

**April 22, 2004**

## **BOARD TAKES ACTION ON CHARTER SCHOOL APPEALS**

Coeur d'Alene -- In a series of split votes, the State Board of Education invoked the new public charter school law and sent one charter school appeal back to the district and two onto the new charter school commission.

Compass Charter School must go back to the Meridian School District, while Rolling Hills Charter School and the Idaho Leadership Academy will be put on the agenda for the charter school commission. Under the new charter law, the State Board of Education can approve or deny the charter, remand it back to the local school board for further review or refer the petition to the charter commission.

"Thanks to the new charter school legislation the Board now has options when charter appeals come before us. Before we could only reject or approve the school if the Board believed the local district's decision was arbitrary," said State Board of Education President Blake Hall.

On a 5 to 1 vote, with member Milford Terrell voting against, the Board sent the Compass Charter School back to the Meridian School District for consideration. Board members expressed their concern that because the charter school had not been formally denied by the district with the changes the school had made in their petition, it would be premature to approve the school or send it to the commission. Compass Charter School has worked with the Meridian School District since June 2003 over issues on attendance area, founder's seats and most recently curriculum. The charter legislation signed by the governor resolved questions on founder's seats. The school district now has 30 days to hear the appeal and an additional 30 days to make a decision. If both parties agree, the school district may take up to 60 days for a ruling.

The Idaho Leadership Academy will be put on the agenda for the charter school commission after Idaho Falls School District officials expressed their desire to have the issue move to the commission. The motion to redirect the school for consideration to the charter school commission passed 4 to 2 with Marilyn Howard and Paul Agidius opposing the measure.

Rolling Hills Charter School who had appealed to the Boise School District will also be put on the agenda of the charter school commission. Rolling Hills submitted its original petition July 2003. Board members determined that because of the history of conflict between the proposed public charter school and the school district determined to send the charter school to the commission for consideration on another 4 to 2 vote. "We need to wipe the slate clean," said Terrell. "The parents have thousands of hours and almost a year trying to shepherd this through the process. A new beginning would be good for them and their charter."