



# **Montana Board of Public Education**

## **Public Charter School Application**

*June 2024*

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# INTRODUCTION

HB 549 (2023), now codified in Title 20, Chapter 6, Part 8 of Montana Code Annotated, authorized the establishment of public charter schools in Montana and tasked the Montana Board of Public Education as the sole entity authorized to enter into public charter contracts with a governing board. There are two types of public charter schools – those operating under an existing local school board and those operating as a new school district under a separate governing board. This Public Charter School Application is for both options.

A public charter school means a public school that has autonomy over decisions including, but not limited to, matters concerning finance, personnel, scheduling, curriculum, and instruction as defined in a public charter contract. Public charter schools are governed by a local school board, or in the case of a governing board other than a local school board, by the governing board of the public charter school district of which the public charter school is a part. Public charter schools are established and operated under the terms of a public charter contract and allow parents to choose to enroll their children. Public charter schools must admit students based on a lottery if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated.

Public charter schools provide a program of education that may include any or all grades from kindergarten through grade 12 and vocational education programs and operate in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives as defined in its public charter contract.

The evaluation of your application will focus on whether implementing the proposals in your application will lead to the academic, organizational, and financial performance you are promising in exchange for potential broad flexibility from Montana’s education standards. The evaluation will also determine whether:

- There is an established need for the proposed public charter school;
- The proposed public charter school meets the needs of all its students;
- The proposed public charter school is of the highest academic quality;
- The proposed public charter school will provide a healthy learning environment and positive school climate;
- The proposed governing board demonstrates the capacity to implement the plan outlined in the application with fidelity; and
- The proposed public charter school will provide an educational opportunity to students that they would not otherwise receive at the traditional school they are zoned to attend.

# SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

To facilitate the Montana Board of Public Education’s review of public charter school applications, applicants must submit the application to [bpe@mt.gov](mailto:bpe@mt.gov) between the dates of October 28 and November 1, 2024, with a deadline of November 1, 2024 at 5PM. All submission materials must be submitted in a single electronic submission. Multiple attachments will not be accepted in the submission. The Board will review the public charter school application, and if determined complete, will facilitate an interview, and take public comment on the application in November. Final approval of the application will take place at the January 2025 Board of Public Education meeting. Please note the timeline on the Board’s webpage under the Public Charter School tab.

We recognize that this application may not provide the space to fully respond to each of the questions in the application. Please provide a brief, direct response to each question, with reference to attachments, appendices, and weblinks to lengthier handbooks, policies, and additional information. Please make sure to clearly state where any corresponding responses are located within the application and limit application pages to 26, plus any attachments and letters of support.

Please note that submitting a public charter school application does not guarantee approval and that a public charter school contract will be granted. Failure to adhere to any requirements may lead to an incomplete application that is rejected before consideration. In addition, complete applications that are not strong enough to guarantee a successful public charter school implementation will be recommended for denial.



# PUBLIC CHARTER APPLICATION

Name of Public 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: \_\_\_\_\_ Public Charter Term Length: \_\_\_\_\_

Grades to be served: \_\_\_\_\_

Minimum Enrollment Per Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Planned Enrollment Per Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Maximum Enrollment Per Year: \_\_\_\_\_

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														
Year 2														
Year 3														
Year 4														
Year 5														

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM

See Submission Procedures

1. State the public charter school's mission and vision and describe why this initiative is important to the community it will serve.
  
2. Identify the targeted student population and the community the public charter school proposes to serve.
  
3. Describe plans and timelines for student recruitment and enrollment, including lottery procedures.

4. Describe the public charter school's academic program, specifically focusing on why it is innovative in your school district. Include plans to formally assess student achievement on an annual basis.
5. Describe any variances to existing standards that the public charter school requires to enhance educational opportunities.
6. Describe the instructional design, including the type of learning environment, class size and structure, curriculum overview, and teaching methods.
7. Describe plans for identifying and successfully serving students with disabilities, students who are English Language Learners, students who are academically challenged, and gifted students, including compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
8. Describe student discipline policies, including those for special education students.

## **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

See Submission Procedures

9. Describe the public charter school's organizational chart that clearly presents the proposed organizational structure, including lines of authority and reporting between the governing board, staff, related bodies such as advisory bodies or parent and teacher councils, and external organizations that will play a role in managing the public charter school.
10. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the governing board, the proposed leadership management team, and other entities shown in the organizational chart.
11. Provide a staffing chart for the public charter school's first year and a staffing plan for the term of the public charter school.
12. Detail the public charter school startup plan, identifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals.
13. Describe the plans for recruiting and developing school leadership and staff.

14. Describe the proposed leadership and teacher employment policies, including performance evaluation plans.
15. State the proposed governing bylaws.
16. Explain any partnerships or contractual relationships central to the operations and mission of the public charter school.
17. Provide the proposed calendar and sample daily schedule.

## **BUSINESS OPERATIONS**

See Submission Procedures

18. Describe plans for providing transportation, food service, and all other significant operational or ancillary services.
19. Describe cocurricular and extracurricular programs and how the programs will be funded and delivered.
20. Describe the proposed financial plan and policies, including financial controls and audit requirements.
21. Describe the insurance coverage that will be obtained.
22. Describe the startup and five-year budgets with clearly stated assumptions.
23. Describe the startup and first year cash flow projections with clearly stated assumptions.
24. Describe anticipated fundraising contributions and evidence, if applicable.

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

## **COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND NEED**

See Submission Procedures

26. Describe the specific evidence of significant community support.

27. Describe the opportunities and expectations for parent involvement.

## **NOT AN EXISTING LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD? COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION**

See Submission Procedures

1. Provide specific evidence that the applicant has sought from the local school board the creation of a school or program of the located school district serving the mission and vision of the proposed public charter school.
2. Provide specific evidence that the local school board declined to create the school or program and declined to submit a proposal for the creation of a public charter school to the Board of Public Education.
3. Provide a legal description of the property of the existing school district from which the boundaries of the public charter school district are proposed to be formed.
4. Share background information on the initial governing board members and, if identified, the proposed school leadership and management team.

*Questions? Contact [bpe@mt.gov](mailto:bpe@mt.gov)*