



# Montana Board of Public Education

## Public Charter School Application

*June 2025*

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# INTRODUCTION

Title 20, Chapter 6, Part 8, MCA, authorizes the establishment of public charter schools in Montana and tasks 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, and must demonstrate a commitment to and robust understanding of personalized and proficiency-based learning.

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 determine whether:

- there is an overall intent to create an innovative public charter school;
- there is an overall intent to create a high-performing public charter school;
- the academic program is consistent with a high-quality public charter school;
- the school governance is consistent with a high-quality public charter school;
- the business operations are consistent with a high-quality public charter school;
- the community support and need are consistent with a high-quality public charter school;
- there is clear and convincing proof of the likelihood of success;
- they can open and operate a successful public charter school; and
- there is a commitment to and robust understanding of personalized and proficiency-based learning.

## 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 27-31, 2025, with a deadline of October 31, 2025 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. Final approval of the application will take place at the January 2026 Board of Public Education meeting. Please note the timeline on the Board's webpage under the Public Charter School tab.

Please provide a brief, direct response to each question using this application template and limit the application to 26 pages. Any appendices, handbooks, policies, and additional documents will be considered as supporting documentation. Please include links, when possible, and refrain from including lengthier documents.

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.

# PUBLIC CHARTER APPLICATION COVER PAGE

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

Name of Public Charter School SOAR Academy

Local school district in which the public charter school will be physically located: Florence-Carlton School District

## Contact Information for the Governing Board Chair

Contact Person: Ben Crocker Board Chairperson  
Name Title

Contact Address: 5602 Old Hwy #93, Florence, MT 59833

Telephone Number: 406-273-6751 Cell: 406-370-6488

E-mail Address: crockerb@florence.k12.mt.us

## Contact Information for the Person Completing this Application

Contact Person: Todd Fiske Superintendent  
Name Title

Contact Address: 5602 Old Hwy #93, Florence, MT 59833

Telephone Number: 406-273-6751

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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. Attached PDF for October 2025 Board Meeting

# PUBLIC CHARTER APPLICATION

Name of Public Charter School: **SOAR Academy**

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.

Executive Summary: **Florence SOAR Academy Public Charter School**

## **General Purpose:**

SOAR Academy has been created to serve as a transformative educational platform for students who need a different kind of learning environment—one that is inclusive, responsive, and deeply supportive.

The Academy's mission is to empower disconnected and vulnerable students to build successful, independent futures through behavioral and educational support systems rooted in positivity and reinforcement. Also, supporting any student on their educational journey.

SOAR stands for **SUPPORT, OPPORTUNITY, ACHIEVEMENT, and READINESS**—the foundational values that guide our commitment to whole-child development and long-term success.

## **Rationale for Creation:**

The rationale for launching SOAR Academy as a public charter school includes:

- **Specialized Programming Platform:** As a school in which special subjects or skills are taught, SOAR provides the flexibility to operate a variety of specialized programs tailored to student needs and interests.
- **Alternative Setting for Vulnerable Learners:** The Academy offers a safe, structured, and nurturing environment for students who struggle in traditional settings—ensuring they receive the behavioral and academic supports necessary to thrive.
- **Career and College Readiness:** SOAR actively engages students in interest-based career pathways, college preparation, and work-based learning opportunities to foster independence and future success.
- **Autonomy for Innovation:** Charter designation enables Florence SOAR to implement trauma-informed practices, flexible scheduling, and interdisciplinary learning models that are difficult to achieve within standard district frameworks.
- **Community-Driven Solutions:** The school is designed to collaborate with families, local agencies, and employers to co-create pathways that address equity, access, and long-term sustainability.

## **Distinction from Traditional District Programs**

SOAR Academy differs from district-operated programs in several key ways:

- Curriculum Flexibility - SOAR Academy allows personalized, adaptive instruction tailored to student interests, needs, and evolving academic goals.
- Staffing Autonomy – SOAR Academy empowers the school to select, assign, and develop personnel aligned with its mission, student needs, and instructional model. This flexibility supports innovative hiring, role customization, and responsive team-building—ensuring staff embody SOAR's values and adapt to evolving educational priorities.
- Student Centered – This focus centers on proactive, student-centered interventions that identify and support learners at risk of academic failure or disengagement. It involves dismantling institutional

barriers, fostering trust, and implementing responsive strategies to boost attendance, re-engage marginalized students, and create pathways for sustained school success.

- Innovation Scope – Ability to pilot new instructional models, develop new schedules that are flexible and applicable to the student situation.
- Student Focus – Design meets the needs of disconnected and vulnerable learners vs. serving the general population with limited differentiation.

While traditional programs may attempt similar goals, they are often constrained by policy, uniformity, and centralized governance. SOAR Academy's charter designation allows for agile, student-centered innovation that meets learners where they are—and helps them grow into where they want to be.

Opening Date: Fall 2026      Public Charter Term Length: 5 years

Grades to be served: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

Minimum Enrollment Per Year: 60

Planned Enrollment Per Year: 60+

Maximum Enrollment Per Year: 85

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	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10	11	10	10	10	11	62
Year 2	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	11	13	11	11	11	11	68
Year 3	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12	12	12	12	12	12	72
Year 4	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12	12	12	13	13	13	75
Year 5	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	15	15	15	15	15	15	90

## 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.

The SOAR mission is to provide a clear sense of purpose and direction, helping to guide its efforts to serve our community effectively.

**MISSION STATEMENT:** *"Our mission is to provide a rigorous, student-centered education that empowers all learners to achieve their fullest potential. We are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment where every student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally."*

**VISION STATEMENT:** *"Our vision is to create a dynamic educational community where innovation and excellence are the norm. We aspire to develop future leaders who are critical*

*thinkers, compassionate citizens, and lifelong learners, prepared to make a positive impact on the world.”*

SOAR Academy (A school in which special subjects or skills are taught) will provide a platform to operate a variety of specialized programs, we will work to offer disconnected and vulnerable students who need a different educational setting the opportunity to create a successful, independent future by providing behavioral and educational support systems in a positive and reinforcing environment. Our Academy will also work to engage students successfully into interest-based career pathways, college preparation and work-based opportunities. SOAR Academy will be geared to ensure inclusive, personalized support so every student thrives academically, socially, and emotionally.

### **Importance to the Community:**

- A. Enhance Educational Opportunities: The SOAR Academy will offer unique curricula tailored to meet the diverse needs of students. One goal is to provide families with alternatives to their education journey. While ensuring that students have access to an education that best suits their learning styles and interests, as well as the high standards expected of a Montana School.
- B. Focus on Innovation: SOAR will have the flexibility to implement innovative educational practices and programs. This can lead to new teaching methods, curricula, and technologies that will benefit our student's educational journey and benefit our community and beyond.
- C. Community Engagement: SOAR will be unique in its approach to building stronger ties with the community in seeking out pathways that students can benefit. This approach will help to ensure that SOAR programming reflects and responds to the specific needs and values of the community it serves.
- D. Accountability and Performance: Through performance goals, students will achieve educational standards differently from a traditional setting. Students must show improvement and goal-oriented outcomes that reflect directly on their overall school performance.
- E. Equity and Access: SOAR will center its attention to students that learn differently from a traditional setting. Working to engage students in career pathways that are desirable and achievable.
- F. Cultural and Social Development: SOAR will help to foster a diverse setting that is inclusive to all. Meeting students where their needs lie, will help to ensure diploma success. Creating greater social cohesion and understanding will benefit all involved.

*SOAR’s mission and vision will be central to its identity and success. Addressing specific educational needs with community and staff involvement, while creating strong educational outcomes for students.*

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

SOAR Academy is built to capture students that have become reluctant learners in the traditional sense. SOAR Academy will identify students in the 7-12 setting a path forward that offers students and families an alternative approach to meeting the necessary outcomes/standards toward earning a

state high school diploma. Our goal is to eliminate drop out students, build career pathways for student successful engagement.

We believe offering a wide variety of options, the SOAR Academy can focus on suitable pathways or alternative educational applications (Digital learning platforms) that meet the Individualized Learning Plan (ILP).

Other student population targets will be ‘at-risk’ students that may get lost in larger class sizes, subject areas that don’t provide enough student engagement to stay in school, school to work programming, discipline/behaviors disrupting their learning process and other unique factors, such as social and emotional challenges that have altered the learning course for students.

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

SOAR Academy will begin in the fall of the 26/27 SY. Recruitment will begin in the spring of 2026. Enrollment plans will be to outline a rubric that identifies the appropriate students. Factors will be based from current grades/credits earned, behavior issues that are impacting learning in a traditional setting, career paths as identified through career readiness identifiers. At this juncture, we don't feel a lottery system will be necessary. A strong focus on what SOAR represents in our school community will be delivered via mailing, Facebook and webpage information.

### **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.**

**Distance Learning:** Distance learning meets the needs of its students by offering an almost infinite number of program options for distance learning. Providing families options for part distance learning and part on-campus instruction as additional flexibility. SOAR Academy will provide an educational experience that provides opportunity, through digital learning options and choice (Hybrid) learning. Allowing student and parental choice that is not available in a traditional brick and mortar setting. In addition, it will provide alternative placements on our campus within our (a) 7-12 SOAR Center, (b) High School, (c) and face to face electives / core classes based on availability.

**Career Readiness/Pathways:** Pathways will be designed for students to focus on career paths that may or may not include college. These pathways will focus on preparation for work during and outside of school. These pathways will allow students to explore educational interests that best suits their abilities. These pathways will correlate to national, state and local level to provide opportunities for students to join the workforce with skills sets suitable for “Work Readiness”.

**Pathway Examples:**

- a) Medical
- b) Construction
- c) Welding/Fabrication
- d) Small Engine Repair
- e) CAD systems
- f) Arts (Visual, Performing, Physical)
- g) Maintenance/Facilities
- h) Fire Management
- i) Paramedic
- j) Vo-Agriculture
- k) Small Veterinarian
- l) Food Service
- m) On-the-Job Training Platforms

**Traditional Course Blending:** Students must strive for and earn the required credits for graduation. Utilizing some coursework that allows for credit recovery, credit completion will enhance the program of success for SOAR students. This provides another avenue for students to utilize digital platforms, pathways and traditional offerings to round-out their course work and credit completion.

**Grading/Competency:** Competency-Based Education (CBE) involves promoting students to the next level of instruction after they have achieved learning expectations for content at the previous level.

**CBE emphasizes:** A body of evidence that shows students meet learning outcomes (via students demonstrating mastery), a de-emphasis on seat time, building in flexible time to demonstrate mastery, presenting multiple types of instruction, adaptable content, and self-navigation skills.

- Students are empowered daily to make important decisions about their learning experiences, how they will create and apply knowledge, and how they will demonstrate their learning.
- Assessment is a meaningful, positive, and empowering learning experience for students that yields timely, relevant, and actionable evidence.
- Students receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs.
- Student's progress based on evidence of mastery, not seat time.
- Students learn actively using different pathways and varied pacing.
- Strategies to ensure equity for all students are embedded in the culture, structure, and pedagogy of schools and educational systems.
- Rigorous, common expectations for learning (knowledge, skills, and dispositions) are explicit, transparent, measurable, and transferable (CompetencyWorks, 2019).

#### **Individualized Learning Plans (ILP's):**

- Individualized Learning Plans are created by the learner and managed by the SOAR Team are composed of multiple different goals (plans to achieve these goals) and outcome measures used to determine when the goal has been met.
- An ILP serves as an action plan to direct learning.
- Goals are a significant part of an ILP, but just creating a goal is not enough.
- ILP allows for individualization of learning on the basis of the learner's unique needs.
- ILP will be reviewed consistently to ensure goals are being achieved and make determinations if changes to the ILP are necessary.

#### **Annual Student Achievement Assessment Plan**

To ensure accountability, continuous improvement, and alignment with SOAR Academy's mission of personalized, flexible, and career-ready education, student achievement will be formally assessed on an annual basis through a multi-tiered, evidence-based approach:

##### **1. Annual Competency Review**

- Each student's progress will be evaluated against clearly defined competency benchmarks aligned with state standards and SOAR's learning outcomes.
- A body of evidence—including performance tasks, digital portfolios, project-based assessments, and formative data—will be reviewed to determine mastery.
- Students who demonstrate mastery will advance to the next level of instruction, while those needing support will receive targeted interventions.

##### **2. ILP Progress Monitoring**

- Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) will be formally reviewed at least once annually by the SOAR Team in collaboration with the student and family.
- Progress toward academic, career, and personal goals will be measured using predefined outcome indicators.
- Adjustments to goals, supports, or pathways will be made based on data and student reflection.

##### **3. Pathway-Specific Performance Metrics**

- Students enrolled in Career Readiness Pathways will be assessed using industry-aligned rubrics, certifications, and hands-on demonstrations of skill.
- Partnerships with local employers and training platforms will provide feedback loops on student readiness and performance in real-world settings.

#### **4. Digital and Hybrid Learning Analytics**

- For students engaged in distance or hybrid learning, learning management system analytics will be used to track engagement, pacing, and content mastery.
- Annual reports will synthesize this data to inform instructional adjustments and student support plans.

#### **5. Graduation and Credit Progress Audits**

- Each student's credit accumulation and graduation trajectory will be audited annually to ensure alignment with state graduation requirements and SOAR's blended learning model.
- Credit recovery and acceleration options will be recommended based on audit results.

#### **6. Stakeholder Feedback and Reflection**

- Annual surveys and reflection tools will gather input from students, families, and staff on the effectiveness of instruction, support systems, and learning environments.

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

SOAR programming builds in work-based learning opportunities that would make offerings far different from a traditional setting. Aligning standards to meet credit obligations for graduation and pathway success.

- Alignment of Classroom and Workplace Learning = **Support**
- Application of Academic/Technical and Employability Skills in a Work Setting = **Opportunity & Achievement**
- Supports from Classroom (Teachers) and Workplace Mentorship = **Readiness**
- Variances must be considered for areas of counseling, library, IT, administration, special education and other related areas within the MCA. SOAR students will have access to all of the above accordingly.

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

The Instructional Design would focus students on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skill building, and responsible decision-making. Students would work with the Student Support Director (SSD), principals and counselors to plan a course/pathway and build an ILP. This planning process would include student, staff members, parents and community partners (if necessary). Students will play an intricate role in the development of their plan and outline how it meets graduation requirements and/or the chosen pathway(s).

SOAR Academy will have a dedicated space for student. This space will be inviting and offer quiet work spaces, a place where the SSD can work collaboratively with students and parents. Form a structure of belonging and paced differently than a traditional model.

SOAR students can be immersed in the traditional sense with blending schedules that align with traditional scheduling. Students that meet certain requirements (strong time management skills) may work from home or alternative setting to complete digital learning coursework on/or off campus and scheduled apprenticeships.

Class sizes and structured seat time will not be the norm in the SOAR Academy. The Student Services Director (SSD) will ensure the appropriate course structure, teaching applications, assistance, guidance, accountability and overall progress monitoring of the student. The goal will be to ensure progress is being made. Helping the student drive the ILP.

# SOAR Charter School Instructional Design Overview

## Learning Environment

SOAR fosters a student-centered, inclusive, and trauma-informed learning environment that prioritizes:

- Safety and belonging: Every student is known, valued, and supported.
- Flexibility and innovation: Spaces are designed for collaboration, exploration, and differentiated instruction.
- Community integration: Learning extends beyond the classroom through partnerships with families, local organizations, and service-learning opportunities.

## Class Size and Structure

- Class Size: Targeted at 15–20 students per class, allowing for personalized attention and strong teacher-student relationships.
- Structure: Multi-age groupings where appropriate to support peer mentoring and differentiated pacing.
- Advisory periods for social-emotional learning, goal setting, and relationship building.
- Block scheduling to support deeper learning and project-based instruction.

## Curriculum Overview

The SOAR curriculum is aligned with Montana OPI standards and designed to promote equity, relevance, and rigor:

- Core Academics: Literacy, math, science, and social studies taught through inquiry-based, interdisciplinary units.
- SOAR Signature Programs:
- Food Justice & Sustainability: Integrated across subjects, with hands-on learning in gardening, nutrition, and community impact.
- Civic Engagement & Leadership: Students explore identity, advocacy, and systems change through real-world projects.
- STEAM Integration: Technology, engineering, and the arts are embedded in problem-solving and design challenges.
- Assessment:
- Standards-based grading
- Performance tasks and portfolios
- Growth-focused feedback loops

## Teaching Methods

SOAR educators employ a blend of constructivist, culturally responsive, and restorative practices:

- Project-Based Learning (PBL): Students investigate authentic problems and present solutions to real audiences.
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL): Multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression ensure access for all learners.
- Differentiation: Instruction is tailored to individual strengths, needs, and interests.
- Restorative Circles & SEL Integration: Daily practices build empathy, accountability, and community.
- Data-Informed Instruction: Teachers use formative data to adjust pacing, groupings, and supports.

## **Flexible Learning Environments**

- **Innovative Spaces:** The charter can design its classrooms and learning environments to promote creativity and collaboration, such as using open spaces for group projects or tech labs for hands-on learning.
- **Diverse Learning Models:** The charter school can experiment with different educational models (e.g., project-based learning, flipped classrooms) that may be more challenging to implement in a traditional setting.
- Our Academy will offer a bricks and mortar setting that will offer students a suitable workspace, connectivity, staff engagement, technology supports and suitable staff support.

## **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.**

The Florence-Carlton School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability, in the educational programs and activities it operates including admission and employment. The District is required by federal law, including but not limited to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX, and Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act and their regulations to not discriminate against individuals in violation of these laws.

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

**CONDUCT** In order for students to take advantage of available learning opportunities and to be productive members of our campus community, each student is expected to:

- Demonstrate courtesy — even when others do not.
- Behave in a responsible manner and exercise self-discipline.
- Attend all classes, regularly and on time.
- Prepare for each class; take appropriate materials and assignments to class.
- Meet District or building standards of grooming and dress.
- Obey all building and classroom rules. Respect the rights and privileges of other students, teachers, and other District staff.
- Respect the property of others, including District property and facilities.
- Cooperate with or assist the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.

**Applicability of School Rules and Discipline to achieve the best possible learning environment for all our students, the Florence-Carlton School District's rules and discipline will apply:**

- On, or within sight of, school grounds before, during or after school hours or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
- Off school grounds at a school sponsored activity or event, or any activity or event that bears a 2026-27 Student Handbook;
- Traveling to and from school or a school activity, function or event; and
- Anywhere, including virtual networks, if conduct may reasonably be considered to be a threat or an attempted intimidation of a staff member, an interference with school purposes or an educational

function, or a threat to the safety and welfare of the student population, or conduct that detrimentally effects the climate or efficient operations of the school. Violation of Student Code of Conduct A student is in violation of the Student Code of Conduct if the student engages in any inappropriate behavior,

Including but not limited to:

- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling tobacco, vapor products, or marijuana products (tobacco includes, but is not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, snuff, smoking tobacco, smokeless tobacco, alternative nicotine product, or any other tobacco or nicotine innovation; marijuana products include but are not limited to edible products, ointments, tinctures, marijuana derivatives, marijuana concentrates, and marijuana intended for use by smoking or vaping);
- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling alcoholic beverages.
- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling marijuana (including medical marijuana).
- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling illegal drugs or controlled substances, look alike drugs, and drug paraphernalia.
- Using, possessing, controlling, or transferring a weapon in violation of the “Possession of a Weapon in a School Building” section of this policy.
- Using, possessing, controlling, or transferring any object that reasonably could be considered or used as a weapon.
- Disobeying directives from staff or disobeying rules governing student conduct.
- Using violence, force, coercion, intimidation or other comparable conduct toward anyone or urging other students to engage in such conduct except when physical force is determined to be reasonable and necessary and used as self-defense or the defense of another person after an investigation into such conduct.
- Causing or attempting to cause damage to, or stealing or attempting to steal, school property or another person’s property.
- Engaging in any activity that constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function or any other disruptive activity.
- Unexcused absenteeism.
- Misconduct of any sort on any means of District transportation. 2024-25 Student Handbook12
- Bullying, hazing, harassment (including sexual harassment), or intimidation, including cyberbullying.
- Forging any signature or making any false entry or attempting to authorize any document used or intended to be used in connection with the operation of a school.

**CELL PHONES:** The possession and use of cellular phones, pagers, and other electronic signaling devices on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, or while otherwise under the supervision and control of District employees is a privilege. High School students may use their cell phones before school, at lunch, and after school. Students may also use their cell phones during class time when the teacher’s direct lesson involves them for educational purposes. The teacher must have permission from administration to allow the cell phones for that particular lesson. Failure to comply with these expectations, will result in confiscation of the cell phone and may result in parents needing to pick up the cell phone from the office. Students are prohibited from operating a cell phone or other electronic device (or camera embedded in such device) while in a locker room, bathroom, or any other location where the privacy rights of others may be violated. Students may not use cell phones, pagers, or other electronic signaling devices during classes unless such use is under the direction of certified staff for educational purposes. Unauthorized possession or use of these devices is grounds for confiscation. Repeated unauthorized use will result in disciplinary action. Depending on the nature of the unauthorized use, the student’s parents and/or law enforcement may be contacted and the student’s cell phone may be searched.

**9. Describe how the public charter school will demonstrate a commitment to and robust understanding of personalized and proficiency-based learning.**

**Vision and Philosophy**

- Student-Centered Learning: SOAR will prioritize each learner's strengths, needs, and interests, ensuring that instruction is responsive and adaptive.
- Growth-Oriented Culture: The school will foster a mindset where progress is measured by mastery, not seat time, encouraging students to take ownership of their learning journey.

**Instructional Design**

- Flexible Pathways to Mastery:
- Students will progress upon demonstrating proficiency, not based on age or grade level.
- Multiple modalities (project-based, experiential, digital) will be used to meet diverse learning styles.
- Individual Learning Plans (ILPs):
- Each student will have a dynamic ILP co-developed with educators and families, outlining goals, supports, and pacing.
- Competency-Based Curriculum:
- Aligned to Montana's OPI standards, the curriculum will be broken into clearly defined competencies with rubrics for mastery.
- Students will revisit and revise work until proficiency is achieved, reinforcing deep understanding.

**Assessment and Feedback**

- Formative and Performance-Based Assessments:
- Frequent, low-stakes assessments will guide instruction and provide real-time feedback.
- Capstone projects and exhibitions will allow students to demonstrate mastery in authentic contexts.
- Transparent Progress Monitoring:
- Dashboards and portfolios will track student growth across competencies, accessible to students, families, and staff.

**Professional Learning and Culture**

- Teacher as Facilitator:
- Educators will be trained to guide personalized learning, using data and relationships to support each student's path.
- Collaborative Planning:
- Interdisciplinary teams will co-design learning experiences and reflect on student progress through regular data cycles.

### **Equity and Inclusion**

- Differentiated Supports:
- SOAR will embed MTSS frameworks to ensure all students—including those with IEPs, ELLs, and gifted learners—can thrive.
- Culturally Responsive Practices:
- Instruction will honor students' identities and lived experiences, integrating community voice and relevance.

### **Accountability and Continuous Improvement**

- Proficiency-Based Reporting:
- Report cards and transcripts will reflect mastery of standards, not traditional letter grades.
- Feedback Loops:
- Regular stakeholder input (students, families, staff) will inform school improvement and instructional refinement.

## **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

See Submission Procedures

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

The SOAR governing board will be the elected school board for the Florence-Carlton School District. It will consist of 5 members. Their roles will be the same; to uphold policy as it relates to all aspects of the school, be prudent financial managers of the charter entity and to make best decisions as it relates to student learning and selected curricular pathways.

Principals will ensure discipline management, staff evaluations and uphold best practices. Principals will work closely with parents, students, counselor and the SSD when placement is being considered.

SSD – Student Support Director will be a direct liaison for all students in the program. They will ensure student engagement, grading, certification management, class enrollment (both on-line and in-school settings).

Building Principals (High School and Middle School) will ensure appropriate Individual Learning Plans are in place along with the SSD. Principals will support academic and behavioral processes.

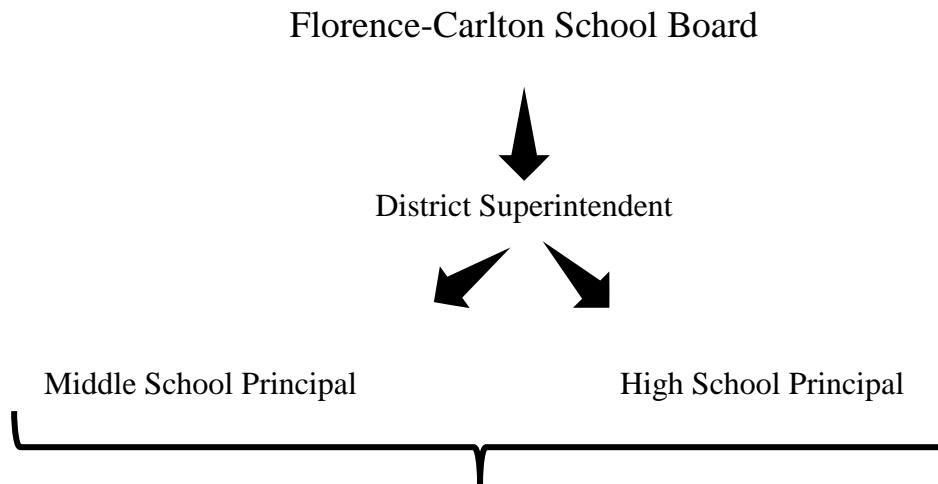
Team Counselor will be a team member with full integration in building the ILP. Integrating student, parents and the SOAR team to design a strong ILP.

Superintendent will provide budgetary oversight, school level supports, ensure strong hiring practices, hold policy and procedure applicability.

School Board will oversee all necessary approvals for governance. Building accountability and assurances toward meeting the needs of our students, parents and community.

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

**SOAR Staffing Chart & Designed Plan**



**Student Support Director (Grades 7-12)**

- Aide Supports as necessary
- Special Education Support
- Other Necessary Services
  - Technology Supports
- Other staff as determined
  - Based from need
- Classroom Teacher(s)

**School Counselors:**

CSCT – School Based Mental Health

(Comprehensive School and Community Treatment)

**STUDENT SUCCESS**

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

**Year 1** (62 students) 41+ High School, 21+ Middle School  
SOAR launches with a student-centered team.

- Leadership: Student Support Director (primary lead), part-time Director of Operations; principals serve in instructional support roles
- Instructional Staff: Four core content teachers, one SPED/ELL teacher, one elective teacher, part-time advisory/career readiness lead

Note: Elective and CTE instructors (e.g., welding, culinary, digital media) are shared with traditional programs to broaden access for SOAR students

- Student Support: Part-time counselor, social worker, behavior interventionist
- Operations: Part-time custodian, food services coordinator, IT support

- SPED/ELL Support: Direct services provided by certified staff; assess the need for paraprofessional support.

**Year 2 (~68 students)**

- Add SPED/ELL paraprofessional (if necessary)
- Continued counselor supports
- Add part-time STEM or trades teacher (shared across programs)
- Continue leveraging shared traditional instructors for electives and CTE

**Year 3 (~72 students)**

- Retain SPED/ELL paraprofessional; assess need for second
- Add support role under Student Support Director
- Cultivate College & Career Advisor with local colleges (University of Montana, Bitterroot College)
- Expand arts programming (shared instructor model)
- Add Family & Community Liaison

**Year 4 (~75 students)**

- Maintain or expand SPED/ELL paraprofessional support (If necessary)
- Add fifth core teacher to reduce class sizes
- Introduce Dual Enrollment Coordinator (If necessary)
- MTSS Coordinator
- Launch student leadership programming
- Continue expanding shared access to advanced electives and career pathways

**Year 5 (~90 students)**

- Maintain two SPED/ELL paraprofessionals if caseload warrants
- Add Dean of Instruction to support teacher development
- Launch teacher mentorship/residency program
- Expand mental health services
- Hire Grant Writer or Development Coordinator
- Formalize shared instructional partnerships with traditional programs to ensure SOAR students have equitable access to specialized courses

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

The SOAR Program will begin in the fall of the 26/27 School Year. This will provide lead time for the academy team to guide students in the process of building academic catalogs, learn digital learning offerings, and build capacity into the outlined pathways.

Academy team meetings will be initiated after Board of Public Education approval of Charter. Our plan will be utilizing the late winter, spring and summer for startup plans to be refined and prepared for launch in the fall.

One of the first goals will be to bring on board a Student Support Director (SSD). This individual will share duties but have a focus as it relates to grade levels. SSD 7-12. As the SOAR Academy grows plans to add additional supports will be incorporated and necessary.

## 14. Describe the plans for recruiting and developing school leadership and staff.

Supportive • Opportunities • Achievement • Readiness

### **Supportive:** Building a Culture of Care and Collaboration

- Hiring Practices: Student Support Director (SSD) must reflect community values and student needs.
- Mentorship & Coaching: Personalized support for educators and leaders, emphasizing trauma-informed care and equity. Building strong relationships throughout the school setting in Florence.
- Wellness & Belonging: Staff wellness initiatives, restorative practices, and peer support systems foster resilience. Building a strong culture in the SOAR setting.
- Homeschool Partnership Supports: Staff are trained to collaborate with homeschool families, offering guidance, curriculum alignment, and access to SOAR's instructional framework.
- Inclusive Supports for Students with Disabilities: Staff are trained in IDEA compliance, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and differentiated instruction to ensure students with IEPs and disabilities are fully integrated into academic, social, and enrichment programs.

### **Opportunities:** Pathways for Growth and Innovation

- Grow-Your-Own Leadership Model: Internal talent is cultivated through residencies, internships, and licensure-aligned pathways.
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs): Weekly PLCs focus on culturally responsive teaching, digital integration, and standards-based instruction.
- Digital Platform Integration: Staff support and leverage platforms like Harmony (SEL and character development) and Montana Digital Academy (course access and credit recovery).
- Homeschool Support Guide: A structured resource for staff and families that includes:
- Guidance on integrating Harmony and MTDA into homeschool routines
- Sample schedules, curriculum maps, and assessment tools
- Communication protocols for homeschool-family engagement
- Equity-focused strategies for supporting diverse learners at home
- Specialized Professional Development: Staff receive ongoing training in inclusive practices, assistive technologies, and collaborative IEP implementation.

### **Achievement:** Excellence in Instruction and Impact

- Mission-Aligned Recruitment: Candidates are selected for their commitment to equity, innovation, and rural community engagement.
- Strategic Coaching: Leaders engage in reflective cycles to improve instructional leadership and student outcomes.
- Performance-Based Growth Plans: Staff co-create development plans tied to SOAR's instructional framework and student achievement metrics.
- Digital Learning Leadership: Staff curate and support personalized learning pathways for both enrolled and homeschool students.
- IEP Integration and Progress Monitoring: Educators use data systems and collaborative planning to ensure students with disabilities meet individualized goals and thrive in inclusive settings.

### **Readiness:** Preparing for Tomorrow's Challenges

- Leadership Development for Future Needs: Training emphasizes adaptive leadership, compliance, and strategic planning.
- Technology Integration: Staff use digital platforms to personalize learning, monitor progress, and expand access to advanced coursework.

- Community and Family Engagement: Staff collaborate with homeschool families, local providers, and digital academies to ensure readiness across diverse learning environments.
- Harmony SEL Framework: Embedded into both classroom and homeschool support models to foster emotional intelligence and positive relationships.
- Inclusive Readiness Planning: SOAR ensures students with disabilities are supported in transitions, career exploration, and postsecondary pathways through coordinated services and family partnerships.

## **15. Describe the proposed leadership and teacher employment policies, including performance evaluation plans.**

All evaluations will be completed by the building level principals, to include performance related plans. SOAR will have built in leadership that is solely focused on the SOAR program, student advocating and student successes. Student Support Director (SSD) will build capacity in the program, cultivate pathways, be connected in all SOAR ways. The SSD will have input in all evaluations. Administrators that have the required credentials will evaluate as per the CBA.

## **16. State the proposed governing bylaws.**

All currently board adopted policies, student and staff handbooks will outline the governing bylaws as it relates to student achievement and accountability. Collective Bargaining Agreement will be followed in relations to proposed governance.

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

### **SOAR Charter School – Grades 7–12 Partnership & Contractual Summary**

#### **1. Academic & Compliance Partners**

- Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI): Oversees curriculum alignment, graduation requirements, and assessment standards.
- Dual Enrollment & CTE Providers: Partnerships with local colleges, trade schools, and career centers offer students access to college credit, certifications, and hands-on career training.
- Meeting testing requirements

#### **2. Student Support Services**

- Mental Health & Counseling Agencies: Contracted professionals provide trauma-informed care, crisis response, and adolescent wellness support.
- Special Education Specialists: Deliver IDEA-compliant services tailored to secondary learners, including transition planning and postsecondary readiness.

#### **3. Equity, Enrichment & Engagement**

- Community Organizations: Support mentorship, food security, and extracurricular engagement for teens.
- Grant-Funded Programs: Sustain enrichment offerings like STEM clubs, leadership development, and college/career readiness initiatives.
- Pathway Partnerships for Learning:
- Work-Based Learning Partners: Local businesses and nonprofits offer internships, job shadowing, and project-based learning aligned with student interests.

- Youth Leadership & Civic Engagement Groups: Collaborations with service organizations and youth councils foster advocacy, public speaking, and community involvement.
- Technology & Innovation Hubs: Partnerships with coding bootcamps, makerspaces, and ed-tech providers support digital literacy and creative problem-solving.

#### **4. Operational Contracts**

- Transportation & Nutrition Vendors: Ensure access to school and meals for older students, including those in alternative schedules or work-study.
- Technology & Data Platforms: Manage student records, progress monitoring, and compliance reporting for grades 7–12.

#### **5. Staffing & Professional Development**

- Consultants & Third-Party Trainers: Provide PD in adolescent engagement, inclusive practices, and culturally responsive teaching.
- Collective Bargaining Agreements: Define roles and responsibilities for educators and support staff.

### **18. Provide the proposed calendar and sample daily schedule.**

The adopted calendar by the school board will be in effect for the 26/27 SY. All holidays and other related calendar impacts will be a part of the everyday SOAR school. SOAR Academy will be a 4-Day School. 26/27 School Calendar will be adopted by the board in late winter.

Schedules will be non-traditional in the sense that each student in the SOAR program may have different schedules, work related activities/training that would alter their schedule.

## **BUSINESS OPERATIONS**

See Submission Procedures

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

SOAR Academy will dovetail with all transportation, food service programming, special educational services, social/emotional mental health supports as currently established.

### **20. Describe cocurricular and extracurricular programs and how the programs will be funded and delivered.**

All SOAR students may be involved in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities as offered by the school district. All rules and procedures will apply (such as; grade eligibility, behavior, attendance).

### **21. Describe the proposed financial plan and policies, including financial controls and audit requirements.**

All financial planning, controls, auditing and policies that are currently in place and required will be in effect for the SOAR Academy. All financial policies adopted will be in effect for The Academy.

## **22. Describe the insurance coverage that will be obtained.**

All required insurance coverages will be in place as currently prescribed for the Florence-Carlton School District. Both Property and Liability coverages will be in effect and enforceable.

## **23. Describe the startup and five-year budgets with clearly stated assumptions.**

SOAR Academy's financial framework is built to support a sustainable, inclusive launch and long-term growth, aligned with OPI standards and charter school expectations. The startup phase includes essential investments in facilities, staffing, curriculum, technology, and compliance, totaling approximately \$115,000 in the Middle School and \$350,000 for the High School.

This includes a contingency reserve to manage unforeseen costs and ensure fiscal stability. Over the five-year horizon, SOAR's operating budget scales with projected enrollment growth, staffing expansion, and program development.

The startup and five-year budget are designed to support the launch and sustained operation of both middle and high school programs, with dedicated annual funding and strategic use of resources. Each year, the middle school will receive \$120,000 and the high school will receive \$355,000.

These funds will be allocated to cover essential operational components including two full-time teachers, paraeducator support, instructional supplies, a cost-effective facility lease, and other associated costs such as insurance, technology, and administrative overhead. The staffing model assumes one full-time certified teacher per site, supported by paraeducators whose hours may increase over time in response to enrollment growth and student needs.

The budget assumes a projected annual student enrollment growth of 3 to 4 percent. This growth will be accommodated by scaling supply purchases, expanding paraeducator support, and adjusting operational costs as needed. Lease costs are expected to remain stable or increase modestly, with negotiations focused on maintaining affordability and flexibility.

In the startup year, the majority of funds will be directed toward establishing core staffing, securing instructional materials, technology support and building capacity into the SOAR programming (to include outreach initiatives, pathway partnerships and other support areas). In subsequent years, the budget will maintain these foundational elements while allowing for incremental adjustments based on enrollment trends and program expansion.

The middle school and high school budget will emphasize flexible staffing and shared resources. The budget will support a robust instructional program, with expanded curriculum, technology integration, and broad student services.

This five-year financial plan is built on the principles of sustainability, scalability, and student-centered growth, ensuring that both programs can adapt to changing needs while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

**Key assumptions include:**

- Enrollment Growth: 3-4% annually, supported by community demand and outreach.
- Staffing Ratios: Maintained between 1:12 and 1:18 to support individualized instruction.
- Revenue Sources: State funding based on Average Number Belonging (ANB) and Basic Entitlement as set-forth by the State of Montana.
- Inflation: 3% annual increase in operating costs.
- Technology Refresh: Major upgrades every three years.
- Custodial and Nutrition Supports included.

**OPI Charter School Budget Supports:**

- Per-Pupil Funding: SOAR will receive state base aid and applicable special education allocations based on AnB, consistent with Montana's funding formula.
- Start-Up Basic Entitlement Funding: Funding to support initial staffing, curriculum development, and outreach.
- Title I & IDEA Allocations: As a public charter, SOAR is eligible for federal funding administered through OPI, including Title I for low-income students and IDEA Part B for students with disabilities.
- Professional Development & Technical Assistance: OPI provides ongoing support for compliance, instructional quality, and data reporting, which offsets district costs for training and systems development.

This financial outline reflects SOAR's commitment to equity, innovation, and sustainability, with clear alignment to OPI's charter school supports and accountability structures.

**24. Describe the startup and first year cash flow projections with clearly stated assumptions.****SOAR Charter School: Startup & Year 1 Cash Flow Summary**

Key Assumptions SOAR Charter School anticipates enrolling 62+ students in its first year, with Basic Entitlement Funding. Facilities will be leased—in our K-2 Building—avoiding capital purchase. Staffing includes administrator support, Student Support Director, two teachers, two paraprofessional, and other part-time support staff.

Investments will be made in Harmony platform access, Montana Digital Academy integration, and standards-aligned curriculum. A 5% contingency reserve is built into both startup and operating budgets.

**Startup Phase (Pre-Opening)**

Startup costs total approximately **\$25,500**. These include technology infrastructure, curriculum and materials, staff recruitment and training, legal and insurance costs, marketing and outreach, and a contingency reserve.

**Year 1 Operating Cash Flow**

Projected revenue for Year 1 is sourced from State Basic Entitlement for Charter school allocations, and possibly local donations (Pathway Supports). Operating expenses are projected at to cover salaries and benefits, facility lease and utilities, instructional materials, technology licenses and support, transportation and food services, administrative and compliance costs, and a contingency reserve.

## **25. Describe anticipated fundraising contributions and evidence, if applicable.**

N/A

## **26. Describe the facilities plan, including backup or contingency plans.**

Florence has a vacant building that was preserved after a passed bond request. This facility will allow for a classrooms to be utilized for the needs of the SOAR program. Students will have a place to perform digital platform work, check in with advisor and integrate into the existing school. We feel strongly that this will provide another niche for our SOAR students as they work toward their goals and provide a safe, organized educational environment. The SOAR classroom will provide wi-fi connectivity, usable workspace, supportive environment and appropriate technology platforms for students. If a backup plan was necessary (unforeseen emergency), SOAR Academy would be integrated within the current school system. I foresee no reason a contingency plan would be necessary given we have a vacant building suitable for the Academy's educational platform.

## **COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND NEED**

See Submission Procedures

## **27. Describe the specific evidence of significant community support.**

Florence-Carlton Community Support for SOAR Charter School Inclusive Pathways for Grades 7–12

The Florence-Carlton community demonstrates strong, values-driven support for the SOAR charter school concept—especially in its commitment to serving students in grades 7–12 through inclusive, personalized, and career-connected learning. This support is rooted in shared priorities, lived experiences, and a deep understanding of local needs:

### **Why the Community Supports SOAR:**

- Recognition of Diverse Student Needs: Families, educators, and local leaders understand that not all students thrive in traditional academic settings. SOAR offers alternative pathways—including school-to-work transitions, technical training, and on-the-job learning—that honor student interests and strengths beyond college-bound tracks.
- Commitment to Equity and Belonging: The community values programs that meet students where they are. SOAR's wraparound supports, behavioral interventions, and trauma-informed practices reflect Florence-Carlton's broader commitment to inclusion, healing, and student-centered care—especially in times of crisis.
- Desire for Local Workforce Development: With growing interest in trades, agriculture, entrepreneurship, and service industries, SOAR's emphasis on career readiness and industry partnerships aligns with regional economic goals. Community members see SOAR as a bridge between education and meaningful employment.
- Shared Values in Action: Through initiatives like the “SOAR to Support” campaign, students in grades 7–12 have demonstrated ownership, accountability, and respect—core values of the SOAR model. Their engagement with nonprofits like Youth Homes of Missoula and YWCA of Western Montana reflects a culture of service and leadership.
- Support for Innovation and Flexibility: SOAR's flexible scheduling, project-based learning, and personalized instruction resonate with families seeking alternatives to rigid systems. The community embraces innovation that empowers students to take charge of their learning and future.

## **How Students Benefit:**

- Grades 7–8: Middle school students engage in service learning, mentorship, and early career exploration, building foundational skills in empathy, collaboration, and self-direction.
- Grades 9–12: High school students access school-to-work programs, internships, certifications, and technical training—preparing them for success whether they pursue college, trades, or direct employment.

Florence-Carlton's support for SOAR is not just aspirational—it's grounded in action, alignment, and a shared belief that every student deserves a pathway to thrive.

## **28. Describe the opportunities and expectations for parent involvement.**

### **Opportunities for Parent Involvement**

#### **1. Governance & Leadership**

- Join advisory councils or school committees focused on curriculum, Title I, wellness, and strategic planning.
- Collaborate on shaping SOAR's vision for inclusive, student-centered education.

#### **2. Curriculum & Learning Support**

- Partner with educators to co-design personalized learning pathways.
- Volunteer in classrooms, enrichment programs, or project-based learning experiences.

#### **3. Family Engagement Events**

- Attend and help organize family nights, cultural celebrations, and community forums.
- Participate in workshops on trauma-informed care, digital literacy, and restorative practices.

#### **4. Advocacy & Outreach**

- Act as ambassadors for SOAR's mission within the Florence community.
- Support grant initiatives, fundraising efforts, and partnerships with local organizations.

#### **5. Collaboration with Homeschool Families**

- Leverage SOAR's flexible, innovative model to supplement home-based instruction.
- Access enrichment programs, assessments, and specialized services while maintaining autonomy.
- Engage in co-learning opportunities that honor parental expertise and student individuality.

### **Expectations for Parent Engagement**

#### **1. Partnership Mindset**

- Approach involvement as a collaborative effort with educators and administrators.
- Uphold SOAR's values of inclusivity, transparency, and respect.

#### **2. Communication & Responsiveness**

- Stay informed through newsletters, portals, and direct outreach.
- Participate in feedback loops and respond promptly to school communications.

#### **3. Advocacy for All Students**

- Support policies and practices that promote equity and access.
- Engage in dialogue that centers student voice and community healing.

#### **4. Commitment to Growth**

- Attend orientation sessions and trainings to understand SOAR's model.
- Explore trauma-informed practices, culturally responsive teaching, and innovative assessment.

Florence SOAR Academy offers a dynamic, collaborative space where homeschool families can find community, resources, and enrichment—without compromising their core values. It's a place where parents are not just welcome, but essential to the learning ecosystem.

## 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)*

## **The Boulder Monitor**

### [The future of education?](#)

A major think tank recently published a report highlighting a Helena homeschooling cooperative that's so popular it's getting overcrowded, which got me thinking about this fast-growing educational alternative and how it's impacting Montana. Did you know that the number of homeschooled kids in Jefferson County has nearly doubled in recent years? It's true, from just 78 in 2020 to 143 today, according to state education data. Over the same period, Lewis & Clark County saw a more modest but still strong increase of about 28%, up to nearly 600 students. This echoes national trends. The rate of homeschooling in the U.S. has doubled in the past quarter-century, from 1.7% of K-12 students in 1999 to 3.4% in 2023, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. And uptake may be accelerating: Forbes last year asserted that the number of homeschooled U.S. students had leapt from 2.5 million in 2019 to 4 million. In Montana, more than 9% of students are homeschooled, behind only Alaska and Tennessee, according to Johns Hopkins research, and the share continues to increase.

### [High school students 'dig' into future trade careers](#)

Helena area high school students are digging into their future careers in the trades at Digger Days. "Just to learn some trades you have never done before and maybe have an idea of what you want to do after high school," Levi Coon, a junior, said. Students got their hands dirty with everything from heavy machinery operation and concrete work to framing and plumbing. The event is led by Tactics Montana and a handful of sponsors. "Being able to pull on the community to come together and bring these pieces of equipment out here, we probably have over 3 million dollars in equipment sitting here being run by the kids," Lucas Canney, a shop instructor from Capital High, says. "They would never have access to something like that inside of the school building." Over one hundred students got to learn through hands-on experience. Calvin Schriver is one of those students and says, "What inspired me is to just like have the hard work and dedication that I want to use big machinery."



# **FLORENCE-CARLTON SCHOOL DISTRICT 15-6**

## **BE SAFE, BE RESPONSIBLE AND BE RESPECTFUL**

### **“HOME OF THE FALCONS”**

Draft - School Board Meeting Min – October 14, 2025

## N - O - T - I - C - E

\* \* \* \* \*

October 14, @ 5:00 P.M.

 NEW Meeting Location: K-2 Board Room 

**Located on Long Ave. in the K-2 building (Old Elementary Building)**

**Board Attendance:** [X] - Bobbie Ketelhut; [X] - James Kennedy; [X] - Emily Dismukes; [X] - Ben Crocker; [X] - Lacy Janes

**NOTE: All meetings will be recorded while in session of a regular board meeting and archived accordingly. Meetings may be viewed after posted to the website: [www.florencecarlton.org](http://www.florencecarlton.org)**

Order of Meeting      Presenter:      Motion/Action:

Pledge of Allegiance ..... Board Chair (begins)

### **Approval of Agenda** (to include any Revisions)

Motion: "I move to approve the agenda as presented to include any revisions."

Motion made by: Lacy Janes

Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by: Bobby Kettelhut

## Discussion: none

Motion: Yes 5 No 0

Community Comments ..... Board Chair

Guidelines for Public Comment are outlined in Board Policy 1420 and 1420F and 1441. The Board Chairperson may place reasonable time limits on any “public comment” period to maintain and ensure effective and efficient operations of the Board. Please sign up for public comment and you will be recognized. Public comments shouldn’t pertain to agenda items presented. **NONE**

**Correspondence:**..... **NONE** **Board Chair**

## **Student(s)/Staff Representative Report:**

FFA Representative: Livestock Competition update

## **Business /Finance Report:**

a. Finance update – Superintendent / Clerk

General Audit Review and Submission to FY 23/24 Audit to OPI – Unqualified Audit Review due to two exceptions. 1: Driver's Educ, Student Accounts 2: Filing Deadline – This lowers our Bond Rating.

General Audit 24/25 begins – Goals will be to eliminate all unqualified exceptions moving forward.

Mr. Fisk gave a brief review of the finance and audit update.

## **Administrative Reports:**

**\* Superintendent:** Mr. Fiske

-Playground Update = Complete Success – Kids Love It!

- Outline of the past month as it relates to mental health and therapeutic support. Quick summary.

Student Vehicle Purchase (Vans)

Snack update

Policy Updates: Clarified that adoptions are up to date.

Upper Seven lawsuit Info

Resignation update.

Stock Farm – Greater Ravalli Foundation (Paid for training “Trauma Informed Classroom” and assistance with overdue lunch accounts and teacher supply dollars. Farm to School grant for Snack Program

Mr. Fisk gave a brief update on happenings this past month. The playground is a big hit, and the outpouring of support for the Florence community, both in the Bitterroot Valley and across the state, has been overwhelming. He gave a brief on the purchased vans, snack update, and policy clarification. Gave a brief review of the Upper Seven lawsuit regarding funding of public education. Gave a short review of additional donations from the Greater Ravalli Foundation and Town Pump.

### **\*Principal Reports (if in attendance; otherwise summary in board packet):**

- Elementary
- Middle School
- High School

### **\* Trustee(s) Reports:**

None to Report

Discussion:

<u>Order of Meeting</u>	<u>Presenter:</u>	<u>Motion/Action:</u>
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## Personnel:

New Hires: ..... Superintendent

### Action Item: I move to approve the Personnel List as presented. **Para Educator Casie Brooks**

Summary: Outline recommended for board approval (Board Packet).

Amber Dobb = move to .5 fte from .4 fte, Heidi Pippin: MS/HS Secretary, Scott Purdy: Para Educator, Staci Pullman: Pre-ETS Coordinator, Mark Caldarone: HS C-Squad Boys Basketball coach,

Motion made by: Lacy Janes

Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by: Emily Dismukes

Board Discussion: None

Public Comment: None

Motion: Yes 5 No 0

### Action Item: I move to approve the Extra/Co-Curricular List as presented.

Summary: Outline recommended for board approval (Board Packet).

Motion made by: Lacy Janes

Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by: Emily Dismukes

Board Discussion: None

Public Comment: Mr. Marsh made a brief statement along with John Maki

Motion: Yes 5 No 0

<u>Order of Meeting</u>	<u>Presenter:</u>	<u>Motion/Action:</u>
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## New Business: ..... Board Chair

### 1. Action Item: Move to approve the sale and/or disposal of two vehicles that are obsolete for student transportation. Vehicle #1: 2006 Ford Freestar. Vehicle #2: 2007 Chevy Uplander (Both vehicles do not run)

Summary: **20-6-604. Sale of property when resolution passed after hearing -- appeal procedure.** (1) Whenever the trustees of a district determine that a site, building, or any other real or personal property of the district is or is about to become abandoned, obsolete, undesirable, or unsuitable for the school purposes of the district, the trustees may sell or otherwise dispose of the real or personal property in accordance with this section and without conforming to the provisions of **20-6-603**. If a decision to sell or dispose of property is made, the trustees shall adopt a resolution to sell or otherwise dispose of the district real or personal property because it is or is about to become abandoned, obsolete, undesirable, or unsuitable for the school purposes of the district.

Motion made by: Lacy Janes

Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by: Emily Dismukes

Board Discussion: Lacy made a brief statement thanking Todd.

Public Comment: None

Motion: Yes 5 No 0

**2. Action Item: Move to approve the creation of a 7<sup>th</sup> grade – 12<sup>th</sup> grade Charter School. SOAR Charter School for the 26-27 SY**

Summary: The application for SOAR Charter has been completed with an abbreviation from the year before. Pairing the charter down to focus on grades 7-12.

Motion made by: Emily Dismukes

Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by: James Kennedy

Board Discussion: Todd gave a brief review of the application. Brief discussion by board members

Public Comment: The Public commented on marketing.

Motion: Yes 4 No 0 Lacy Janes left the meeting

<u>Order of Meeting</u>	<u>Presenter:</u>	<u>Motion/Action:</u>
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Old Business: ..... Board Chair None

Consent Agenda: (can be made in one motion a. – d.).....Board Chair

a. Warrants

b. Review Budget to Actuals & Cash Report

c. Journal Vouchers

d. Minutes

Motion made by: Emily Dismukes Motion: "I move to accept the Consent Agenda as presented."

Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by: Bobby Kettelhut

Motion: Yes 4 No 0

Next regular meeting.....Board Chair

REGULAR BOARD MEETING: October 14, 2025— November 11, 2025

Place: K-2 Building – 5:00 pm

Adjournment ..... Board Chair Time Noted: 6:51 pm

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Board Chair Date

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District Clerk Date