

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

July 22-24, 2026

**Montana School Boards Association, First Floor Boardroom
863 Great Northern Blvd
Helena, MT**

Wednesday, July 22, 2026

10:00AM

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tim Tharp called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. Chair Tharp led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance, Ms. Kris Stockton took Roll Call, and the Chair read the Statement of Public Participation and welcomed guests.

Board members: Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair; Dr. Ron Slinger, Vice Chair; Dr. Hannah Nieskens; Ms. Lisa Schmidt; Ms. Julia Maxwell; Ms. Renee Rasmussen; Ms. Amanda Mills. Ex Officio members: Ms. Tyler Capece, Office of Public Instruction (OPI); Dr. Angela McLean, Office of Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE); Mr. Manish Bhatt, Governor's Office. Staff: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Specialist; Ms. Julie Balsam, Administrative Assistant; Ms. Lea Ann Munkres, Program Officer; Mr. Rich Batterman, Board Legal Counsel. Guests: Mr. Larry Crowder, Montana Rural Education Association; Mr. Dylan Klapmeier, OPI; Ms. Audra Ahumada, ACT Education Corp; Mr. Joey Hedger, National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE); Mr. Paola DeMaria, NASBE.

❖ STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION – Dr. Tim Tharp

10:00AM STRATEGIC PLANNING ITEMS – 00:00:00

Chair Tim Tharp reviewed the schedule for the morning, and Ms. McCall Flynn led the Board in a review of Board Bylaws, Committee Assignments, 2027 Meeting Calendar, Agenda Calendar, and a review of the Open Meeting Laws.

1:00PM REVIEW DRAFT STRATEGIC PLANNING ITEMS

1:30PM DISCUSS RELATED METRICS FOR SUCCESS

2:00PM REVIEW LAYOUT AND FORMATTING

3:00PM IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS FOR FEEDBACK

3:30PM WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS

PUBLIC COMMENT ON STRATEGIC PLANNING ITEMS -

No public comment was made.

RECESS

The Board recessed for the day at 3:30 PM.

Thursday, July 23, 2026

8:30AM

CALL TO ORDER – 0:07:42

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

Board members: Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair; Dr. Ron Slinger, Vice Chair; Dr. Hannah Nieskens; Ms. Lisa Schmidt; Ms. Julia Maxwell; Ms. Renee Rasmussen; Ms. Amanda Mills; Ms. Lydia Comstock, Student Representative. Ex Officio members: Mr. Dylan Klapmeier, OPI; Dr. Angela McLean, OCHE; Mr. Manish Bhatt, Governor's Office. Staff: Ms.

McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Specialist; Ms. Julie Balsam, Administrative Assistant; Mr. Rich Batterman, Board Legal Counsel. Guests: Ms. Tyler Capece, OPI; Mr. Brenton Craggs, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI; Ms. Marie Judisch, OPI; Ms. Crystal Andrews, OPI; Ms. Elsie Workman, OPI; Mr. Mike Krout, Majestic Transportation; Mr. Neal Ullman, Department of Environmental Quality; Ms. Jordann Lankford Forster, Chair, Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE); Ms. Christy Mock-Stutz, OPI; Dr. Brooke Gondara, OPI; Ms. Cedar Rose, OPI; Ms. Audra Ahumada, ACT Education Corp; Ms. Kim Popham, Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE); Ms. Melissa Romano, MFPE; Deputy Superintendent Craig Barringer, OPI; Mr. Matthew Bell, OPI; Ms. Norma Bixby, MACIE; Ms. Dawn Bishop-Moore, MACIE; Ms. Iris Killeagle, MACIE; Ms. Jen Murphy, OPI; Ms. Michele Henson, OPI; Mr. Ivan Small; Ms. Billie Jo Juneau, MACIE; Mr. Ryan Schrenk, OPI; Mr. Lucas Rowsey, OPI.

PUBLIC COMMENT 0:10:09

No public comment was made.

CONSENT AGENDA – 00:10:19

Vice Chair Slinger moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion seconded by Board member Maxwell.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

ADOPT AGENDA – 00:11:05

Board member Rasmussen moved to approve the agenda. Motion seconded by Board member Schmidt.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

*****Items are listed in the order in which they are presented*****

❖ **REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 1-5)**

**Item 1 CHAIRPERSON REPORT – 00:11:35
Dr. Tim Tharp**

Chair Tim Tharp reviewed meetings and conferences he has attended since the May 2026 Board meeting, including the School Funding Interim Commission Meeting, the Forum on Education and Democracy, the National Association of School Boards of Education conference and the Education Commission of the States conference.

**Item 4 COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT – 00:17:00
Dr. Angela McLean**

Dr. Angela McLean discussed the Montana University System-Rural Talent Development and Attraction Lab Rural Montana Listening Sessions and Phase II of Montana's Future at Work. Dr. McLean discussed specific work with Miles Community College and Vice Chair Slinger discussed the program at Miles Community College. Dr. McLean answered Board members' questions.

**Item 2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – 00:36:53
McCall Flynn**

Ms. McCall Flynn thanked Montana School Boards Association for the use of their boardroom, updated the Board on rulemaking progress, shared information on committee work since the May Board meeting, and reviewed the upcoming Montana Association of School Superintendents fall meetings she will attend.

**Item 5 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – 00:44:07
Lydia Comstock**

Ms. Lydia Comstock shared efforts to help local school boards include student representation. Ms. Comstock noted the Montana Association of Student Councils will hold its state conference this fall and highlighted schools that are considering membership. Ms. Comstock offered to assist the Board with future projects to include student voice.

**Item 3 STATE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – 00:48:33
Dylan Klapmeier**

Mr. Seth Whitney spoke on his own behalf and requested the Board move to a hearing so his case can be heard.

Dr. Hannah Nieskens clarified that the hearing will be a contested case hearing, not an investigative case hearing as stated by Mr. Whitney.

Mr. Rich Batterman explained the hearing process for Mr. Whitney.

Mr. Craggs clarified that both parties will present their case at the hearing and may call witnesses and present evidence.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 9 ACTION ON THE EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDER ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK – 03:20:16

Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews reviewed the presentation made at the May 2026 Board meeting of the Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Handbook and answered Board members' questions.

Vice Chair Slinger moved to approve the Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Handbook as presented. Motion seconded by Dr. Nieskens.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 10 ACTION ON THE SITE VISIT AND STATE EXIT REPORT OF THE CARROLL COLLEGE EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – 03:23:56

Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews reviewed the presentation made at the May 2026 Board meeting of the State Exit Report for Carroll College and answered Board members' questions.

Vice Chair Slinger moved to approve the Site Visit and State Exit Report of the Carroll College Educator Preparation Provider in the Department of Education. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 11 ACTION ON PRAXIS ITEMS – 03:26:06

Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews reviewed the Praxis tests and qualifying scores and answered Board members' questions.

Vice Chair Slinger moved to approve the following Praxis tests and qualifying scores: Middle School Mathematics test #5164 with a score of 157; Middle School English Language Arts test #5047 with a score of 164; Middle School Social Studies test #5589 with a score of 149; Middle School Science test #5442 with a score of 152; Physical Education test #5091 with a score of 147; and Health test #5551 with a score of 154. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

Vice Chair Slinger stated his appreciation for the work done to bring this to the Board.

Chair Tharp stated his appreciation for the focus on Middle School endorsements.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – Dr. Hannah Nieskens (Item 12)

Item 12 INFORMATION AND REVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TECHNICIAN RULEMAKING – 03:31:31
Dr. Julie Murgel

Dr. Julie Murgel presented the Chapter 55 rulemaking revisions for the newly created Special Education Technician License. Dr. Murgel answered Board members' questions and took suggestions about the proposal. Ms. McCall Flynn outlined the timeline for the rulemaking and public comment process.

❖ **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Dr. Tim Tharp (Item 13)**

**Item 13 INFORMATION AND REVIEW OF MONTANA SCHOOL BUS STANDARDS
RULEMAKING – 03:28:37**

Elsie Workman, OPI; Mike Krout, Majestic Transportation; Neal Ullman, DEQ

Ms. Elsie Workman, Mr. Mike Krout, and Mr. Neal Ullman reviewed and discussed the revisions to the Montana School Bus Standards noting where changes were made and reasons for the changes. The group answered Board members' questions.

*****TIME CERTAIN AT 2:00PM*****

❖ **JOINT MACIE MEETING AND TRIBAL CONSULTATION – Julia Maxwell (Items 14-17)**

**Item 14 MACIE REPORT – 05:38:08
Jordann Lankford Forster**

Ms. Jordann Lankford Forster presented the MACIE report and answered Board members' and MACIE members' questions.

**Item 15 INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL REPORT – 05:42:57
Christy Mock-Stutz, Dr. Brooke Gondara**

Ms. Christy Mock-Stutz and Dr. Brooke Gondara presented the Indian Education for All Report and answered Board members' and MACIE members' questions.

**Item 16 INFORMATION AND UPDATE ON INTENSIVE ASSISTANCE PROCESS – 06:07:38
Dr. Julie Murgel, Dr. Brooke Gondara**

Dr. Julie Murgel and Dr. Brooke Gondara reviewed the updated Intensive Assistance Process and addressed Board members' and MACIE members' questions, concerns, and suggested revisions.

**Item 17 WRAP UP AND FINAL THOUGHTS – 06:52:00
Dr. Tim Tharp, Jordann Lankford Forster**

The Board and MACIE members discussed how to best support schools that are not in Intensive Assistance but struggle with their accreditation status and how to help those schools as well.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON JOINT MACIE MEETING ITEMS

No public comment was made.

RECESS

The Board recessed for the day at 3:30 PM.

Friday, July 24, 2026
8:30AM

CALL TO ORDER – 00:02:00

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

Board members: Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair; Dr. Ron Slinger, Vice Chair; Dr. Hannah Nieskens; Ms. Lisa Schmidt; Ms. Julia Maxwell; Ms. Renee Rasmussen; Ms. Amanda Mills. Ex Officio members: Ms. Tyler Capece, OPI; Dr. Angela McLean, OCHE. Staff: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Specialist; Ms. Julie Balsam, Administrative Assistant; Ms. Lea Ann Munkres, Program Officer; Ms. Cathy Kincheloe, Director of Planning, Community Choice Schools Commission; Mr. Rich Batterman, Board Legal Counsel. Guests: Mr. John Doran, Bridged Health Alliance; Ms. Sarah Music, OPI; Ms. Genie Zeeck, OPI; Mr. Lucas Rowsey, OPI; Ms. Kristi Steinberg, University of Montana (UM); Dr. Jen Snow, UM; Ms. Christy Mock-Stutz, OPI; Deputy Superintendent Craig Barringer, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI; Ms. Kim Popham, MFPE; Ms. Crystal Andrews, OPI; Dr. Jason Nieffer, Montana Digital Academy (MTDA); Ms. Caitlin Byers, MTDA; Mr. Jeremy MacDonald, Stone Child College; Ms.

Marie Judisch, OPI; Dr. Carly Urban, Montana State University; Mr. Mike Paffhausen, National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors; Ms. Shannon Boswell, OPI; Ms. Nicole Thuotte, OPI; Ms. Autumn Warren, OPI; Mr. Ryan Schrenk, OPI; Ms. Susan Sutherland, Stone Child College; Ms. Cory Sangrey-Billy, President, Stone Child College; Ms. Aislinn Brown, OPI; Ms. Kristal Smith, OPI; Superintendent Christopher Hess, Big Sandy Public Schools; Ms. Wilma Tyner, Stone Child College.

❖ **CHARTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE – Lisa Schmidt (Items 18-19)**

Item 18 UPDATE ON COMMUNITY CHOICE SCHOOLS COMMISSION – 00:05:40
Cathy Kincheloe

Ms. Cathy Kincheloe presented the Commission Guidebook for the Application Process and Oversight of Local District Authorizers and Community Choice Schools drafted by the Commission and answered Board members' questions.

Item 19 ACTION AND INFORMATION ON PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT
REQUEST PROCESS – 00:17:11
McCall Flynn

Ms. McCall Flynn presented the Public Charter School Amendment Request Process to the Board. Ms. Lea Ann Munkres reviewed the document and explained why a school might request a contract amendment and answered Board members' questions.

Board member Schmidt moved to approve the Public Charter School Amendment Request Process. Motion seconded by Vice Chair Slinger.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 20-22)**

Item 20 PRESENTATION ON MONTANA BRIDGED HEALTH ALLIANCE – 00:39:14
John Doran

Mr. John Doran presented the Montana Bridged Health Alliance as a new Health Insurance option for school districts. Mr. Doran outlined the process for establishing this new health alliance and answered Board members' questions.

Item 21 INFORMATION ON THE YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY RESULTS – 01:00:37
Sarah Music, Genie Zeeck

Ms. Sarah Music and Ms. Genie Zeeck shared the results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey for the Board and answered Board members' questions.

Item 22 ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND TIMELINE
PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 64, TRANSPORTATION
STANDARDS AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER –
01:26:46
Dr. Tim Tharp

Ms. McCall Flynn noted that, based upon the questions posed the prior day, the Board may not be ready to vote upon the proposed Notice until the September meeting. Chair Tharp requested volunteers to serve on an ad-hoc committee and review the proposed revisions. Chair Tim Tharp, Board member Rasmussen, and Dr. Nieskens will serve on the newly formed ad-hoc committee that will review the proposed revisions.

Board member Nieskens moved to table action on the Proposed Notice of Public Hearing and Timeline pertaining to rulemaking in ARM Title 10, Chapter 64, Transportation Standards and authorize filing of the notice with the Secretary of State for publication in the Montana Administrative Register until the September 2026 Board meeting. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE – Dr. Hannah Nieskens (Item 23)**

Item 23

PRESENTATION ON ARTIFICIAL TECHNOLOGY GUIDANCE – 01:29:39

Dr. Jason Nieffer, Montana Digital Academy, Tyler Capece, Lucas Rowsey

Ms. Tyler Capece, Dr. Jason Nieffer, Mr. Lucas Rowsey, and Ms. Caitlin Byers presented state guidance on Artificial Intelligence for schools. The presenters explained that the document aligns with best practices and guidelines from other states. The group answered Board members' questions.

❖ **LICENSURE COMMITTEE – Dr. Ron Slinger (Items 24-27)**

Item 24

ACTION ON THE DRAFT COUNCIL FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – 02:09:39

Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews reviewed the May 2026 Board meeting presentation. Following, Dr. Julie Murgel outlined the CAEP accreditation process and requirements for programs to meet the accreditation standards.

Vice Chair Slinger moved to approve the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation Memorandum of Understanding as presented for a term of seven years. Motion seconded by Board member Nieskens.

Vice Chair Slinger explained that approving the memorandum for seven years will provide stability for the Educator Preparation Programs.

Board member Rasmussen stated she will not vote for a seven year cycle.

Board member Schmidt asked for Board member Rasmussen to explain her concerns with the seven year proposal.

Board member Rasmussen stated that the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation is a potential accrediting body the state could use and added that she is concerned that seven years may be too long.

Mr. Batterman stated that the draft states one year.

Ms. McCall Flynn stated that the proposal from the Office of Public Instruction is for one year but that the Board can revise the timeframe.

Chair Tharp noted Mr. Batterman's concerns and asked OPI if there were concerns with the seven year timeframe.

Ms. Tyler Capece noted that the OPI proposed one year because there are not any joint accreditations scheduled for the next year.

Ms. Julia Maxwell noted that the cycle may break up the accreditation process for programs.

Vice Chair Slinger noted that the University of Montana is the next program up for accreditation and their plan is due May 1, 2027. Dr. Slinger restated his concern that not approving an accrediting body could harm the schools.

Dr. Angela McLean noted that the Montana University System stance is that a multi-year agreement is most appropriate.

Dr. Nieskens stated that the motion could be amended to reject the one year memorandum and request OPI seek a multi-year contract.

Vice Chair Slinger asked if the memorandum could be approved at the September meeting.

Ms. Tyler Capece noted that the OPI is open to negotiating the timeframe.

Chair Tharp asked if waiting until September would be detrimental to any programs.

Dr. Murgel noted that it would not be detrimental to wait until September, but that September would be the latest timeframe with the least impact on programs.

Board member Rasmussen stated that she would be comfortable with a three year contract.

Board member Schmidt asked for a comparison of other possible accrediting bodies.

Dr. Nieskens stated that the Accreditation Committee will work with OPI to research other potential accrediting bodies.

Chair Tharp noted that the motion on the floor needs to be voted down or a new motion made.

No further discussion. Motion failed with Vice Chair Slinger voting in favor.

Chair Tharp requested OPI present a new proposal at the September 2026 meeting.

Item 25 INFORMATION ON THE SITE VISIT AND STATE EXIT REPORT OF THE STONE CHILD COLLEGE EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – 02:44:01

Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews presented the Site Visit and State Exit Report for the Educator Preparation Provider at Stone Child College. Ms. Andrews discussed the review process, and Mr. Jeremy MacDonald shared the report's findings and outlined the college's ongoing corrective actions to improve the program. Ms. Andrews noted this will be an action item at the September 2026 Board meeting and answered Board members' questions.

Item 26 INFORMATION ON THE APPROVAL OF NEW CURRICULAR PROGRAM FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA PHYLLIS J. WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF EDUCATION – 02:55:20

Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews presented a proposal for a new standalone Special Education curricular program at the University of Montana. Ms. Kristi Steinberg explained the need to transition from the current add-on model to a standalone program. Ms. Steinberg detailed how partnering with two-year colleges will allow students to complete the degree through a hybrid of local and online classes. Ms. Steinberg answered Board members' questions.

Item 27 ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF ADOPTION PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 57, EDUCATOR LICENSURE STANDARDS – DUAL CREDIT POSTSECONDARY FACULTY LICENSE AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER – 03:07:27

Dr. Ron Slinger

Vice Chair Slinger moved to approve the Notice of Adoption pertaining to rulemaking in ARM Title 10, Chapter 57, Educator Licensure Standards – Dual Credit Postsecondary Faculty License and authorize filing of the notice with the Secretary of State for Publication in the Montana Administrative Register. Motion seconded by Board member Nieskens.

Dr. Angela McLean expressed her appreciation to OPI and the Board for making this change.

Chair Tharp thanked Ms. McCall Flynn for her work revising the rules.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ **ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE – Renee Rasmussen (Items 28-29)**

Item 28 INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ON STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT THINK TANK – 03:11:49

Dr. Julie Murgel, Tyler Capece

Dr. Julie Murgel outlined the request from the Board at the May 2026 meeting to create an Assessment Task Force and reviewed the deliverables and outcomes the Task Force will develop. Dr. Murgel outlined the timeframe for the Task Force and Ms. Tyler Capece reviewed the members and how they were selected. Dr. Murgel noted a third party facilitator will be hired to manage the Task Force meetings.

Item 29 ACTION AND INFORMATION ON THE APPLICATION AND CRITERIA FOR THE LIST OF APPROVED EARLY NUMERACY SCREENING TOOLS – 03:22:14

McCall Flynn

Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed the work of the Early Numeracy Advisory Council and outlined the process used to select the approved screening tools. Ms. Flynn answered Board members' questions.

Board member Rasmussen moved to approve the Application and Criteria for the List of Approved Early Numeracy Screening Tools. Motion seconded by Board member Maxwell.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

*****TIME CERTAIN AT 1:00PM*****

❖ **ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – Dr. Hannah Nieskens (Items 30-36)**

Item 30 INFORMATION ON FINANCIAL LITERACY AND ECONOMICS AS A GRADUATION REQUIREMENT – 04:32:04

Dr. Carly Urban, Montana State University; Mike Paffhausen, NAIFA; Dr. Julie Murgel

Dr. Julie Murgel reviewed the Administrative Rule change that added Financial Literacy as a graduation requirement and outlined the various options school districts offer students. Dr. Carly Urban shared state level data that shows how Montana compares to other states and discussed the benefits of the requirement. Dr. Urban answered Board members' questions, and Mr. Mike Paffhausen shared his perspective on his involvement in the creation of the requirement.

Item 31 INFORMATION ON ACCREDITATION PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK - COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS METRIC – 05:11:26

Shannon Boswell, Nicole Thuotte

Ms. Shannon Boswell and Ms. Nicole Thuotte presented the Accreditation Performance Framework College and Career Readiness Metric.

Item 32 INFORMATION ON THE PROPOSED CORRECTIVE PLANS FOR SCHOOLS IN DEFICIENT AND ADVICE STATUS FOR ACCREDITATION – 05:24:55

Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews discussed the proposed Corrective Plans for Schools in Deficient and Advice Accreditation Status and provided a status update on the affected schools. Ms. Andrews stated the schools that must submit corrective plans to the Board and stated those will be presented at the Board's September and November meetings. Ms. Andrews answered Board members' questions.

Item 33 ACCREDITATION UPDATE – 05:30:21

Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews presented the Accreditation Update and noted which schools will go through the Accreditation process for the 2026-2027 school year and answered members' questions.

Item 34 ACTION ON THE ACCREDITATION STATUS FOR NEW PUBLIC SCHOOLS – 05:36:32

Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews reviewed the presentation at the May 2026 Board meeting on the proposed process to accredit new schools and answered Board members' questions.

Dr. Hannah Nieskens moved to approve the Accreditation Status for new public schools: Creston 7-8, Provisional Status; Martinsdale Colony, Provisional Status; Meadow Lane Colony, Provisional Status. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item 35 INFORMATION ON OPENING AND CLOSING OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS – 05:43:52
Autumn Warren**

Ms. McCall Flynn reminded the Board about the conversation at the May Board meeting when questions were raised about how schools are opened or closed. Ms. Autumn Warren provided an overview of the process, provided examples of why a school might close and later reopen, and reviewed the protocols if a school needs to close mid-year. Ms. Warren answered Board members' questions.

**Item 36 ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND TIMELINE
PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 55, SPECIAL
EDUCATION TECHNICIAN STANDARDS AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE
WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA
ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER – 06:08:45
Dr. Hannah Nieskens**

Dr. Hannah Nieskens moved to approve the Notice of Public Hearing and Timeline pertaining to rulemaking in ARM Title 10, Chapter 55, Special Education Technician Standards with the following amendment to proposed rule 10.55.725(2): replace the phrase “under the direct supervision” with “under the direction”. I further move to authorize filing of the notice with the Secretary of State for publication in the Montana Administrative Register. Motion seconded by Board member Maxwell.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS September 24-25, 2026, Glendive, MT

Election of Board Officers
Action on Strategic Planning Items
MACIE Update
Montana Digital Academy Update
MACIE Renewal (Even Years)
Review Community Choice School Academic Performance and Financial Reports
Annual HiSET Report
Annual Special Education Report
Accreditation Update
Assessment Update
Federal Update
Content Standards Revision Update

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was made.

ADJOURN

The Board adjourned at 2:42 PM.

The Montana Board of Public Education is a Professional Development Unit Provider. Attending a Board of Public Education Meeting either in person or via Zoom may qualify you to receive professional development units. Please complete the necessary information on the sign-in sheet if you are applying for professional development units.

Agenda items are handled in the order listed on the approved agenda. Items may be rearranged unless listed “time certain”. Public comment is welcome on all items listed as “Action” and as noted at the beginning and end of each meeting.

The Board of Public Education will make reasonable accommodations for known disabilities that may interfere with an individual's ability to participate in the meeting. Individuals who require such accommodations should make requests to the Board of Public Education as soon as possible prior to the meeting start date. You may write to Kris Stockton, PO Box 200601, Helena MT, 59620, kmstockton@mt.gov, 406-444-0302.