

## MEETING MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING

**Date:** Thursday, April 10, 2025

**Start Time:** 9:00 AM, MST

**Physical Location:** Capitol Mall Annex, Senate Conference Room, Third Floor, 514 W. Jefferson Street, Boise, Idaho 83702

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Reed at 9:01am.

Commissioners Present:	Staff Present:
Chairman Reed - Present	Director Joshua Whitworth, OSBE
Vice Chair Bair - Present via Zoom	Jen Coffey, IPCSC
Commissioner Koehler - Present	Jared Dawson, IPCSC
Commissioner Hedrick - Present	Joy Lindner, IPCSC
Commissioner Quinn - Present via Zoom	Korey Mereness, CTE
Commissioner Amador - Present	Matthew Reiber, OSBE
Commissioner Paulos - Absent	

Karen Sheehan from the Attorney General's Office was also present.

### I. COMMISSION WORK (Action Item)

Minutes Review / Approval

**Motion/Second (Hedrick/Koehler)** Motion to approve the minutes from the February 27, 2025 Regular Commission Meeting as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.*

### II. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Joshua Whitworth gave a report. He recognized the ongoing efforts of IPCSC staff. One staff position is open and ready to be filled. Terry Ryan, Board Chair of Idaho Charter School Network and CEO of BLUUM, gave a presentation on a current Supreme Court case (*St. Isidore of Seville Catholic Virtual School v. Gentner Drummond, Attorney General of Oklahoma*). A decision is expected in late June or July. Terry Ryan provided a copy of an amicus brief submitted by the Idaho Charter School Network.

### III. CONSIDERATION OF NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION (Action Item)

President Sonja Howerton and Board Member Don Lynn along with Vice-President Karen McGee and Board Member Fred Ostermeyer via zoom from Trailhead Virtual Academy (formerly Virtual Preparatory Academy of Idaho) and Cody Claver from Accel gave a presentation. Since their presentation to the Commission in December 2024, they have changed their name from Virtual Preparatory Academy of Idaho to Trailhead Virtual Academy. Commissioners asked questions about enrollment, student demand, budget, CTE curriculum and opportunities, board role, and school readiness. Commissioner Sherrilyn Bair recused herself from discussion and vote, due to her job as a teacher with an online school.

**Motion/Second (Hedrick/Koehler)** Motion to deny the application from Trailhead Virtual Academy, based on the likelihood of low success from budgetary and innovative standpoints. *The motion passed unanimously with one abstention.*

**IV. CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT TO PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE (Action Item)**

Executive Director Kathleen Allison from iSucceed Virtual School gave a presentation. Total enrollment for iSucceed as of April 8, 2025 is 1760. iSucceed's current Performance Certificate (2022-2027) amended in February 2025 has an enrollment cap of 1980. Their request is not to have an enrollment cap for the remaining two years of their Performance Certificate.

**Motion/Second (Hedrick/Koehler)** Motion to allow iSucceed Virtual School to increase maximum enrollment to 2200 students. Discussion was held about increasing enrollment to Executive Director Allison's projection of 2300-2600 students. **Amended Motion/Second (Hedrick/Koehler)** Motion to allow iSucceed Virtual School to increase maximum enrollment to 2450 students. *The motion passed 5-1.*

**V. ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORK UPDATE**

Dr. Jody Ernst, VP of Research and Policy Analytics, Momentum Strategy and Research, presented a second reading of the draft Alternative Framework. In recent revisions, the attendance indicator has been removed from the framework. Alternative schools have been sent the framework templates so they can input their data. IPCSC staff are waiting for their responses and feedback. A final presentation will be given at the June 2025 meeting for a vote.

**VI. INCREASED CHARTER SCHOOL SUPPORT PRESENTATION**

Rachel Burk, Parent Engagement and School Choice Coordinator, State Department of Education, gave a presentation on increased charter school support. Charter schools receiving support in the 2024-2025 school year are Blackfoot Charter, Mountain Community School, Peace Valley Charter, and Rolling Hills Public Charter. A theory of action paper for Blackfoot Charter and Peace Valley Charter concerning staff professional development and disciplinary literacy was provided.

**VII. 2025 LEGISLATURE OVERVIEW**

Matthew Reiber, External Affairs and Strategy Officer, State Board of Education, gave a presentation of highlights from the 2025 Legislative Session. The IPCSC budget was approved as part of the maintenance budget. HB93 which establishes the Idaho parental choice tax credit passed and was signed by Governor Little. HB331 which amends existing law to revise provisions regarding the public charter school facilities program was passed and signed by Governor Little. In addition, teacher pay increases and a policy limiting use of cell phones in schools were approved.

**VIII. FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Director Joshua Whitworth gave a financial update. A presentation of IPCSC personnel and operating expenditures was shown for the 2025 fiscal year. All authorizer fees for the 2025 fiscal year have been received.

**IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION (Action Item)**

No Executive Session was needed.

**X. APPROVAL OF NEW IPCSC DIRECTOR (Action Item)**

Director Joshua Whitworth recommended Korey Mereness as the next IPCSC Director and invited him to share with the Commission. Korey Mereness shared brief comments on his personal history, education experience, focus on student success, and a three-year strategic plan he has drafted. Commissioner Pete Koehler recused himself from voting since Korey Mereness worked for him in the past.

**Motion/Second (Hedrick/Bair)** Motion to hire Korey Mereness as the IPCSC Director effective immediately. **Amended Motion/Second (Hedrick/Bair)** Motion to hire Korey Mereness as the IPCSC Director effective immediately and that pay considerations be delegated to the Interim Director Whitworth in consultation with the Commission Chair. *The motion passed.*

**XI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

China Gum, representative from the Coalition of Idaho Charter School Families, spoke about including charter school families in the legislative process for any bills affecting charter schools.

Meeting adjourned.