

**MEETING MINUTES  
IDAHO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION**

February 23 and 24, 2023  
Joe R. Williams Building, 700 W. State St, West Conference Room  
Boise, ID 83702

This meeting was called to order by Chairman Reed on February 23, 2023 at 9:04 a.m.

Alan Reed – Present  
Sherrilynn Bair – Present  
Karen Echeverria – Present  
Brian Scigliano – Present  
Wanda Quinn – Present  
Dean Fisher – Present via Zoom  
Nils Peterson – Present

**I. COMMISSION WORK**

**A. Agenda Review/Approval**

**M/S (Bair/Echeverria)** Motion to approve the agenda as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.*

**B. Minutes Review/Approval**

**M/S (Peterson/Scigliano)** Motion to approve the meeting minutes for December 8, 2022 as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.*

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment provided.

**III. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Thompson shared updates on closure protocol and procedures.

No action.

**IV. LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE**

Director Thompson provided a review of legislative activity relevant to the charter school sector and the education sector in general.

No action.

## V. CONSIDERATION OF PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

A. Pinecrest Academy of Lewiston

**M/S (Echeverria/Quinn)** Motion to execute the performance certificate for Pinecrest Academy of Lewiston as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.*

B. Idaho Novus Classical Academy

**M/S (Peterson/Scigliano)** Motion to execute the performance certificate for Idaho Novus Classical Academy as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.*

## VI. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Finance Committee Chair, Brian Scigliano and Finance Program Manager, Jacob Smith provided updates from the January 24, 2023 Finance Committee meeting.

No action.

## VII. STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Strategic Planning Committee Chair, Sherrilynn Bair and Director Thompson provided updates from the January 27, 2023 Strategic Planning Committee meeting. Additionally, the agency's five-year strategic plan, which must be adopted by the IPCSC prior to submission to the State Board of Education in June, was discussed.

**M/S (Scigliano/Echeverria)** Motion to approve the agency's strategic plan as amended, to reflect a correction of the date on the document cover to read 2023-2028. *The motion passed unanimously.*

## VIII. CONSIDERATION OF NEW CHARTER SCHOOL PETITION

Gem Innovation Schools was represented by: Laurie Wolfe, Chief Academic Officer, Brian Fletcher, Chief Financial Officer, Josh Femreite, Chief Development Officer and Jason Bransford, Chief Executive Officer. The team presented the petition for Gem Prep Ammon, with a recorded message from Mr. Bransford.

**M/S (Quinn/Bair)** Motion to approve the new charter school petition for Gem Prep Ammon as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.*

## IX. CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT AGREEMENTS TO RENEW CHARTER WITHOUT CONDITIONS

Director Thompson recommended the following schools for charter renewal with no conditions:

A. Falcon Ridge Public Charter School

Christie Jorgensen and David Peterson were present for questions.

No discussion.

**M/S (Quinn/Echeverria)** Motion to approve the consent agreement for charter renewal with no conditions as presented for Falcon Ridge Public Charter School thereby renewing the school's charter for another five years of operations. *The motion passed unanimously.*

The Final Order for Falcon Ridge Public Charter School's charter renewal was issued on March 7, 2023.

#### B. Future Public School

Amanda Cox, Heather Efav, Lauren Tassos, Darnisha Orcutt and Keith Donahue were present virtually for questions.

No discussion.

**M/S (Scigliano/Quinn)** Motion to approve the consent agreement for charter renewal with no conditions as presented for Future Public School thereby renewing the school's charter for another five years of operations. *The motion passed unanimously.*

The Final Order for Future Public School's charter renewal was issued on March 7, 2023.

#### C. Gem Prep Meridian

Elizabeth Warburton and Laurie Wolfe were present virtually for questions.

No discussion.

**M/S (Echeverria/Quinn)** Motion to approve the consent agreement for charter renewal with no conditions as presented for Gem Prep Meridian thereby renewing the school's charter for another five years of operations. *The motion passed unanimously.*

The Final Order for Gem Prep Meridian's charter renewal was issued on March 7, 2023.

#### D. Heritage Community Charter School

Shantell Mullanix and Rob MacDonald were present virtually for questions.

No discussion.

**M/S (Quinn/Scigliano)** Motion to approve the consent agreement for charter renewal with no conditions as presented for Heritage Community

Charter School thereby renewing the school's charter for another five years of operations. *The motion passed unanimously.*

The Final Order for Heritage Community Charter School's charter renewal was issued on March 7, 2023.

#### E. Idaho Science and Technology Charter School

Tami Dortch and Becki Adams were present virtually for questions.

No discussion.

**M/S (Scigliano/Peterson)** Motion to approve the consent agreement for charter renewal with no conditions as presented for Idaho Science and Technology Charter School thereby renewing the school's charter for another five years of operations. *The motion passed 5-0; Bair recused.*

The Final Order for Idaho Science and Technology Charter School's charter renewal was issued on March 7, 2023.

#### F. Legacy Charter School

Director Thompson noted that, due to illness, neither Seth Stallcop, Principal, nor Gayle O'Donahue, Federal Programs Coordinator, who had planned to attend in person were able to attend.

No discussion.

**M/S (Echeverria/Peterson)** Motion to approve the consent agreement for charter renewal with no conditions as presented for Legacy Charter School thereby renewing the school's charter for another five years of operations. *The motion passed unanimously.*

The Final Order for Legacy Charter School's charter renewal was issued on March 7, 2023.

#### G. North Idaho STEM Academy

Scott Thomson was present virtually for questions.

No discussion.

**M/S (Quinn/Bair)** Motion to approve the consent agreement for charter renewal with no conditions as presented for North Idaho STEM Academy thereby renewing the school's charter for another five years of operations. *The motion passed unanimously.*

The Final Order for North Idaho STEM Academy's charter renewal was issued on March 7, 2023.

#### H. North Star Charter School

Andy Horning, Shay Davis, and Joanna O'Donnell were present virtually for questions.

No discussion.

**M/S (Echeverria/Quinn)** Motion to approve the consent agreement for charter renewal with no conditions as presented for North Star Charter School thereby renewing the school's charter for another five years of operations. *The motion passed unanimously.*

The Final Order for North Star Charter School's charter renewal was issued on March 7, 2023.

#### I. North Valley Academy

Jeff Klamm was present virtually for questions.

No discussion.

**M/S (Scigliano/Echeverria)** Motion to approve the consent agreement for charter renewal with no conditions as presented for North Valley Academy thereby renewing the school's charter for another five years of operations. *The motion passed unanimously.*

The Final Order for North Valley Academy's charter renewal was issued on March 7, 2023.

#### J. Palouse Prairie Charter School

Sara Beggs gave a brief presentation virtually.

No discussion.

**M/S (Quinn/Bair)** Motion to approve the consent agreement for charter renewal with no conditions as presented for Palouse Prairie Charter School thereby renewing the school's charter for another five years of operations. *The motion passed 5-0; Peterson recused.*

The Final Order for Palouse Prairie Charter School's charter renewal was issued on March 7, 2023.

### **X. CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT AGREEMENTS TO RENEW CHARTER WITH CONDITIONS**

Director Thompson recommended the following schools for charter renewal with conditions:

A. Inspire Connections Academy

Director Thompson reviewed the cover sheet and the recommendation for renewal with 3 conditions as recorded in the Notification of Director's Renewal Recommendation. The school's board agreed to these conditions.

Cook Jones, Manager of Student Accountability, presented on the school's performance.

Commissioner Echeverria asked if the school's vendor had expressed any concerns regarding the removal of the financial accountability exemption. Mr. Jones responded that the school does not expect this transition to be problematic.

No further discussion.

**M/S (Quinn/Peterson)** Motion to approve the consent agreement for conditional charter renewal as presented for Inspire Connections Academy thereby renewing the school's charter for another five years. *The motion passed unanimously.*

The Final Order for Inspire Connections Academy's charter renewal was issued on March 7, 2023.

B. Monticello Montessori Charter School

Director Thompson reviewed the cover sheet and the recommendation for renewal with 7 conditions as recorded in the Notification of Director's Renewal Recommendation. The school's board agreed to these conditions.

Jeanne Johnson, principal, and Cari Smith, Business Manager, presented via Zoom on the school's financial situation.

Commissioners asked questions about finances and academics. No board directors were present. Various commissioners expressed a desire to ascertain the board's actions and engagement. Chairman Reed expressed concern that a disengaged board is not a functional board.

No further discussion.

**M/S (Peterson/Echeverria)** Motion to reject the consent agreement for charter renewal for Monticello Montessori Charter School as presented and to proceed to a charter renewal hearing before March 15, 2023. *The motion passed unanimously.*

A notice of hearing was subsequently issued on February 28, 23 and a hearing was held on March 8, 2023.

#### E. Rolling Hills Public Charter School

Chairman Reed deviated from the order of schools on the agenda to accommodate the schedule of a representative of Rolling Hills Public Charter School.

Director Thompson reviewed the cover sheet and the recommendation for renewal with 4 conditions as recorded in the Notification of Director's Renewal Recommendation. The school's board agreed to these conditions.

Shane Pratt, school administrator, presented to the Commission. Jennifer Sweet-Fears, Board Chair, Emily McCoy, Assistant Principal and Christie Cheney, Business Manager were present in the audience for questions.

The school acknowledged several potential factors of its current financial distress, including the pandemic's impact on enrollment, turn-over in the business manager position, and an unsuccessful transportation strategy. Mr. Pratt identified steps the school had already taken to address the situation as well as plans for future actions to ensure the school gets back on track quickly.

No further discussion.

**M/S (Echeverria/Peterson)** Motion to approve the consent agreement for conditional charter renewal as presented for Rolling Hills Charter School thereby renewing the school's charter for another five years. *The motion passed unanimously.*

The Final Order for Rolling Hills Public Charter School's charter renewal was issued on March 7, 2023.

#### C. Project Impact STEM Academy

Director Thompson reviewed the cover sheet and the recommendation for renewal with 2 conditions as recorded in the Notification of Director's Renewal Recommendation. The school's board agreed to these conditions.

Director Thompson acknowledged that the school is academically and operationally performing well. Dr. Jill Hettinger, school administrator was present in person, with Teresa Fleming, board chair, participating via zoom.

Discussion focused primarily on the school's lease default situation with respect to a previously occupied facility. The outcome of pending litigation will be a significant factor in the school's ability to continue operations. Resolution is not expected in fiscal year 2023. Conditions allow the commission to check-in on the school's progress over time.

No further discussion.

**M/S (Peterson/Quinn)** Motion to approve the consent agreement for conditional charter renewal as presented for Project Impact STEM Academy thereby renewing the school's charter for another five years. *Recorded: Bair, Aye; Fisher, Aye; Peterson, Aye; Quinn, Aye; Scigliano, Nay; Echeverria, Nay. The motion passed 4-2.*

The Final Order for Project Impact STEM Academy's charter renewal was issued on March 7, 2023.

#### D. Peace Valley Charter School

Director Thompson reviewed the cover sheet and the recommendation for renewal with 7 conditions as recorded in the Notification of Director's Renewal Recommendation. The school's board agreed to these conditions.

Director Thompson spoke about the school's financial, operational, and academic challenges, noting that high board turnover in years past has played a role in some of those areas. Over the last year, however, the current board has regained stability and is continuously working toward improvement of the school.

Andrew Ross, Principal; William Paul, board chair; Matt Lovell, Red Apple Finance; and Mike Pinkerton, board secretary were present in person.

Discussion focused on concerns over the school's academic performance over the last 5 years, plans for academic improvement, and commission's desire to check back in with the school to ensure progress toward meeting conditions.

**M/S (Echeverria/Scigliano)** Motion to reject the consent agreement for charter renewal for Peace Valley Charter School as presented and to proceed to a charter renewal hearing before March 15, 2023. *The vote tied 3-3; Recorded: Scigliano, Aye; Echeverria, Aye; Fisher, Aye; Peterson, Nay; Quinn, Nay; Bair, Nay. Chair votes only to break a tie. Reed, Nay. Motion failed 3-4.*

**M/S (Bair/Quinn)** Motion to approve the consent agreement for conditional charter renewal as presented for Peace Valley Charter School thereby renewing the school's charter for another five years. *Recorded: Peterson, Aye; Quinn, Aye; Bair, Aye; Fisher, Aye; Scigliano, Nay; Echeverria, Nay. The motion passed 4-2.*

The Final Order for Peace Valley Charter School's charter renewal was issued on March 7, 2023.



## F. Village Leadership Academy

Director Thompson reviewed the cover sheet and the recommendation for renewal with 4 conditions as recorded in the Notification of Director's Renewal Recommendation. The school's board agreed to these conditions.

Josh Noteboom, principal, and Adrian Castaneda, board chair, were present in person. Adam Holcomb, CEO MAST Financial, was present via zoom.

Mr. Noteboom discussed the school's progress in improving academics, operations, and finances, since a 2018 IPCSC investigation. The school is back on track operationally, still has a few gaps to close in academics, and is facing a significant financial concern. The school is in default of its facility loan. If this situation isn't rectified, the school will not be able to continue operations. However, Mr. Noteboom and Mr. Castaneda are both committed to keeping the school on a path to improvement.

Commissioners discussed the need for the school to have an alternate facility lined up, in the event that the current situation does not resolve by July 1, as is required per condition 1.

No further discussion.

**M/S (Echeverria/Quinn)** Motion to approve the consent agreement for conditional charter renewal as presented for Village Leadership Academy thereby renewing the school's charter for another five years. *The motion passed unanimously.*

The Final Order for Village Leadership Academy's charter renewal was issued on March 7, 2023.

Meeting recessed for the day at 3:39 p.m.

Meeting resumed on February 24, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

## **CHARTER RENEWAL HEARING**

On November 15, 2022 Director Thompson issued a notice of recommendation to Idaho Virtual Academy recommending that the school be renewed with three conditions. The school engaged in the negotiation process as provided, but the parties were unable to reach a consensus. Subsequently, Idaho Virtual Academy submitted a request for hearing on December 15, 2022.

The Commission served as the hearing officer, with Chairman Reed presiding. The commission was represented by Karen Sheehan, Deputy Attorney General.

Commission staff, a party to the hearing, was represented by Rachel Kolts, Deputy Attorney General.

Idaho Virtual Academy was represented by Amy White, of Anderson, Julian & Hull, LLP.

Director Thompson provided testimony on behalf of commission staff and for the purpose of presenting the Director's recommendation and reasoning.

Felica Boyle, a Stride employee who serves as Business Manager for Idaho Virtual Academy presented testimony on behalf of the school.

At the conclusion of testimony, a motion was made.

**M/S (Quinn/Bair)** Motion to renew Idaho Virtual Academy with no conditions for another five years.

Commissioner Echeverria stated disagreement and asked to make a substitute motion.

Chairman Reed, after consulting with legal counsel, denied the request to make a substitute motion, and opted to complete the first motion before entertaining a second motion.

Chairman Reed called for the vote on the original motion. *The vote tied 3-3; Recorded: Quinn, Aye; Bair, Aye; Fisher, Aye; Peterson, Nay; Scigliano, Nay; Echeverria, Nay. Chair votes only to break a tie. Reed, Aye. Motion passed 4-3.*

A video recording of the full proceeding and copies of all exhibits entered into the record are retained in the IPCSC office.

Meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

The meeting minutes were approved by the IPCSC on April 13, 2023. Meeting minutes approval verified by

*Melissa-Jo Rivera*

Apr 18, 2023