeterse, Department of Administration (DOA) Procurement Bureau; Anna Lubick, DOA Procurement Bureau; Marc Carignan, CFO Bluum; Terry Ryan, CEO Bluum.

Guests: Dylan Klapmeier, Governor Gianforte’s Office; Christy Mock-Stutz, Office of Public Instruction (OPI); Kimberly Evans, OPI; Judy Territo (Zoom); Jane Hamman, BPE Member; Patrick Webb, Montana Family Foundation; Rita Schreiber, Educational Promise Foundation; Heather Irving; Jenny Murnane Butcher, Montanans Organized for Education.

**Item 1            Approve Consent Agenda 10:03:56**

*Member Brown moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Member Rutt.*

*No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.*

**Approve Agenda 10:04:28**

*Vice Chair Wright moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Member Brown.*

*No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.*

**Item 2            Chairperson Welcome Statement 10:05:05**

Chair Schreiber opened the meeting by welcoming members and guests and thanking Board of Public Education staff for their work supporting the Commission. The Chair briefly discussed meeting procedures before welcoming newest member Dr. Katey Franklin to the meeting. Dr. Franklin introduced herself to the Commission.

**Item 3            Discussion/Presentation: State Procurement Laws presented by Anna Lubick and Natalie Peeterse of the State Procurement Bureau of The Department of Administration 10:08:31**

Anna Lubick and Natalie Peeterse, State Procurement Bureau, gave a presentation on State Procurement law, levels of procurement, when a Limited Solicitation or Request for Proposal is necessary, and the Procurement Lifecycle, before answering Commission member questions.

**Item 4            Discussion/Presentation: Dr. Matt Ladner, Senior Fellow EdChoice: Rustic Renaissance, lecture and Q&A 10:55:35**

Chair Schreiber introduced Dr. Matt Ladner to the Commission for a presentation on the positive effects of school choice policies for rural districts in Arizona. Dr. Ladner discussed his research of increasing rural NAEP and rural academic growth scores in Arizona over the past 30 years since the advent of open enrollment and charter schools, how school choice programs are structured in Arizona, how charter schools have developed in and near rural areas, legal challenges experienced, and how they were overcome. Dr. Ladner answered Commission members questions and questions from the public. Discussion points varied in topic between: school choice effects on teens with depression, cultural and socioeconomic integration in charter schools, advantages and disadvantages of elected vs. appointed school boards, the importance of school board transparency, assessments as an indicator for performance, union opposition to school choice policies in Arizona, the role and development of charter support associations, complications related to transportation, and that the authorizers in AZ include: a statewide Charter School Board, traditional districts, and universities.

**Item 6            Discussion/Presentation: Marc Carignan, CFO Bluum, A Glimpse at Section 15 Funding of CCSA; Terry Ryan, CEO Bluum, The Role of Philanthropy and the Charter School Program Grant, lecture and Q&A 13:18:32**

Chair Schreiber introduced Marc Carignan and Terry Ryan from Bluum, a Charter Support Organization (CSO) based out of Boise, Idaho. Mr. Ryan discussed charter schools in Idaho, the evolution of legislation pertaining to charter schools over past 25 years and different types of charter schools in operation in Idaho and how Bluum supports growth of high-quality charter seats. Mr. Ryan answered Commission member questions pertaining to how Bluum supports special education students' needs via charter schools and access to Medicaid benefits, charter-school teacher credentialing, the trust lenders and investors have with the NWEA MAP performance data, and how high school sports are handled in Idaho. Mr. Carignan discussed funding, types of funding charter schools in Idaho receive, and work done by Bluum to secure funding for charter schools. Mr. Carignan discussed hypothetical situations of choice school funding in Montana, how founders must creatively approach their school models to compensate for lack of equal funding (facility and transportation, specifically), and the necessity to philanthropically secure additional money for charter school start-ups. Mr. Carignan noted that start-up is the most vulnerable stage, and ideally choice schools would sustain themselves with public money by year 5. Members presented questions regarding fundraising, facilities, building partnerships between districts and charter schools, managing tensions between unions and politics in general, distribution of assets should a school fail, and charter school teacher retention rates in Idaho along with parental satisfaction. Mr. Ryan concluded with remarks about the importance of national partnerships to create a healthy choice charter school sector. Lastly, Mr. Ryan shared about how Idaho has now received two Federal CSP grants totaling almost \$50M

since 2018 used almost exclusively to open, expand or replicate new charter schools and to improve the data infrastructure for authorizing systems. .

**Item 5 Discussion: Shall the Commission form any committees at this time other than the standing Executive Committee? 15:35:36**

Member Brown asked if the financial components have been set up so that the Commission can take donations. Chair Schreiber noted that the account has been established to accept donations from private entities and that logistical pieces are being finalized. Member Rutt noted that a draft form for donations is being worked on. Member Brown asked how to direct people to the recorded meetings and the Chair noted that they are posted on the BPE webpage and the Legislative Services webpage. Member Rutt noted that members should keep track of any expenses they have incurred to turn in receipts to Member Rutt to be reimbursed once funding is available. If members choose not to be reimbursed and would rather donate their expenses as charitable for tax purposes, members should keep track of expenses so that the Commission can acknowledge their donation. Ms. Flynn asked members what else they need from the Board to be ready to accept donations, and the Chair stated that she is waiting for some information from the Lt. Governor and Budget Office about an official recognition letter. Discussion ensued as to whether individuals can donate or only private entities, and whether an individual is considered a private entity. Members determined that no additional committees are needed at this time.

**Future Agenda Items 15:51:52**

Presentation from OPI

Presentation from people interested in opening Choice Schools

**Public Comment 16:03:32**

No public comment.

**Adjourn**

The Commission meeting adjourned at 4:04 PM.