



PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS
 Constitutional Players
 June 17, 2024

IMPLEMENTATION

House Bill 549 passed in the 2023 session and authorized the establishment of public charter schools in Montana. It also tasked the Montana Board of Public Education (BPE) to enter into public charter contracts with a governing board.

The BPE opened the first round of public charter applications in October 2023. The BPE approved 19 Public Charter Schools applications in January. Two of these schools are planning to open in the fall of 2025: Bozeman Charter School and Boulder Jefferson Academy. Seventeen others will open for the 2024-2025 school year. All seventeen schools have received their preliminary budget sheets with their base entitlements.

Innovation: Five public charter schools have been granted variances to accreditation standards. The OPI is supporting these schools in their new accreditation process.

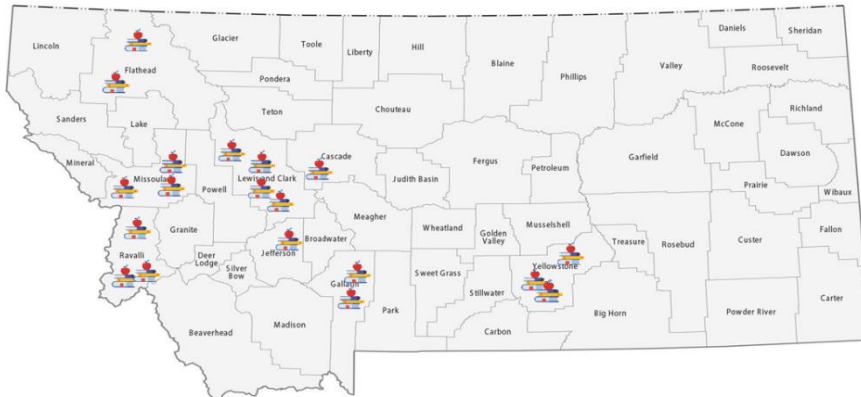
Public Charter Applications for 2025-2026 school year are now available. Applications are due November 1, 2024. For more information on the application process visit

These 17 schools will open for 2024-2025 school year.

- Billings Early College
- Billings Multilingual Academy
- Billings Opportunity School
- Bozeman Bridger Charter
- Corvallis Distance Learning Center
- Corvallis Pathways Learning Center
- East Helena 227 Academy
- Frenchtown Broc Fast Track Public Charter
- Great Falls CORE School at Morningside Elementary
- Hamilton Bitterroot Polytech
- Helena Montessori Charter
- Helena Mount Ascension Learning Academy
- Helena Project for Alternative Learning
- Kalispell Flathead PACE Academy Charter
- Kalispell Rising Wolf Charter
- Missoula Connect Academy
- Missoula Teach Academy



**MONTANA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS
 UNDER THE TERMS OF 20-6-806, MCA**



LEGAL PROCEEDING REGARDING PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

A summary of the positions that the Board of Public Education (BPE), the Montana Quality Education Coalition (MQEC), and the OPI took on the implementation of Public Charter Schools:

- OPI's position was that [Title 20, Chapter 6, Part 5](#) (Opening and Closing of Schools) applied to public charter schools.
- BPE's position was that the Board could declare the public charter schools open and direct the public charter school opening process.
- MQEC's position was that Title 20, Chapter 6, Part 5 (Opening and Closing of Schools) did not apply to public charter schools and that, instead, the Board's directive should be required.
- OPI and MQEC reiterated their opposing positions during the briefing on the preliminary injunction motion.
- The District Court determined that OPI, not the Board, is responsible for public charter school opening.
- The District Court did not order OPI to comply with the Board's directive or prohibited OPI from enforcing Title 20, Chapter 6, Part 5, with one exception regarding only elementary schools: "OPI is preliminarily enjoined from requiring compliance with the parental petition, county superintendent approval and county commission approval provisions of Mont. Code Ann. § 20-6-502 as a condition to issuing schools codes and other support provided by OPI to charter schools."
- Immediately upon receiving the court's decision the OPI reached out to the Board of Public Education and notified the 11 school districts that have the 19 Public Charter School contracts.

For questions regarding public charter schools, please contact barbara.quinn@mt.gov Christy Mock-Stutz, Assistant Superintendent, christy.mock-stutz@mt.gov.