



**IDAHO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

Date: Thursday, August 20, 2026

Start Time: 9:00 AM, MST

Physical Location: Capitol Mall Annex, IPCSC Office, Third Floor, 514 W. Jefferson Street, Boise, Idaho 83702

Live Stream: <https://www.youtube.com/@IPCSC>

- I. COMMISSION WORK (Action Item)**
 - A. Minutes Review / Approval
- II. DIRECTOR'S REPORT** (Opening Schools, Assurances Survey, Application, IPCSC website, Budget Brief)
- III. CONSIDERATION OF NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION (Action Item)**
 - A. Gem Prep: Caldwell
- IV. PRE-OPENING UPDATES**
- V. PUBLIC COMMENT**
 - A. Public comment will be limited to three minutes per person. To submit written comment please email to pcsc@osbe.idaho.gov before 5:00 pm MST on Wednesday, August 19, 2026.

MEETING MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING

Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026

Start Time: 9:00 AM, MST

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

Attendance:

Commissioners Present: Chairman Alan Reed, Vice Chair Sherrilyn Bair, Commissioner Paul Amador via Zoom, Commissioner Wally Hedrick, Commissioner Lisa Paulos, Commissioner Wanda Quinn

Commissioners Absent: none

IPCSC Staff Present: Director Rachel Burk, Jared Dawson, Monique Bosse, Brian Tillinger, Joy Lindner. Tim Davis from the Attorney General's Office was also present.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Reed at 8:59am.

I. COMMISSION WORK (Action Item)

Motion/Second (Hedrick/Bair) Motion to approve the April 9, 2026 Regular Commission Meeting Minutes as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.*

II. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Rachel Burk gave a report on Project Impact STEM Academy's closure, school visits, new applications, and a budget update.

III. CONSIDERATION TO LIFT NOTIFICATION OF FISCAL CONCERN (Action Item)

Representatives from Monticello Montessori Charter School gave a presentation, including Board Chair Linda Hawley, Board Treasurer Tyler Pincock, and Business Manager Shanna Nunez.

Motion/Second (Quinn/Paulos) Motion to lift the notification of fiscal concern for Monticello Montessori Charter School as of June 30, 2026. *The motion passed unanimously.*

IV. CONSIDERATION OF NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION (Action Item)

Representatives from Ignite Leadership School gave a presentation, including Board Chair William Weaver, Board Vice Chair Dacia Crossley, Board Secretary/Treasurer Candie Massey, Director Jennifer Mayes, Director Andrea Weaver, and Director Stephanie Wright.

Motion/Second (Hedrick/Quinn) Motion to deny the new charter school application for Ignite Leadership School based upon the five Idaho Code salutations 33-5205(2)(a)(iv), (ii), (ii), (ii), and (ii) which address student demand, anticipated funding, facilities plan, operating budget, and key revenue assumptions. *The motion passed unanimously.*

V. CONSIDERATION OF PRE-OPENING CONDITIONS (Action Item)

Representatives from Brabeion Academy gave a presentation, including Board President Miguel DeLuna, Board Vice Chair and Treasurer Tom Moore, Head of School and Sport Branden Durst, and Chief Officer of Instruction and Assessment Tony Nelson.

Motion/Second (Hedrick/Quinn) Motion to withhold Commission approval until conditions four and five have been met and documented by IPCSC staff no later than June 19, 2026. *The motion passed 4-1.*

VI. INCREASED CHARTER SCHOOL SUPPORT REPORT

A report on the Increased Charter School Support program was given by Increased Charter Support Program Mentor Dr. Mary Gervase and Parent Engagement and School Choice Coordinator at the Idaho State Department of Education Stacie Swenwold. Representatives from several schools who received funds for the 2025-2026 year also presented including Blackfoot Charter Director Craig Gerard, Chief Tahgee Elementary Academy Director of School Programs Jessica Wilson, Chief Tahgee Elementary Academy Business Manager Eric Gonzalez, Mountain Community School Head of School Dr. Jenny Schon, North Valley Academy Principal Jeff Klamm, and Peace Valley Charter School Principal Sita Chiang.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

Meeting adjourned.

II. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Rachel Burk will give a report.

III. CONSIDERATION OF NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

A. Gem Prep: Caldwell

BASIS

Pursuant to Idaho Code 33-5205:

APPLICATION TO ESTABLISH A PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL – HEARING – APPLICATION DECISION – APPEAL PROCEDURE - TERM. (4) The authorizer shall afford applicants a hearing prior to making a decision, with an opportunity in a public forum for local residents to learn about and provide input on each application. The authorizer shall provide each applicant with its detailed analysis of the application and grant the applicant at least fourteen (14) days to provide additional materials to address any identified deficiencies.

Idaho Code 33-5205(5): No later than ninety (90) days after an application is submitted, the authorizer shall decide to approve or deny the charter application, unless the applicant agrees to a later date. The authorizer shall adopt by resolution all charter approval or denial decisions in an open meeting of the authorizer's governing board and, in the case of a denial, include all reasons for denial in the resolution adopted by the governing board.

BACKGROUND

The new charter school application for Gem Prep: Caldwell was initially received on April 24, 2026. IPCSC Staff collaborated with the school to provide feedback and develop the final application and evaluation on July 23, 2026. The final application is available as Attachment III.A. The school intends to operate in Canyon County, Idaho beginning Fall 2028.

DISCUSSION

The Application Evaluation Report is included in these materials which is a staff evaluation of the application with respect to the IPCSC's established Standards of Quality.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff analysis is available as Attachment III.B. Pursuant to that analysis, the staff recommends conditionally approving a charter for a six-year term under Idaho Code §33-5205(7)(a).

It is recommended that approval be subject to conditions to ensure the school can meet its financial requirements in particular, including:

1. Charter holder provides the IPCSC with a signed Facility Lease agreement or Facility Purchase agreement by March 1, 2028.
2. Charter holder provides the IPCSC its budget for year 2028-2029 showing a balanced year 1 budget based on the enrollment numbers from its Spring 2028 lottery by June 1, 2028.
3. Charter holder provides the IPCSC with a copy of all of its grants, loans and contracts that are part of its year 1 budget by June 1, 2028.

SPEAKERS

Rachel Burk, IPCSC Director

Jason Bransford, Chief Executive Officer

Laurie Wolfe, Chief Academic Officer

Bryan Fletcher, Chief Financial Officer

Josh Femreite, Chief Growth Officer

COMMISSION ACTION

1. A motion to approve the new charter school application for Gem Prep: Caldwell for a six-year term effective July 1, 2028.
OR
2. A motion to approve the new charter school application for Gem Prep: Caldwell for a six-year term effective July 1, 2028 with the following conditions:
 - a. Charter holder provides the IPCSC with a signed Facility Lease agreement or Facility Purchase agreement by March 1, 2028;
 - b. Charter holder provides the IPCSC its budget for year 2028-2029 showing a balanced year 1 budget based on the enrollment numbers from its Spring 2028 lottery by June 1, 2028;
 - c. Charter holder provides the IPCSC with a copy of all of its grants, loans and contracts that are part of its year 1 budget by June 1, 2028.
 - d. OR other Commission-developed conditions
 OR
3. A motion to deny the new charter school application for Gem Prep: Caldwell on the following grounds:

Attachment III.A

The application is available at <https://chartercommission.idaho.gov/event/charter-commission-meeting-boise-17/>.

Attachment III.B



Application Evaluation Report Gem Prep: Caldwell July 23, 2026

Idaho Public Charter School Commission

514 W. Jefferson Street, Suite 303

Boise, Idaho 83702

Phone: (208)332-1561

pcsc@osbe.idaho.gov

Alan Reed, Chairman

Rachel Burk, Director

July 23, 2026

Application Review Summary

Gem Prep: Caldwell (GCN) proposes to serve 574 students in grades K-12 at capacity, with a total enrollment capacity of 676 students to allow for potential future growth beyond the current performance certificate term. GPC is seeking to operate in the Idaho Public Charter School Commission portfolio in 2028.

The GPC application evidences the team's commitment to serving all students through a focus on high-quality operational programs and data-driven academic instruction.

The school plans on building a new facility on land donated by the Brighton Corporation within the Vallivue School District.

The application does not currently meet the following Standards of Quality: Section 1: Supported and Credible; 3a; Section 7: Thorough and Compliant; Section 7: Supported and Credible

Overview of Executive Summary and Narrative Section Ratings

Executive Summary ↓
Meets Standard
Section II: Educational Program
Meets Standard
Section IV: School Leadership ↓
Meets Standard
Section VI: Facilities Plan ↓
Meets Standard
Section VIII: Virtual & Blended Schools ↓
N/A

Section I: Student Demand & Primary Attendance Area ↓
Approaches Standard
Section III: Board Capacity & Governance Structure ↓
Meets Standard
Section V: Education Service Provider ↓
N/A
Section VII: Finance ↓
Approaches Standard

Executive Summary

Criteria	Performance Level
1. Provides a clear, concise, and accurate overview of the proposed school's mission, instructional model, grades served, location, target population, and organizational structure. 2. Communicates a compelling rationale for the proposed school's existence and intended impact. 3. Summarizes key elements of the educational program and anticipated outcomes for students.	Meets Standard

Comments

There are no concerns with this section.

Section I: Student Demand and Primary Attendance Area

Criteria	Performance Level
1. Thorough and Compliant - The application provides verifiable data on student demand, including the proposed primary attendance area, target population, and projected enrollment by grade level. All items listed in the Checklist for Narrative Sections for this section are present. 2. Supported and Credible - The application includes supporting documentation such as surveys, letters of interest, or demographic analysis that demonstrate realistic and sufficient demand to sustain enrollment. 3. Connected and Cohesive - Enrollment projections and the primary attendance area align with the school's mission, capacity, and educational model. The plan supports equitable access and compliance with lottery and enrollment procedures under § 33-5206(9).	Approaches Standard

Comments

The proposed school will enroll 373 students at full capacity in Year One of operations, and 574 students at full capacity in Year Five of operations (page 11). The school will have a maximum enrollment capacity of 676 students (to allow for future growth).

The primary attendance area will encompass a portion of Vallivue School District. Schools in the district have the following enrollment:

Desert Springs Elementary: 719
 Skyway Elementary: 754
 Sage Valley Middle School: 882
 Summitvue Middle School: 840
 Vision Charter School: 747

The proposed school be built through a partnership with a new housing development, Brighton Community, and school facilities will also serve as a central meeting place for community youth, events, and meetings (page 10). The development, Aviary Heights, will eventually comprise 800 homes.

The application does not provide any documentation related to student interest. Student interest will be addressed during the Commission meeting in August.

Section II: Educational Program

Criteria	Performance Level
1. <i>Thorough and Compliant</i> - The application provides a comprehensive explanation of the intended educational program, including curriculum design, instructional philosophy, measurable student outcomes, and alignment with Idaho standards and accountability expectations. All items listed in the Checklist for Narrative Sections for this section are present. 2. <i>Supported and Credible</i> - The application includes supporting research, evidence of success for the proposed model, or a clear theory of action for new models. 3. <i>Connected and Cohesive</i> - The educational program aligns with the school's mission and vision, is cohesive across governance, staffing, and financial plans, and demonstrates capacity to meet performance certificate expectations.	Meets Standard

Comments

Gem Prep: Caldwell is part of the Gem Prep of Idaho school network, of which there are nine schools that the Idaho Public Charter School Commission currently authorizes (two are in pre-operational status, one is a statewide virtual school). The educational program currently satisfies the requirements of the IPCSC's framework.

Section III: Board Capacity and Structure

Criteria	Performance Level
1. Thorough and Compliant - The articles of incorporation and bylaws are compliant with § 33-5204 and Idaho nonprofit law (Title 30, Chapter 30). The application demonstrates understanding of the board's statutory responsibilities, ethics, and oversight duties. All items listed in the Checklist for Narrative Sections for this section are present. 2. Supported and Credible - The application includes executed and filed corporate documents verifying legal status and board readiness to govern in compliance with state law. 3. Connected and Cohesive - The governing board's structure and expertise are matched to the needs of the educational program and oversight of operations. The governance narrative aligns with other application components, demonstrating cohesive organizational capacity.	Meets Standard

Comments

The board for of Gem Prep of Idaho network currently governs nine schools, all of which are in the Idaho Public Charter School Commission portfolio. The board is comprised of seven individuals, each with varied backgrounds that collectively provide expertise in areas pertinent to charter school governance.

Founding Charter School Board Governance Capacity Interview Packet

This interview protocol is designed to measure the governance capacity of founding charter school boards. It ensures fairness, consistency, and alignment with Idaho Code Title 33, Chapter 52, while allowing flexibility for diverse and innovative charter models.

Date: June 18, 2026

Name of Charter: Gem Prep: Caldwell

Participants in Interview:

- Dennis Turner
- Randy Benglan

Interview Questions

Mission & Vision

How did your board develop the school's mission and vision, and how will you ensure they remain central to decision-making? (Reference: §33-5202 Legislative Intent)

Notes:

- College preparation is central to everything they do, including opportunities for students to earn AA degrees.
- Emphasis is placed on graduation readiness and credit attainment.
- The mission remains “front and center” in all decisions.
- Innovative use of technology and exceptional teaching are considered core elements.
- The board remains committed to the mission even as new members join.

Governance Roles & Legal Compliance

How does your board understand its role in governance versus management? What steps will you take to comply with Idaho nonprofit corporation law, open meeting law, conflicts of interest, and nepotism policies? (Reference: §33-5204)

Notes:

- Clear distinction between governance vs. management; board avoids management involvement.
- Contract oversight occurs at the board level, with minimal operational interaction.
- Board and HR handbooks guide clarity and expectations.
- Attorney Chris Yorgason provides ongoing legal guidance and board training on nonprofit compliance, open meeting laws, conflict-of-interest requirements, and nepotism policies.

Board Capacity & Structure

What expertise does your board bring (finance, education, law, community engagement), and how will you fill gaps? How will you ensure transparency and compliance in board operations (e.g., bylaws, reporting requirements)? (Reference: §33-5205(2)(a)(iii))

Notes:

- The board maintains an expertise chart to track strengths and identify gaps.
- Key expertise areas include business, finance, planning, and real estate.
- A dedicated board clerk ensures transparent reporting and compliance with policy and state requirements.
- Board handbooks and policies guide operations and expectations.
- Transparency is foundational to how the board conducts its work.
- Strategic planning is used to address gaps and maintain strong governance capability.

Accountability & Performance

How will your board ensure compliance with the performance certificate, including student proficiency, growth, and stewardship? (Reference: §33-5205B)

Notes:

- The board closely reviews the budget with attention to all performance certificate components.
- A data dashboard is a standing agenda item for ongoing monitoring.
- The board regularly reviews trends in proficiency, growth, and stewardship.
- A detailed performance report is discussed school by school, examining trends and all performance elements.
- The board stays informed across all schools and areas of performance.

Financial Oversight

What financial controls and reporting systems will your board adopt to ensure fiscal soundness and compliance with Idaho financial reporting requirements? (Reference: §33-5207, §33-5210)

Notes:

- Financial dashboard reviews occur at every board meeting.
- An annual independent audit is conducted.
- The board benefits from strong financial leadership.
- Regular financial reporting supports compliance with state requirements.

Risk & Conflict Management

How will your board handle conflicts of interest, contracts with educational service providers, and early warning signs of distress (e.g., enrollment decline, turnover)? (Reference: §33-5206(8), §33-5205B(6)(f))

Notes:

- A dashboard is used to monitor enrollment, attendance, turnover, and other early-warning indicators.
- The board has clear conflict-of-interest policies and adheres to them.
- Members are willing to have difficult conversations and address concerns promptly, ensuring issues are quickly resolved when they arise.

Innovation & Community Engagement

How will your board balance innovation and flexibility with accountability to students, parents, and taxpayers? How will you engage your primary attendance area community in decision-making? (Reference: §33-5202 Legislative Intent)

Notes:

- Innovation is driven by real-time results and data insights.
- The board adjusts course when data indicates a need.
- Innovation is intentional and must support classroom outcomes.
- Families are educated on how to use dashboards to understand student progress.
- The board helps parents identify student strengths, needs, and overall outcomes.

- Student learning and “learning societies” are core priorities.

Board Replication Question

Idaho Code §33-5205C allows eligible charter schools to apply for replication if they have successfully completed at least one renewal without condition. Replication requires demonstrating the capacity to manage multiple schools while maintaining high academic and fiscal performance. How would your board ensure that it has the governance structures, oversight systems, and financial controls necessary to successfully operate another school while sustaining performance in the original school(s)?

Notes:

- The board uses streamlined processes and voting procedures to support efficiency.
- Strong board committees develop recommendations and support oversight.
- Strong leaders are identified to launch and sustain new schools while protecting culture.
- Network-wide compliance systems support consistent implementation across schools.
- The board believes replication is feasible due to established systems and core operational structures.

Section IV: School Leadership

Criteria	Performance Level
1. <i>Thorough and Compliant</i> - The application clearly describes the school's leadership structure, roles, and qualifications of key personnel, including administrators and instructional leaders. All items listed in the Checklist for Narrative Sections for this section are present. 2. <i>Supported and Credible</i> - The leadership team's experience, capacity, and qualifications demonstrate readiness to operate a public charter school in compliance with state law. 3. <i>Connected and Cohesive</i> - The leadership and management approach align with the educational program, governance model, and financial plan, ensuring accountability and operational effectiveness.	Meets Standard

Comments

The application states that a school leader has not yet been identified, but notes that the "organization has a strong internal leadership pipeline with numerous candidates in the Treasure Valley area" (page 26).

Back office services will be provided by the Gem Prep network (page 26).

Section V: Education Service Provider (if applicable)

Criteria	Performance Level
1. Thorough and Compliant - The application provides a clear and complete description of any proposed relationship with an education service provider (ESP), including the scope of services, fee structure, and terms of the management contract. The contract ensures the governing board retains full legal and fiduciary responsibility in accordance with § 33-5206(8). All items listed in the Checklist for Narrative Sections for this section are present. 2. Supported and Credible - The application includes executed or draft contracts, documentation of the ESP's prior experience and performance with other schools, and evidence that the arrangement aligns with Idaho's nonprofit governance requirements. 3. Connected and Cohesive - The ESP relationship aligns with the school's mission, educational program, and financial plan, supports transparency and accountability, and clearly defines roles and responsibilities between the board and provider.	N/A

Comments

This section is not applicable.

Section VI: Facilities Plan

Criteria	Performance Level
1. Thorough and Compliant - The application identifies viable facility options with clear timelines, costs, and financing structures. Plans address safety, accessibility, compliance with building codes, and capacity to serve the proposed enrollment. All items listed in the Checklist for Narrative Sections for this section are present. 2. Supported and Credible - The facility plan includes letters of intent or lease/purchase options, budget alignment for maintenance and operations, and demonstrates the applicant's financial capacity to secure and maintain the site. 3. Connected and Cohesive - The proposed facilities plan is appropriate for the educational model and student population and is financially feasible within the overall budget and revenue assumptions.	Meets Standard

Comments

The school has identified two potential facility options. Option 1 is to utilize property donated via the Brighton Corporation of approximately 7 acres within the Aviary Heights Subdivision (page 30). The application includes a Letter of Support from Brighton Corporation (page 72).

Facility Option 2 requires the school to “phase the construction of the facility” (page 30).

The new facility construction will be completed by Bouma, USA (page 54).

The school “plans to work with Raymond James to secure IHFA Bonds or Bank/Private financing similar to other GP schools” (page 55). The application includes a preliminary financial commitment sheet from Raymond James and Associates (page 73).

Section VII: Finance

Criteria	Performance Level
1. Thorough and Compliant - The financial plan and budget evidence a full understanding of federal and state funding mechanisms, cost structures, and operational needs. Revenue projections are realistic and restricted funds are used appropriately. All items listed in the Checklist for Narrative Sections for this section are present. 2. Supported and Credible - The application provides documentation, assumptions, and data demonstrating the accuracy and validity of revenue and expenditure estimates. 3. Connected and Cohesive - The financial and facilities plan aligns with the academic program and intended student body; the budget narrative and template are internally consistent and responsive to the school's educational model.	Approaches Standard

Comments

The school will be part of the Gem Prep Network, which provides back office services.

The school plans on receiving donations from the Gem Innovation Schools Foundation in the amounts of \$445,000 (Break-even Year 1); \$350,000 (Year 2), and \$250,000 (Year 3) (page 65) The applicants state, "At Full Enrollment no philanthropy/donations would be needed to support school operations. Traditional funding via the state would satisfy the expenditure levels necessary for operations."

The application anticipates loans in the amount of \$14,380,000 (page 60) for pre-operational expenses. The application includes a preliminary financial commitment sheet from Raymond James and Associates (page 73). The applicants state, "At present we have not secured the funds to finance the project as it is too soon. The traditional time frame for working through the financing phase is about 10 months prior to breaking ground on the project. At present we have not determined if this will be a bank loan or a bond financing as this decision will be based on market conditions and interest rates when we get into the financing phase."

The pre-operational budget does not include expenditures outside of staff and benefit totals for one Lead Administrator (page 61). The applicants state “Within this budget we do not anticipate any additional expenses in the pre-op year. However, we likely will be seeking additional philanthropy for operational purposes from a couple of other sources. If we do receive those funds we would spend some of the proceeds in the pre-op year on a classified support staff 1.0 FTE, and early order of tech and furniture supplies to augment the planned procurements in year 1.

Section VIII: Virtual and Blended Schools (if applicable)

Criteria	Performance Level
1. Thorough and Compliant - The application addresses all required components for virtual schools, including learning management systems, teacher availability, student attendance verification, and technical support as required by § 33-5205(3). The application describes the blended learning model, including how online and in-person components will integrate to meet Idaho's thoroughness standards. Attendance, grading, and instructional delivery systems are clearly defined. All items listed in the Checklist for Narrative Sections for this section are present. 2. Supported and Credible - The application includes evidence or plans demonstrating effective instructional delivery, student engagement, and assessment in an online environment. The application demonstrates that the blended model is supported by credible evidence or a proven track record of success, includes staffing and technology plans, and ensures equitable access for all students. 3. Connected and Cohesive - The virtual model aligns with the school's mission, capacity, and academic goals, ensuring equitable access, compliance with Idaho standards, and sustainable operations. The blended learning approach aligns with the educational philosophy, staffing model, and financial resources, ensuring academic rigor and operational feasibility within Idaho's statutory framework.	N/A

Comments

This section is not applicable.

IV. PRE-OPENING UPDATE

DISCUSSION

The IPCSC authorized six (6) charter schools approved to open in the Fall of 2026. The schools are Alturas Academy North, Brabeion Academy, Gem Prep: Idaho Falls, North Idaho Classical Academy, Trailhead Virtual Academy, and Valor Classical Academy.

IPCSC staff have tracked each school's progress toward opening day. Pre-opening meetings are complete for all schools. Site visits are complete for all schools that have begun operations and are scheduled for schools that have not yet begun operations.

SPEAKERS

Monique Bosse, IPCSC Program Manager
Jared Dawson, IPCSC Program Manager

IMPACT

Information item only.

COMMISSION ACTION

No Action

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment will be limited to three minutes per person. To submit written comment please email pcsc@osbe.idaho.gov before 5:00 pm MST on Wednesday, August 19, 2026.