

September 14, 2004

CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION TO MEET SEPTEMBER 17

BOISE - The Idaho Charter School Commission will consider five public charter schools at its meeting September 17 at Boise State University.

The meeting begins at 8 a.m. at the Lookout Room in the Boise State Student Union building. The charter school petitions on the agenda include: Rolling Hills Public Charter School in Boise, Compass Public Charter School in Meridian, the state-wide Idaho Virtual Academy, Idaho Virtual High School/Richard McKenna Charter High School headquartered in Mountain Home, and Falcon Ridge Public Charter School in Kuna.

Rolling Hills Public Charter School: Petitioners initially filed a petition with the Boise School District and were denied. Petitioners appealed to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and after a public hearing, the matter was referred back to the Boise School District, with the recommendation of the hearing officer. The Boise School District affirmed its initial decision and denied the petition. Petitioners then appealed to the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education, in April, redirected the petition to the Charter School Commission for further review. The Commission heard a presentation by the petitioners of Rolling Hills Public Charter School at its first meeting in July.

Compass Public Charter School: Petitioners initially filed a petition with the Meridian School District to charter Compass Charter School. The Meridian School District denied the petition. Petitioners appealed to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and after a public hearing, the matter was referred back to the Meridian School District, with the recommendation of the hearing officer. The Meridian School District affirmed its initial decision and denied the petition. Petitioners then appealed to the State Board of Education. At its April board meeting, the State Board of Education remanded the petition back to the Meridian School District for further review, without considering the merits of the petition. The Meridian School District did not take any action on the petition within 30 days of the remand from the State Board of Education. Pursuant to Section 33-5205(a), Idaho Code, petitioners then withdrew the petition from Meridian School District and filed it with the Commission. The Commission also heard from the petitioners of Compass Public Charter School at its first meeting in July.

Idaho Virtual Academy (IDVA): The Idaho Virtual Academy has filed a petition to form a new charter school, which, if granted, would mean the public virtual school would be under the jurisdiction of the Commission. The public virtual school originated in the Butte County School District. If the Commission grants the petition, the charter granted by the Butte County School District will be terminated. Petitioners of IDVA presented before the Commission at its July meeting.

Idaho Virtual High School/Richard McKenna Charter High School: The Idaho Virtual High School has also filed a petition to form a new charter school under the jurisdiction of the Commission. The school is currently operating as a public virtual school, under the oversight of the Mountain High School District, but if the petition is granted by the Commission that charter will be terminated. Petitioners of Idaho Virtual High School also presented before the Commission at its July meeting.

Falcon Ridge Public Charter School: Petitioners initially filed a petition with the Kuna School District to charter Falcon Ridge Public Charter School. The Kuna School District referred the petition to the Commission. Although the Commission may take action on the petition at this meeting, the Commission may take the petition under advisement, or may conduct another meeting open to the public for the purpose of discussing the proposed new public charter school.

About the Commission:

The Commission was created by the Legislature to consider charter school petitions. Commission members appointed by Governor Dirk Kempthorne are: Marianne Donnelly, Bill Goesling, Jim Hammond, Kirk Miller, Paul Powell, Ann Souza, and Esther Van Wart. The Commission held its first meeting in July and heard presentations from several proposed charter school petitioners. Under state statute, charter school petitioners must first apply for a charter with their local school district. The Commission can consider charter school petitions that are referred by local school districts. In addition, petitions that are not heard by the school district within 30 days may be withdrawn and filed with the Commission. Finally, the Commission also can consider petitions on appeal that are redirected to the Commission by the State Board of Education. Virtual charter schools may apply directly to the Commission.

About the Charter School Law:

Senate Bill 1444, signed by Governor Dirk Kempthorne April 1, created the Charter School Commission. Under the law, not more than six newly chartered public schools may be approved for any one school year. This includes charters approved by the Commission as well as local school districts. The law also established a timeline for action on charter schools. After the Charter School Commission receives a petition, it has 30 days to hold a meeting open to the public to consider the petition, and must take action on the petition 60 days after the petition is received.