



Community Choice Schools Commission Report
to the Education Interim Committee and
the Education Interim Budget Committee

March 17, 2026

Contents:

- 1) Commission Core Values
- 2) Community Choice Schools Chartering Cycle
- 3) Commission Annual Report Template to the
BPE, EIC, and the Public

Director of Planning
Cathy Kincheloe



The vision of the Community Choice Schools Commission is to develop the full educational potential of each student by fostering a diverse and dynamic public education landscape.



Our Promise

As duly appointed Members of the Montana Community Choice Schools Commission, we embrace our responsibility to serve as stewards of educational opportunity and the public trust. We are committed to helping realize the full promise of our Constitution for every student, in every community.

Our Guiding Principles

- 1. Students First, Always:** Student success is our north star. We want every student to experience the transformative power of education.
- 2. Stewards of the Public Trust:** We exercise our authority with transparency, discipline, and humility. Credibility is foundational and we understand that trust must be earned, not assumed. We seek to build enduring trust with families, educators, communities, tribes, and policymakers through every decision we make.
- 3. Authorizing for Systems Change:** We don't just authorize schools, we help foster a more responsive, innovative, and effective public education system.
- 4. Excellence is the Expectation:** Students deserve our best. That's why we set a high bar for schools, boards, authorizers, and ourselves.
- 5. Community-Centered Innovation:** We listen to and elevate local voices and context, especially in rural and tribal communities, in order to create the conditions where excellence can thrive.
- 6. Clarity and Courage in Decision-Making:** We lead transparently and act with integrity. We face difficult decisions with moral clarity and constitutional conviction.

Core Values & Commitments

<p>Courage We make bold decisions in the best interests of students, even under pressure.</p>	<p>Respect We communicate. We honor the dignity of students, families, educators, communities, and tribes.</p>	<p>Integrity We follow through. We are fair, honest, and grounded in our principles and purpose.</p>	<p>Service We act with intention and humility. We exist to serve the people, not ourselves.</p>	<p>Transparency We share our rationale, invite public understanding, and welcome accountability.</p>	<p>Learning We grow through reflection, data, feedback, and the wisdom of Montana's people.</p>
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Our Core Purpose

- 1.** To authorize, oversee, and hold accountable public community choice schools for fulfilling the terms of their contracts.
- 2.** To approve, oversee, and evaluate the effectiveness of public community choice school authorizers.

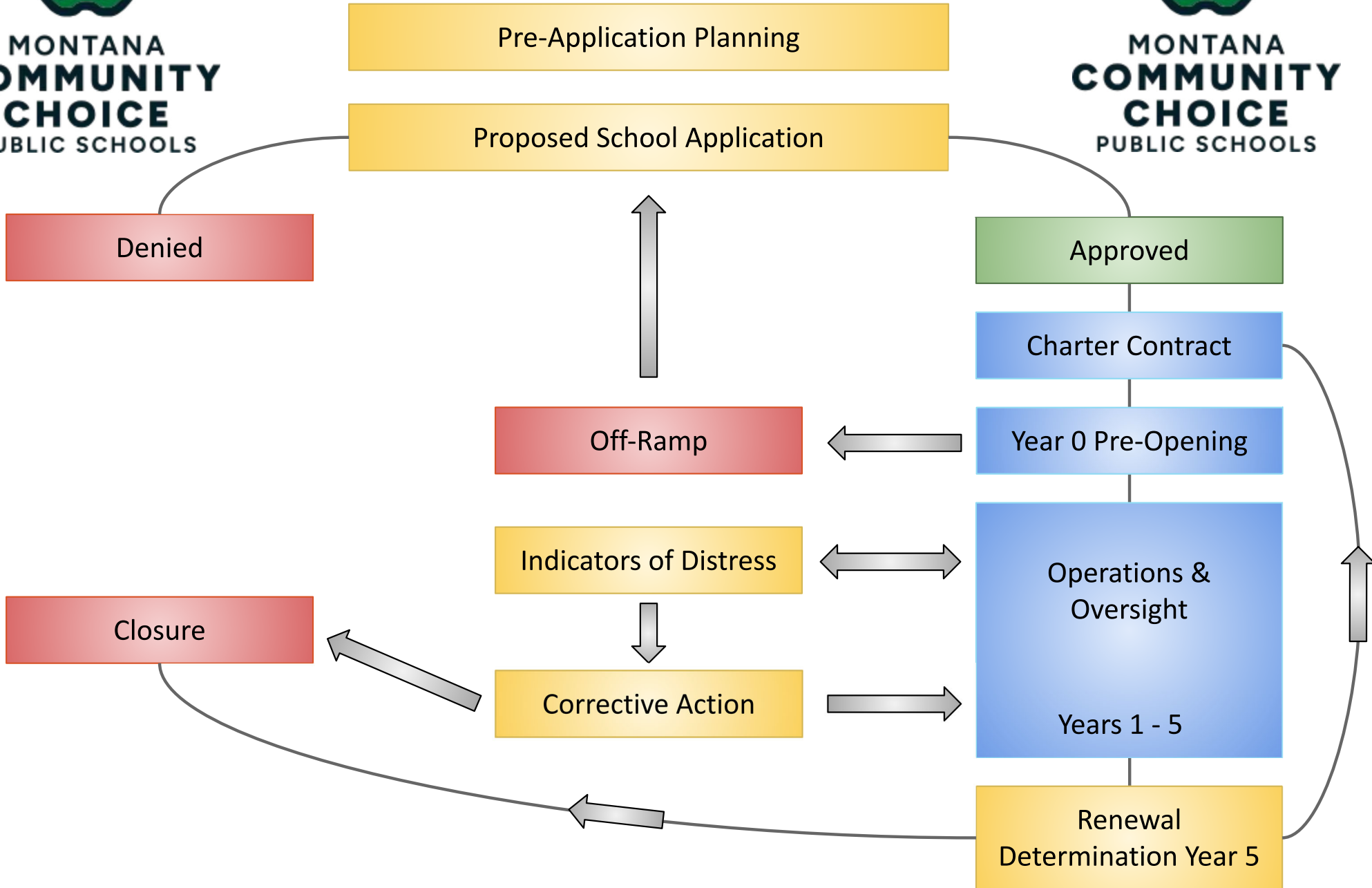


**MONTANA
COMMUNITY
CHOICE**
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Community Choice Schools Contract Cycle



**MONTANA
COMMUNITY
CHOICE**
PUBLIC SCHOOLS





**MONTANA
COMMUNITY
CHOICE SCHOOLS**

Commission Annual Report to the
Education Interim Committee,
Board of Public Education,
and the Public

(year)

Report Contents

Chair Welcome Letter

- Section I: The Commission
- Section II: Community Choice Schools Portfolio at a Glance
- Section III: Community Choice Schools Summary Report of Progress
- Section IV: Community Choice Schools Performance Comparison
with Resident District Schools
- Section V: Assessment of Successes, Challenges, and Areas for Improvement

Letter from the Commission Chair:

- Highlight accomplishments as whole (schools, movement) and work to be completed

Section I: The Commission

Members	Chair - headshot, name	location, profession, appointing official
	Vice Chair - headshot, name	location, profession, appointing official
	Treasurer - headshot, name	location, profession, appointing official
	Member - headshot, name	location, profession, appointing official
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Our Promise

As duly appointed Members of the Montana Community Choice Schools Commission, we embrace our responsibility to serve as stewards of educational opportunity and the public trust. We are committed to helping realize the full promise of our Constitution—for every student, in every community.

Our Guiding Principles

- Students First, Always:** Student success is our north star. We want every student to experience the transformative power of a great education.
- Stewards of the Public Trust:** We exercise our authority with transparency, discipline, and humility. Credibility is foundational — and we understand that trust must be earned, not assumed. We seek to build enduring trust with families, educators, communities, tribes, and policymakers through every decision we make.
- Authorizing for Systems Change:** We don't just authorize schools—we help foster a more responsive, innovative, and effective public education system.
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Core Values and Commitments

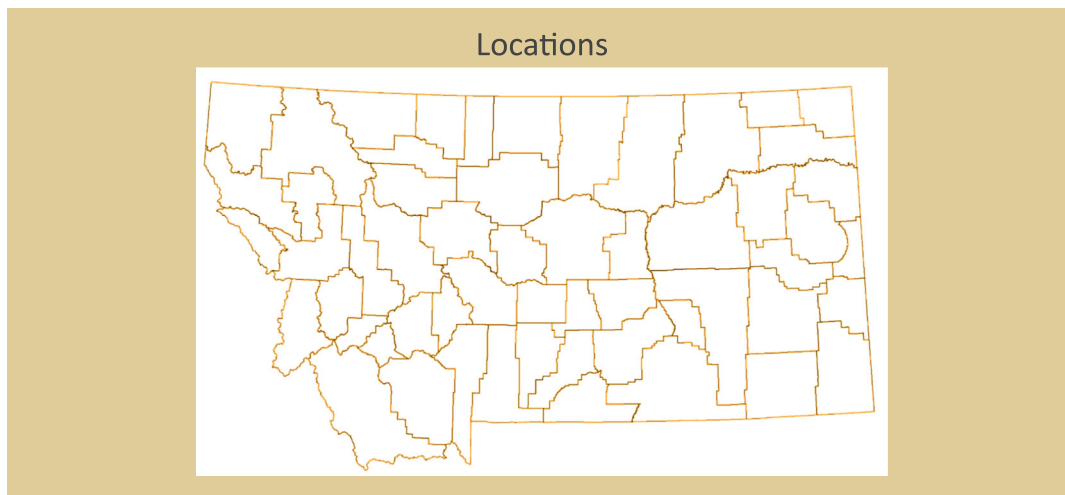
Courage	Respect	Integrity	Service	Transparency	Learning
We make bold decisions in the best interests of students, even under pressure.	We communicate. We honor the dignity of students, families, educators, and tribes.	We follow through. We are fair, honest, and grounded in our principles and purpose.	We act with intention and humility. We exist to serve the people, not ourselves.	We share our rationale, invite public understanding, and welcome accountability.	We grow through reflection, data, feedback, and the wisdom of Montana's people.

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Section II: Community Choice Schools Portfolio

Community Choice Schools at a Glance				
	Total	Elementary	Middle	High School
Schools	#	#	#	#
Students	#	#	#	#



Year 0 #
Start-up/Year 1 #
Renewals #
Closures #

# Total Students		Model Focus	# Schools
% of State Enrollment			
% American Indian			
% Special Education			
% English Language Learners			
% Economically Disadvantaged			

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK SUMMARY FOR ALL SCHOOLS				
	Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Does Not Meet
Academic	%	%	%	%
Operational	%	%	%	%
Financial	%	%	%	%

Schools' Philanthropy	Schools' Partnerships

Commission Philanthropy	Commission Partnerships

Section III: Community Choice Schools Performance Summaries

School Name		
Location		
Model		
Mission		
School Leader		
Governing Board Chair		
Year of Charter Contract		
Student Demographics	Grades Served	
	Enrollment	
	% F/RL	
	% American Indian	
	% White	
	% Special Education	
	% English Language Learners	
	Other (indicate)	

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK SUMMARY

	Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Does Not Meet
Academic	#	#	#	#
	%	%	%	%
Operational	#	#	#	#
	%	%	%	%
Financial	#	#	#	#
	%	%	%	%

Section IV: Community Choice Schools Performance Comparison with Resident District Schools

For each school:

- Literacy & Math graphs displaying the growth of students by grade compared to their resident district.
 - Note: the data for the resident school district will not likely be for the same assessment, it may also be a challenge to retrieve.
- Cohort Adjusted Graduation Rate graph for high school compared to the resident district
- Note: longitudinal data will be displayed on each graph as the school progresses in years

Section V: Commission’s Assessment of Successes, Challenges, and Areas for Improvement of the Intent of the Law

20-11-102. Community choice schools -- legislative findings and intent. (1) The legislature finds, pursuant to the authority and duties provided in Article X, section 1(3), of the Montana constitution, that:

- (a) parents desire education options for their children;
- (b) expanding educational opportunities for K-12 education within the state is a valid public purpose; and
- (c) creating options that empower parents, encourage students to develop their full educational potential, provide a variety of professional opportunities for teachers, and encourage educational entrepreneurship is vital to the economic competitiveness of the state.

(2) It is the legislature's intent, pursuant to the authority and duties provided in Article X, section 1(3), of the Montana constitution, to create other public educational programs and institutions through choice schools. The purposes are to:

- (a) enable parents to make decisions on how best to educate their children;
- (b) provide other public educational opportunities for all students, especially those at risk of academic failure or academic disengagement;
- (c) encourage the use of different models of teaching, governing, scheduling, and providing instruction to meet a wide variety of student and community needs; and
- (d) advance Montana's commitment to the preservation of American Indian cultural identity, pursuant to Article X, section 1(2), of the Montana constitution, and to eliminate the American Indian achievement gap by encouraging participation in the choice school program by students, parents, and school districts in Indian country.

Community Choice Schools Movement Overall

Successes	
Challenges	
Areas for Improvement	

Sufficiency of Funding for Community Choice Schools

Successes	
Challenges	
Areas for Improvement	

Efficacy of the Commission’s Formula for Authorizer Funding

Successes	
Challenges	
Areas for Improvement	

Suggested Changes to State Law or Policy Needed to Strengthen Community Choice Schools

Section of Law	Suggested Amendment