

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 633

2 INTRODUCED BY E. HILL

3
4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC CHARTER
5 SCHOOLS AS A MEANS OF PROVIDING ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES; DEFINING
6 "PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL"; PROVIDING FOR AUTONOMY OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS
7 THROUGH EXEMPTION FROM TITLE 20, MCA; ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
8 COMMISSION; ESTABLISHING CHARTER AUTHORIZERS FOR OVERSEEING PUBLIC CHARTER
9 SCHOOLS; PROVIDING AN OVERSIGHT FEE FOR CHARTER AUTHORIZERS; PROVIDING FOR THE
10 CREATION, RENEWAL, REVOCATION, AND CLOSURE OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS; PROVIDING
11 FOR PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS; EXEMPTING PUBLIC CHARTER
12 SCHOOL TEACHERS FROM STATE CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS; PROVIDING FOR FUNDING OF
13 PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS; ESTABLISHING THE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNT; PROVIDING
14 AN APPROPRIATION; AMENDING SECTIONS 15-6-201, 20-1-101, 20-4-101, 20-5-323, 61-3-321, AND 61-
15 10-214, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND AN APPLICABILITY DATE."

16
17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

18
19 NEW SECTION. Section 1. Short title. [Sections 1 through 17] may be cited as the "Public Charter
20 Schools Act".

21
22 NEW SECTION. Section 2. Public charter schools -- legislative findings and intent. (1) The
23 legislature finds, pursuant to the authority and duties provided in Article X, section 1(3), of the Montana
24 constitution, that:

25 (a) parents desire education options for their children;

26 (b) expanding educational opportunities for K-12 education within the state is a valid public purpose;

27 and

28 (c) creating options that assist parents and encourage students to develop their full educational

1 potential is vital to the economic competitiveness of the state.

2 (2) It is the legislature's intent, pursuant to the authority and duties provided in Article X, section 1(3),
3 of the Montana constitution, to create other public educational programs and institutions through charter
4 schools. The purposes are to:

5 (a) enable parents to make decisions on how best to educate their children;

6 (b) provide other public educational opportunities for all students, especially those at risk of academic
7 failure;

8 (c) encourage the use of different models of teaching, governing, scheduling, and other aspects of
9 instruction that meet a variety of student needs; and

10 (d) advance Montana's commitment to the preservation of American Indian cultural identity, pursuant
11 to Article X, section 1(2), of the Montana constitution and to eliminate the American Indian achievement gap by
12 encouraging participation in the charter school program by students, parents, and school districts in Indian
13 country.

14
15 **NEW SECTION. Section 3. Definitions.** As used in [sections 1 through 17], the following definitions
16 apply:

17 (1) "Applicant" means a person or group that submits a proposal for a public charter school to an
18 authorizer.

19 (2) "Authorizer" means an entity authorized under [sections 1 through 17] to review proposals,
20 determine whether to approve proposals for entering into a charter contract, enter into charter contracts with
21 applicants, oversee public charter schools, and determine whether to renew or revoke charter contracts.

22 (3) "Charter contract" means a fixed-term, renewable contract between a public charter school and an
23 authorizer that outlines the roles, powers, responsibilities, and performance expectations for each party to the
24 contract.

25 (4) "Commission" means the state public charter school commission provided for in [section 4].

26 (5) "Education service provider" means a for-profit education management organization, nonprofit
27 charter management organization, school design provider, or other partner entity with which a public charter
28 school intends to contract for educational design, implementation, or comprehensive management.

1 (6) "Governing board" means the independent board of trustees of a public charter school that is party
2 to the charter contract with the authorizer.

3 (7) "Local school board" means a school district board of trustees exercising management and control
4 of a local school district pursuant to the laws of the state.

5 (8) "Noncharter public school" means a public school that is under the direct management,
6 governance, and control of a local school board or the state.

7 (9) "Parent" means a parent, guardian, or other person or entity having legal custody of a child.

8 (10) "Public charter school" means a public school that:

9 (a) has autonomy over decisions, including but not limited to matters concerning finance, personnel,
10 scheduling, curriculum, and instruction;

11 (b) is governed by a governing board;

12 (c) is established and operated under the terms of a charter contract between the school's governing
13 board and its authorizer;

14 (d) is a school in which parents choose to enroll their children;

15 (e) is a school that admits students on the basis of a lottery if more students apply for admission than
16 can be accommodated;

17 (f) provides a program of education that may include any or all grades from kindergarten through
18 grade 12 and vocational education programs;

19 (g) operates in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives as defined in its charter contract;

20 (h) operates under the oversight of its authorizer in accordance with its charter contract; and

21 (i) establishes graduation requirements and has authority to award degrees and issue diplomas.

22 (11) "Resident school district" means the public school district in which a student resides.

23 (12) "Student" means a child who is eligible for attendance in a public school in the state.

24 (13) "Virtual public charter school" means a public charter school that offers educational services
25 predominantly through an online program.

26

27 NEW SECTION. Section 4. Public charter school commission -- creation -- appointments. (1)

28 There is an independent state public charter school commission with statewide chartering jurisdiction and

1 authority.

2 (2) The commission is responsible for approving authorizers for public charter schools throughout the
3 state.

4 (3) The commission consists of nine members who are appointed as follows:

5 (a) three members appointed by the governor;

6 (b) three members appointed by the president of the senate; and

7 (c) three members appointed by the speaker of the house.

8 (4) The commission members are subject to the following qualifications:

9 (a) no more than five of the members may be affiliated with the same political party;

10 (b) no more than two members may be public employees;

11 (c) one of the public employee members may be from the board of public education; and

12 (d) in making the appointments, the governor, president of the senate, and speaker of the house shall
13 ensure statewide geographic diversity among commission members.

14 (5) Members appointed to the commission must collectively possess substantial experience and
15 expertise in public and nonprofit governance, management and finance, public school leadership, assessment,
16 curriculum, instruction, and public education law. All members of the commission must have a demonstrated
17 understanding of and commitment to charter schools as a strategy for strengthening public education.

18 (6) (a) Each appointing authority shall appoint one member to a 4-year term, one member to a 3-year
19 term, and one member to a 2-year term.

20 (b) All terms after the initial term must be for 3 years. Appointment to the initial terms must be made
21 no later than 60 days following [the effective date of this act]. If any of the appointing authorities fails to make
22 the appointments, the remaining appointing authorities may make the remaining appointments.

23 (7) Each member of the commission is entitled to reimbursement for expenses as provided in 2-18-
24 501 through 2-18-503.

25 (8) A member of the commission may be removed by a majority vote of the commission for any cause
26 that renders the member unable or unfit to discharge the duties of the office, including but not limited to failure
27 to approve an authorizer without just cause and interference with the functions of the commission as set forth in
28 [sections 1 through 17]. Whenever a vacancy on the commission exists, the original appointing authority shall

1 appoint a member for the remaining portion of the term consistent with the requirements of subsections (3) and
2 (4).

3 (9) The commission shall operate with dedicated resources and hire staff qualified to execute the day-
4 to-day responsibilities of public charter school authorizing in accordance with [sections 1 through 17].

5 (10) The commission is authorized to receive and expend gifts and donations of any kind from any
6 private entity. The gifts and donations may not require conditions that do not comport with the purposes of
7 [sections 1 through 17]. Gifts and donations under this subsection must be deposited in the public charter
8 school account pursuant to [section 17] and may be used by the commission for commission operations or
9 distributed to public charter schools at the discretion of the commission.

10 (11) (a) The commission is allocated to the board of public education for administrative purposes only
11 as prescribed by 2-15-121(1)(a).

12 (b) The commission shall hire staff for the commission, except for any support staff provided by the
13 board of public education for centralized services such as payroll, human resources, accounting, information
14 technology, or other services determined by the commission and the board to be more efficiently provided by
15 the board.

16 (c) Commission budget requests prepared and presented to the legislature and the governor in
17 accordance with 17-7-111 must be prepared and presented independently of the board of public education.
18 However, nothing in this subsection (11)(c) prohibits the board from providing administrative support for the
19 budgeting process and including the budget requests in appropriate sections of the board's budget requests for
20 administratively attached agencies.

21 (12) The commission shall elect a presiding officer from among the members. The presiding officer
22 shall serve a 2-year term.

23 (13) The commission shall meet at least twice each year at the call of the presiding officer.

24 (14) All commission meetings are open to the public pursuant to Article II, section 9, of the Montana
25 constitution and 2-3-203.

26
27 **NEW SECTION. Section 5. Authorizers.** (1) The state public charter school commission created
28 under [section 4] may authorize public charter schools in the state. The commission shall perform the functions

1 of public charter school authorizers under [sections 1 through 17].

2 (2) (a) A local school board may apply to the commission for chartering authority within the
3 boundaries of the school district overseen by the local school board.

4 (b) If the commission determines that the local school board fulfills the requirements of an authorizer,
5 the commission shall, within 60 days of receipt of a local school board's application, approve the local school
6 board as an authorizer.

7 (c) On approval, the commission shall register the local school board and shall provide the local
8 school board with a letter confirming its approval as an authorizer.

9 (3) Governing bodies of accredited public or private postsecondary institutions, including community
10 colleges, technical colleges, tribal colleges, and 4-year colleges and universities, may apply to the commission
11 for statewide, regional, or local chartering authority pursuant to this section.

12 (4) Nonpublic sectarian or religious organizations and any other charitable organizations that, in their
13 federal Internal Revenue Service Form 1023, Part IV under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, 26
14 U.S.C. 501(c)(3), describe activities indicating a religious purpose are not eligible to become authorizers.

15 (5) (a) The commission shall establish the annual application and approval process, including cycles
16 and deadlines during the fiscal year, for all entities eligible to apply for chartering authority as set forth in this
17 section.

18 (b) By March 1 of each year, the commission shall make available information and guidelines for all
19 eligible entities concerning the opportunity to apply for chartering authority under [sections 1 through 17].

20 (c) Each interested eligible entity shall submit an application that clearly explains or presents the
21 following elements in a format to be established by the commission:

22 (i) written notification of intent to serve as a charter authorizer in accordance with [sections 1 through
23 17];

24 (ii) an explanation of the entity's strategic vision for chartering;

25 (iii) a plan supporting the entity's strategic vision and an explanation of the entity's budget and
26 personnel capacity and commitment to execute the duties of charter authorizing in accordance with [sections 1
27 through 17];

28 (iv) a draft or preliminary outline of a request for proposal that will solicit public charter school

1 applicants in accordance with [section 9];

2 (v) a description or outline of the performance framework the entity will use to guide the establishment
3 of a charter contract and for ongoing oversight and evaluation of public charter schools consistent with the
4 requirements of [sections 1 through 17];

5 (vi) a draft of the entity's renewal, revocation, nonrenewal, and school closure processes consistent
6 with [sections 12 and 13];

7 (vii) a statement of assurance that the entity commits to serving as a charter authorizer in fulfillment of
8 the expectations, spirit, and intent of [sections 1 through 17] and will fully participate in any authorizer training
9 provided or required by the commission; and

10 (viii) a statement of assurance that the entity will be accountable and transparent in all matters
11 concerning charter-authorizing practices, decisions, and expenditures.

12 (6) (a) Within 60 days of receipt of the application, the commission shall determine whether to
13 approve an application based on a review of the documentation provided in subsection (5) and the quality of the
14 application. The commission shall provide a letter to the entity either confirming or denying acceptance as an
15 authorizer.

16 (b) Within 30 days of approval of an application for charter authorizing, the commission and the
17 approved authorizer shall execute a renewable authorizing contract. The initial authorizing contract term is 6
18 years.

19 (7) An applicant entity may not engage in charter-authorizing functions without a fully executed
20 authorizing contract.

21 (8) When approved, the authorizer continues from year to year during the term of the contract as long
22 as the authorizer fulfills all charter-authorizing duties and expectations set forth in [sections 1 through 17] and
23 remains an authorizer in good standing with the commission.

24
25 **NEW SECTION. Section 6. Authorizer responsibilities.** (1) In accordance with [sections 1 through
26 17], an authorizer is responsible for executing the following essential powers and duties:

27 (a) soliciting and evaluating charter proposals;

28 (b) approving charter proposals that meet identified educational needs and promote a diversity of

1 educational choices, including but not limited to:

2 (i) creating more schools with high standards for pupil performance;

3 (ii) closing achievement gaps between high-performing and low-performing groups of public school
4 students;

5 (iii) increasing educational opportunities within the public education system;

6 (iv) providing alternative learning environments for students who are not thriving in traditional school
7 settings;

8 (v) addressing the dropout rate;

9 (vi) creating new professional opportunities for teachers and other school personnel;

10 (vii) encouraging the use of different models of teaching and other aspects of schooling; and

11 (viii) providing students, parents, community members, and local entities with expanded opportunities
12 for involvement in the public education system;

13 (c) declining to approve inadequate charter proposals;

14 (d) negotiating and executing sound charter contracts with each approved public charter school;

15 (e) monitoring, in accordance with charter contract terms, the performance and legal compliance of
16 public charter schools; and

17 (f) determining whether each charter contract merits renewal, nonrenewal, or revocation.

18 (2) An authorizer may delegate its duties to its officers, employees, and contractors.

19 (3) Regulation of public charter schools by authorizers is limited to the powers and duties described in
20 [sections 1 through 17], consistent with the intent of [sections 1 through 17].

21 (4) An authorizer shall develop, carry out, and maintain chartering policies and practices consistent
22 with nationally recognized principles and standards for charter authorizing in all major areas of authorizing
23 responsibility, including:

24 (a) organizational capacity and infrastructure;

25 (b) soliciting and evaluating charter proposals;

26 (c) performance contracting;

27 (d) ongoing public charter school oversight and evaluation; and

28 (e) charter renewal decisionmaking.

1 (5) Evidence of material or persistent failure to carry out the duties enumerated in this section
2 constitutes grounds for rescission of charter-authorizing powers by the commission.

3 (6) Each authorizer shall submit to the commission an annual report summarizing:

4 (a) the authorizer's strategic vision for chartering and progress toward achieving that vision;

5 (b) the academic and financial performance of all operating public charter schools overseen by the
6 authorizer, according to the performance expectations for public charter schools set forth in [sections 1 through
7 17];

8 (c) the status of the authorizer's public charter school portfolio, identifying all public charter schools
9 approved but not yet open, operating, renewed, transferred, revoked, not renewed, voluntarily closed, or never
10 opened;

11 (d) the authorizing functions provided by the authorizer to the public charter schools under its
12 direction, including the authorizer's operating costs and expenses detailed in annual audited financial
13 statements that conform with generally accepted accounting principles; and

14 (e) the services purchased from the authorizer by a public charter school under the authorizer's
15 direction, including an itemized accounting of the actual costs of these services, as required in [section 7].

16 (7) An employee, trustee, agent, or representative of an authorizer may not simultaneously serve as
17 an employee, trustee, agent, representative, vendor, or contractor of a public charter school authorized by that
18 entity.

19 (8) A governmental unit or other entity, other than those expressly granted chartering authority as set
20 forth in [sections 1 through 17], may not assume any charter-authorizing function or duty in any form unless
21 expressly allowed by law.

22

23 **NEW SECTION. Section 7. Duties of commission for oversight of authorizer.** (1) The commission
24 shall establish a statewide formula for authorizer funding to be applied uniformly to every authorizer in the state.
25 Authorizer funding is financed through an oversight fee.

26 (2) The oversight fee must be calculated as a uniform percentage of the state funding allocated to
27 each public charter school and is to be paid from the public charter school's budget share of the per-pupil
28 funding, not to exceed 3% of each public charter school's state funding in a single school year.

1 (3) The commission may establish a sliding scale for authorizer funding, with the funding percentage
2 decreasing after the authorizer has achieved a certain threshold after a certain number of years of authorizing,
3 after a certain number of schools have been authorized, or for other reasons determined at the discretion of the
4 commission.

5 (4) An authorizer's oversight fee may not include any costs incurred in delivering services that a public
6 charter school may purchase at its discretion from the authorizer. The authorizer shall use the funding provided
7 under this section exclusively for the purpose of fulfilling authorizing obligations in accordance with [sections 1
8 through 17].

9 (5) The commission is responsible for overseeing the performance and effectiveness of all authorizers
10 established under [sections 1 through 17].

11 (6) The commission shall annually review the effectiveness of the state formula for authorizer funding
12 and shall adjust the formula if necessary to maximize public benefit and strengthen the implementation of
13 [sections 1 through 17].

14 (7) By October 15 of each year, the commission shall communicate to every authorizer the
15 requirements for the format, content, and submission of the annual report.

16 (8) Persistently unsatisfactory performance of an authorizer's portfolio of public charter schools, a
17 pattern of well-founded complaints about the authorizer or its public charter schools, or other objective
18 circumstances may trigger a special review by the commission.

19 (9) In reviewing or evaluating the performance of authorizers, the commission shall apply nationally
20 recognized principles and standards for charter authorizing.

21 (10) If at any time the commission finds that an authorizer is not in compliance with an existing charter
22 contract, its authorizing contract with the commission, or the requirements of authorizers under [sections 1
23 through 17], the commission shall notify the authorizer in writing of the identified problems and shall provide the
24 authorizer reasonable opportunity to respond and remedy the problems.

25 (11) If an authorizer fails to respond and remedy the problems identified by the commission, the
26 commission shall notify the authorizer, within a reasonable amount of time under the circumstances, that it
27 intends to revoke the authorizer's chartering authority unless the authorizer demonstrates a timely and
28 satisfactory remedy for the violation or deficiencies.

1 (12) In the event of revocation of an authorizer's chartering authority, the commission shall manage the
 2 timely and orderly transfer of each charter contract held by that authorizer to another authorizer in the state,
 3 with the mutual agreement of each affected public charter school and proposed new authorizer. The new
 4 authorizer shall assume the existing charter contract for the remainder of the charter term.

5 (13) On or before December 1 of each year, beginning in the first year that public charter schools have
 6 been in operation for a full school year, the commission shall issue to the board of public education, the
 7 education and local government interim committee, and the public an annual report on the state's public charter
 8 schools that includes data from the annual reports submitted by every authorizer, as well as any additional
 9 relevant data compiled by the commission, for the school year ending in the preceding calendar year. The
 10 annual report must include:

11 (a) a comparison of the performance of public charter school students with the performance of
 12 academically, ethnically, and economically comparable groups of students in noncharter public schools; and

13 (b) the commission's assessment of the successes, challenges, and areas for improvement in
 14 meeting the purposes of [sections 1 through 17], including the commission's assessment of the sufficiency of
 15 funding for public charter schools, the efficacy of the state formula for authorizer funding, and any suggested
 16 changes in state law or policy necessary to strengthen the state's public charter schools.

17
 18 **NEW SECTION. Section 8. Purchase of services by charter school.** (1) With the exception of
 19 oversight services as required by [section 7], a public charter school may not be required to purchase services
 20 from the public charter school's authorizer as an express or implied condition of charter approval or of executing
 21 a charter contract.

22 (2) A public charter school may choose to purchase services from its authorizer. In that event, the
 23 public charter school and authorizer shall execute an annual service contract, separate from the charter
 24 contract, stating the parties' mutual agreement concerning any services to be provided by the authorizer and
 25 any service fees to be charged to the public charter school. An authorizer may not charge more than market
 26 rates for services provided to a public charter school.

27
 28 **NEW SECTION. Section 9. Charter school proposal process -- request for proposal -- charter**

1 **term.** (1) To solicit, encourage, and guide the development of public charter schools, every authorizer operating
2 under [sections 1 through 17] shall issue and broadly publicize a request for proposal by June 1 of each year.
3 The content and dissemination of the request for proposal must be consistent with the purposes and
4 requirements of [sections 1 through 17].

5 (2) Each authorizer's request for proposal must present the authorizer's strategic vision for chartering,
6 including a clear statement of any preferences the authorizer wishes to grant to proposals that help at-risk
7 students.

8 (3) A request for proposal must include or otherwise direct applicants to the performance framework
9 that the authorizer has developed for public charter school oversight and evaluation in accordance with [section
10 7].

11 (4) A request for proposal must include the criteria that will guide the authorizer's decision to approve
12 or deny a charter proposal.

13 (5) A request for proposal must include clear and detailed questions as well as guidelines concerning
14 the format and content essential for applicants to demonstrate the capacities necessary to establish and
15 operate a successful public charter school.

16 (6) A request for proposal must require applicants to describe thoroughly all of the following essential
17 elements of the proposed school plan:

18 (a) an executive summary;

19 (b) the mission and vision of the proposed public charter school, including identification of the
20 targeted student population and the community the school hopes to serve;

21 (c) the location or geographic area proposed for the public charter school;

22 (d) the grades to be served each year for the full term of the charter contract;

23 (e) minimum, planned, and maximum enrollment each year for the term of the charter contract;

24 (f) evidence of need and community support for the proposed public charter school;

25 (g) background information on the initial governing board members and, if identified, the proposed
26 school leadership and management team;

27 (h) the proposed public charter school's proposed calendar and sample daily schedule;

28 (i) a description of the academic program, including plans to formally assess student achievement on

1 an annual basis;

2 (j) a description of the proposed public charter school's instructional design, including the type of
3 learning environment, class size and structure, curriculum overview, and teaching methods;

4 (k) the proposed public charter school's plans for identifying and successfully serving students with
5 disabilities, students who are English language learners, students who are academically challenged, and gifted
6 students, including but not limited to compliance with applicable laws and regulations;

7 (l) a description of cocurricular or extracurricular programs, if any, and how the programs will be
8 funded and delivered;

9 (m) plans and timelines for student recruitment and enrollment, including lottery procedures;

10 (n) the proposed public charter school's student discipline policies, including those for special
11 education students;

12 (o) an organizational chart that clearly presents the proposed public charter school's organizational
13 structure, including lines of authority and reporting between the governing board, staff, related bodies such as
14 advisory bodies or parent and teacher councils, and external organizations that will play a role in managing the
15 school;

16 (p) a clear description of the roles and responsibilities for the governing board, the proposed public
17 charter school's leadership and management team, and other entities shown in the organizational chart;

18 (q) a staffing chart for the proposed public charter school's first year and a staffing plan for the term of
19 the charter;

20 (r) plans for recruiting and developing school leadership and staff;

21 (s) the proposed public charter school's leadership and teacher employment policies, including
22 performance evaluation plans;

23 (t) proposed governing bylaws;

24 (u) explanations of any partnerships or contractual relationships central to the proposed public charter
25 school's operations or mission;

26 (v) the proposed public charter school's plans for providing transportation, food service, and all other
27 significant operational or ancillary services, if any;

28 (w) opportunities and expectations for parent involvement;

- 1 (x) a detailed school startup plan identifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals;
- 2 (y) a description of the proposed public charter school's financial plan and policies, including financial
- 3 controls and audit requirements;
- 4 (z) a description of the insurance coverage the proposed public charter school will obtain;
- 5 (aa) startup and 5-year budgets with clearly stated assumptions;
- 6 (bb) startup and first-year cash flow projections with clearly stated assumptions;
- 7 (cc) evidence of anticipated fundraising contributions if claimed in the proposal; and
- 8 (dd) a sound facilities plan, including backup or contingency plans if appropriate.

9 (7) In the case of a proposal to establish a public charter school by converting an existing noncharter

10 public school to public charter school status, a request for proposal must also require the applicants to

11 demonstrate support for the proposed public charter school conversion by a petition signed by a majority of

12 teachers or a majority of the local school board and a petition signed by a majority of parents of students in the

13 existing noncharter public school.

14 (8) In the case of a proposal to establish a virtual public charter school, a request for proposal must

15 additionally require the applicants to describe the proposed school's system of course credits and how the

16 school will:

- 17 (a) monitor and verify full-time student enrollment, student participation in a full course load, credit
- 18 accrual, and course completion;
- 19 (b) monitor and verify student progress and performance in each course through regular, proctored
- 20 assessments and submissions of coursework; and
- 21 (c) conduct parent-teacher conferences.

22 (9) In the case of a proposed public charter school that intends to contract with an education service

23 provider for substantial educational services, management services, or both, a request for proposal must

24 additionally require the applicants to:

- 25 (a) provide evidence of the education service provider's success in serving student populations similar
- 26 to the targeted population, including demonstrated academic achievement as well as successful management
- 27 of nonacademic school functions if applicable;
- 28 (b) provide documentation setting forth:

- 1 (i) the proposed duration of the service contract;
- 2 (ii) the roles and responsibilities of the governing board, the school staff, and the education service
3 provider;
- 4 (iii) the scope of services and resources to be provided by the education service provider;
- 5 (iv) performance evaluation measures and timelines;
- 6 (v) a compensation structure, including clear identification of all fees to be paid to the education
7 service provider;
- 8 (vi) methods of contract oversight and enforcement;
- 9 (vii) investment disclosure; and
- 10 (viii) conditions for renewal and termination of the contract; and
- 11 (c) disclose and explain any existing or potential conflicts of interest between the governing board and
12 the proposed education service provider or any affiliated business entities.

13 (10) In the case of a public charter school proposal from an applicant that currently operates one or
14 more schools in any state or nation, a request for proposal must additionally require the applicant to provide
15 evidence of past performance and current capacity for growth.

16 (11) If a public charter school proposal does not contain the elements required in this section, the
17 authorizer may consider the proposal incomplete and return the proposal to the applicant without the process
18 described in subsection (12).

19 (12) In reviewing and evaluating charter proposals, authorizers shall employ procedures, practices,
20 and criteria consistent with nationally recognized principles and standards for charter authorizing. The proposal
21 review process must include thorough evaluation of each written charter proposal, an in-person interview with
22 the applicant group, and an opportunity in a public forum for local residents to learn about and provide input on
23 each proposal.

24 (13) In deciding whether to approve charter proposals, authorizers shall:

- 25 (a) grant charters only to applicants that have demonstrated competence in each element of the
26 authorizer's published approval criteria and are likely to open and operate a successful public charter school;
- 27 (b) base decisions on documented evidence collected through the proposal review process; and
- 28 (c) follow charter-granting policies and practices that are transparent, are based on merit, and avoid

1 conflicts of interest or any appearance of conflict.

2 (14) (a) The authorizer shall approve or deny the charter proposal within 60 days after the filing of a
3 charter proposal, except the commission has up to 120 days if more than three proposals have been submitted
4 to the commission within 30 days. The commission shall notify the applicant of the expected timeline for
5 approval or denial.

6 (b) The authorizer shall adopt by resolution all charter approval or denial decisions in an open
7 meeting of the authorizer's governing body.

8 (c) An approval decision may include, if appropriate, reasonable conditions that the applicant must
9 meet before a charter contract may be executed pursuant to [section 10].

10 (d) For any charter denial, the authorizer shall clearly state for the public record the reasons for
11 denial. A denied applicant may subsequently reapply to that authorizer or apply to any other authorizer in the
12 state.

13 (e) Within 10 days of taking action to approve or deny a charter proposal, the authorizer shall report
14 its decision to the commission. The authorizer shall provide a copy of the report to the applicant at the same
15 time that the report is submitted to the commission. The report must include a copy of the resolution of the
16 authorizer's governing body setting forth the action taken and reasons for the decision and providing
17 assurances of compliance with all of the procedural requirements and proposal elements set forth in this
18 section.

19 (15) An applicant may submit a proposal for a particular public charter school to only one authorizer at
20 a time.

21
22 **NEW SECTION. Section 10. Charter contract -- terms.** (1) An initial charter must be granted for a
23 term of 5 operating years, commencing on the public charter school's first day of operation. An approved public
24 charter school may delay its opening for 1 school year to plan and prepare for the school's opening. If the
25 school requires an opening delay of more than 1 school year, the school shall request an extension from its
26 authorizer. The authorizer may grant or deny the extension depending on the particular school's circumstances.

27 (2) Within 45 days of approval of a charter proposal, the authorizer and the governing board of the
28 approved public charter school shall execute a charter contract that clearly sets forth the academic and

1 operational performance expectations and measures by which the public charter school will be judged and the
2 administrative relationship between the authorizer and the public charter school, including each party's rights
3 and duties.

4 (3) The performance provisions may be refined or amended by mutual agreement after the public
5 charter school is operating and has collected baseline achievement data for its enrolled students.

6 (4) The charter contract for a virtual public charter school must include a description and agreement
7 regarding the methods by which the school will:

8 (a) monitor and verify full-time student enrollment, student participation in a full course load, credit
9 accrual, and course completion;

10 (b) monitor and verify student progress and performance in each course through regular, proctored
11 assessments and submissions of coursework; and

12 (c) conduct parent-teacher conferences.

13 (5) The charter contract must be signed by the president of the authorizer's governing body and the
14 president of the public charter school's governing board. Within 10 days of executing a charter contract, the
15 authorizer shall submit to the commission written notification of the charter contract execution, including a copy
16 of the executed charter contract and any attachments.

17 (6) A public charter school may not commence operations without a charter contract executed in
18 accordance with this section and approved in an open meeting of the authorizer's governing body.

19 (7) Authorizers may establish reasonable preopening requirements or conditions to monitor the
20 startup progress of a newly approved public charter school to ensure that the school is prepared to open
21 smoothly on the date agreed and to ensure that each school meets all building, health, safety, insurance, and
22 other legal requirements for school opening.

23
24 **NEW SECTION. Section 11. Enrollment.** (1) (a) A public charter school must be open to any student
25 residing in the state.

26 (b) A school district may not require a student enrolled in the school district to attend a public charter
27 school.

28 (c) A public charter school may limit admission to students within a given age group or grade level.

1 (d) A public charter school may be organized for a special emphasis, theme, or concept as stated in
2 the school's proposal.

3 (e) A public charter school shall enroll all students who wish to attend the school unless the number of
4 students exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building.

5 (f) If capacity is insufficient to enroll all students who wish to attend the school, the public charter
6 school shall select students through a lottery.

7 (2) A noncharter public school converting to a public charter school shall adopt and maintain a policy
8 giving enrollment preference to students who reside within the former attendance area of that public school.

9 (3) (a) A public charter school shall give enrollment preference to students who were enrolled in the
10 public charter school the previous school year and to siblings of students already enrolled in the public charter
11 school. An enrollment preference for returning students excludes those students from entering into a lottery.

12 (b) A public charter school may give enrollment preference to children of a public charter school's
13 governing board and full-time employees, limited to no more than 10% of the school's total student population.

14 (4) This section does not preclude the formation of a public charter school for the purpose of serving
15 students with disabilities, students of the same gender, students who pose a sufficiently severe disciplinary
16 problem to warrant a specific educational program, or students who are at risk of academic failure. If capacity is
17 insufficient to enroll all students who wish to attend a school, the public charter school shall select students
18 through a lottery.

19 (5) If a student who was previously enrolled in a public charter school enrolls in any other public
20 school in this state, the student's new school shall accept credits earned by the student in courses or
21 instructional programs at the public charter school.

22 (6) A school district shall provide or publicize to parents and the general public information about
23 public charter schools as an enrollment option within the district to the same extent and through the same
24 means that the district provides and publicizes information about noncharter public schools in the district.

25 (7) An authorizer may not restrict the number of students a public charter school may enroll. The
26 capacity of the public charter school must be determined annually by its governing board in conjunction with the
27 authorizer and in consideration of the public charter school's ability to facilitate the academic success of its
28 students, to achieve the objectives specified in the charter contract, and to ensure that its student enrollment

1 does not exceed the capacity of its facility or site.

2

3 **NEW SECTION. Section 12. Charter school performance and renewal.** (1) The performance
4 provisions within the charter contract must be based on a performance framework that clearly sets forth the
5 academic and operational performance indicators, measures, and metrics that will guide the authorizer's
6 evaluations of each public charter school. The performance framework must include indicators, measures, and
7 metrics for, at a minimum:

8 (a) student academic proficiency;

9 (b) student academic growth;

10 (c) achievement gaps in both proficiency and growth between major student subgroups;

11 (d) attendance;

12 (e) recurrent enrollment from year to year;

13 (f) postsecondary readiness;

14 (g) financial performance and sustainability; and

15 (h) governing board performance and stewardship, including compliance with all applicable laws,
16 regulations, and terms of the charter contract.

17 (2) Each public charter school, in conjunction with its authorizer, shall set annual performance targets
18 designed to help each school meet applicable federal, state, and authorizer expectations.

19 (3) (a) The contract performance framework must allow the inclusion, with the authorizer's approval,
20 of additional rigorous, valid, and reliable indicators proposed by a public charter school to augment external
21 evaluations of its performance that are consistent with the purposes of [sections 1 through 17].

22 (b) The authorizer shall collect and analyze data from each public charter school it oversees in
23 accordance with the performance framework.

24 (c) Multiple schools operating under a single charter contract or overseen by a single governing board
25 shall report their performance as separate, individual schools, and each school must be held independently
26 accountable for its performance.

27 (4) (a) An authorizer shall monitor the performance and legal compliance of the public charter
28 schools it oversees, including collecting and analyzing data to support ongoing evaluation according to the

1 charter contract. Every authorizer has the authority to conduct or require oversight activities that do not unduly
2 inhibit the autonomy granted to public charter schools but that enable the authorizer to fulfill its responsibilities
3 under [sections 1 through 17], including conducting appropriate inquiries and investigations consistent with the
4 intent of [sections 1 through 17], and to adhere to the terms of the charter contract.

5 (b) Each authorizer shall annually publish and provide as part of its annual report to the commission a
6 performance report for each public charter school it oversees, within the performance framework set forth in the
7 charter contract and [section 10]. The authorizer may require each public charter school it oversees to submit
8 an annual report to assist the authorizer in gathering complete information about each school, consistent with
9 the performance framework.

10 (c) In the event that a public charter school's performance or legal compliance appears unsatisfactory,
11 the authorizer shall promptly notify the public charter school of the perceived problem and provide reasonable
12 opportunity for the school to remedy the problem.

13 (d) An authorizer may take appropriate corrective action or exercise sanctions short of revocation in
14 response to apparent deficiencies in public charter school performance or legal compliance. The action or
15 sanctions may include, if warranted, requiring a public charter school to develop and execute a corrective action
16 plan within a specified timeframe.

17 (5) (a) A charter may be renewed for successive 5-year terms, although the authorizer may vary the
18 term based on the performance, demonstrated capacities, and particular circumstances of each public charter
19 school. An authorizer may grant renewal with specific conditions for necessary improvement to a public charter
20 school.

21 (b) No later than June 30 of each year, the authorizer shall issue a public charter school performance
22 report and charter renewal application guide to any public charter school whose charter will expire the following
23 year. The performance report must summarize the public charter school's performance record to date, based
24 on the data required by [sections 1 through 17] and the charter contract, and must provide notice of any
25 weaknesses or concerns perceived by the authorizer concerning the public charter school that may jeopardize
26 renewal if not promptly rectified. The public charter school shall respond to the performance report and submit
27 any corrections or clarifications within 90 days.

28 (6) The renewal application guide must, at a minimum, provide an opportunity for the public charter

1 school to:

2 (a) present additional evidence, beyond the data contained in the performance report, supporting its
3 case for charter renewal;

4 (b) describe improvements undertaken or planned for the public charter school; and

5 (c) detail the public charter school's plans for the next charter term.

6 (7) The renewal application guide must include or refer explicitly to the criteria that will guide the
7 authorizer's renewal decisions, based on the performance framework set forth in the charter contract and
8 consistent with [sections 1 through 17].

9 (8) (a) No later than February 1 of each year, the governing board of a public charter school seeking
10 renewal shall submit a renewal application to the charter authorizer pursuant to the renewal application guide
11 issued by the authorizer. The authorizer shall rule by resolution on the renewal application no later than 30 days
12 after the filing of the renewal application.

13 (b) Every authorizer shall, when considering charter renewal:

14 (i) base its decision on evidence of the school's performance over the term of the charter contract in
15 accordance with the performance framework set forth in the charter contract;

16 (ii) ensure that the data used in making renewal decisions is available to the school and the public; and

17 (iii) provide a public report summarizing the basis for each decision.

18
19 **NEW SECTION. Section 13. Charter contract revocation and school closure or charter contract**

20 **nonrenewal.** (1) A charter contract may be subject to nonrenewal or revocation if the authorizer determines
21 that the public charter school:

22 (a) committed a material and substantial violation of any of the terms, conditions, standards, or
23 procedures required under [sections 1 through 17] or the charter contract and from which the public charter
24 school was not exempted;

25 (b) failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward the performance expectations set forth in the
26 charter contract;

27 (c) failed to meet public safety standards; or

28 (d) failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.

- 1 (2) An authorizer shall develop revocation and nonrenewal processes that:
- 2 (a) provide the charter holders with timely notification of the prospect of revocation or nonrenewal and
- 3 of the reasons for the possible closure;
- 4 (b) allow the charter holders a reasonable amount of time in which to prepare a response;
- 5 (c) provide the charter holders an opportunity to submit documents and testimony at a hearing to
- 6 challenge the rationale for the closure recommendation and in support of the continuation of the school;
- 7 (d) allow the charter holders to be represented by counsel and call witnesses on their behalf;
- 8 (e) permit the recording of the proceedings; and
- 9 (f) provide for a final determination conveyed in writing to the charter holders.
- 10 (3) If an authorizer revokes or denies renewal of a charter, the authorizer shall clearly state, by
- 11 resolution of its governing body, the reasons for the revocation or nonrenewal.
- 12 (4) Within 10 days of taking action to renew, not renew, or revoke a charter, the authorizer shall report
- 13 to the commission the action taken and at the same time shall provide a copy of the report to the public charter
- 14 school. The report must include a copy of the resolution of the authorizer's governing body setting forth the
- 15 action taken and reasons for the decision and providing assurances of compliance with all the requirements set
- 16 forth in [sections 1 through 17]. The authorizer's decision is appealable to the commission in writing within 30
- 17 days of the commission's receipt of the authorizer's report.
- 18 (5) (a) Prior to a public charter school closure, an authorizer shall develop a public charter school
- 19 closure protocol to ensure timely notification to parents, orderly transition of students and student records to
- 20 new schools, and proper disposition of school funds, property, and assets in accordance with the requirements
- 21 of [sections 1 through 17]. The protocol must specify responsible parties, transition and closure timelines, and a
- 22 delineation of the respective duties of the public charter school and the authorizer.
- 23 (b) The authorizer shall oversee the closure and work with the closing public charter school to ensure
- 24 a smooth and orderly closure and transition for students and parents.
- 25 (c) In the event of a public charter school closure for any reason, the nonrestricted distributable
- 26 assets of the public charter school must be distributed first to satisfy outstanding payroll obligations for
- 27 employees of the public charter school, then to creditors of the public charter school, then to public school
- 28 districts to which students previously attending the closed charter school are returning on a prorated per-pupil

1 basis, and then to the state general fund. If the assets of the public charter school are insufficient to pay all
2 obligations, the prioritization of the distribution of assets may be determined by a court of law.

3 (d) If a closing public charter school was converted from an existing noncharter public school, the
4 closing public charter school is not responsible for any financial obligation or debt of the previously existing
5 noncharter public school unless the public charter school assumed the debt or obligation at the time of
6 conversion.

7 (6) Transfer of a charter contract, and of oversight of that public charter school from one authorizer to
8 another before the expiration of the charter term, may occur only if the authorizer violates the provisions of
9 [section 6] or by special petition to the commission by a public charter school or its authorizer. The commission
10 shall consider a petition for transfer on a case-by-case basis and may grant transfer requests in response to
11 special circumstances and to evidence that the transfer would serve the best interests of the public charter
12 school's students.

13

14 **NEW SECTION. Section 14. Public charter school operation and autonomy.** (1) (a) A public
15 charter school must be a nonprofit education organization.

16 (b) A public charter school is subject to all federal laws and authorities as provided in [sections 1
17 through 17] or arranged by charter contract with the public charter school's authorizer consistent with applicable
18 laws, rules, and regulations.

19 (c) Except as provided in [sections 1 through 17], a public charter school is not subject to the
20 provisions of Title 20 or any state or local rule, regulation, policy, or procedure relating to noncharter public
21 schools within an applicable local school district.

22 (d) A single governing board may hold one or more charter contracts. A charter contract may consist
23 of one or more schools, to the extent approved by the authorizer and consistent with applicable law. Each
24 public charter school that is part of a charter contract is separate and distinct from any other public charter
25 school.

26 (e) The initial governing board of a public charter school shall ensure an elected governing board is in
27 place within 12 months of the school commencing operations. The governing board must be elected by a
28 process outlined in the charter school bylaws. The election process must include the following:

1 (i) parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school shall nominate candidates for the
2 governing board;

3 (ii) if the number of nominees is equal to the number of vacancies, no election is required;

4 (iii) if the number of nominees is greater than the number of vacancies, the election must be decided
5 by the qualified electors of the district as part of the next regular school election; and

6 (iv) the terms of board members must be staggered to ensure continuity on the governing board.

7 (2) A public charter school may not be created within the geographical boundaries of a third-class
8 elementary district, as described in 20-6-201, or a third-class high school district, as described in 20-6-301,
9 unless:

10 (a) the public charter school is being converted from an existing public school;

11 (b) the school district elects to establish a public charter school;

12 (c) the school district elects to convert a grade or grades to a public charter school from an existing
13 school;

14 (d) the public charter school is a tribal charter school; or

15 (e) the public charter school is a virtual public charter school.

16 (3) A public charter school shall function as a local educational agency. A public charter school is
17 responsible for meeting the requirements of a local educational agency under applicable federal, state, and
18 local laws, including those relating to special education.

19 (4) A public charter school is primarily responsible for special education at the school, including
20 identification and service provisions, and is responsible for meeting the needs of enrolled students with
21 disabilities. If a student's individualized education program team determines that a student's needs are so
22 profound that they cannot be met in the public charter school and that the public charter school cannot provide
23 a free, appropriate public education to that student, the student's district of residence shall place the student in
24 a more appropriate setting.

25 (5) A public charter school has all the powers necessary for carrying out the terms of its charter
26 contract, including the following powers:

27 (a) to receive and disburse funds for school purposes;

28 (b) to secure appropriate insurance and to enter into contracts and leases, free from prevailing wage

1 laws;

2 (c) to contract with an education service provider for the management and operation of the public
3 charter school only if the school's governing board retains oversight authority over the school;

4 (d) to incur debt in reasonable anticipation of the receipt of public or private funds;

5 (e) to pledge, assign, or encumber its assets to be used as collateral for loans or extensions of credit;

6 (f) to solicit and accept gifts or grants for school purposes subject to applicable laws and the terms of
7 its charter contract;

8 (g) to acquire real property, for use as its facility or facilities, from public or private sources; and

9 (h) to sue and be sued in its own name.

10 (6) (a) A public charter school may not engage in any sectarian practices in its educational program,
11 admissions policies, employment policies or practices, or operations.

12 (b) The powers, obligations, and responsibilities set forth in the charter contract may not be delegated
13 or assigned by either party except as otherwise specifically provided in [sections 1 through 17].

14 (7) (a) A public charter school is subject to the same civil rights, health, and safety requirements
15 applicable to other public schools in the state except as otherwise specifically provided in [sections 1 through
16 17].

17 (b) The governing board shall establish graduation requirements and may award degrees and issue
18 diplomas.

19 (c) A governing board is subject to and shall comply with state open meeting and public records laws
20 pursuant to Title 2, chapters 3 and 6.

21 (d) A public charter school shall establish purchasing procedures that include a competitive bidding
22 process for purchases or contracts exceeding \$80,000.

23 (8) (a) Public charter school teachers are exempt from state teacher certification requirements
24 provided in 20-4-101.

25 (b) Employees in public charter schools have the same rights and privileges as other public school
26 employees except as otherwise provided in [sections 1 through 17].

27 (c) Teachers and other school personnel, as well as governing board trustees, are subject to criminal
28 history record checks and fingerprinting requirements.

1 (d) Public charter school employees may not be required to be members of any existing collective
2 bargaining agreement between a school district and its employees. However, a public charter school may not
3 interfere with laws and other applicable rules protecting the rights of employees to organize and to be free from
4 discrimination.

5
6 **NEW SECTION. Section 15. Funding of public charter schools.** (1) It is the intent of the legislature
7 that:

8 (a) a public charter school receive funding on a per-pupil basis that is equitable with the per-pupil
9 spending of a student's resident school district;

10 (b) a public charter school be budgeted along with other schools in the located school district; and

11 (c) funds generated for a public charter school be accounted for separately as described in this
12 section.

13 (2) If a district that consists of only one school desires to convert to a public charter school, this
14 section does not apply and the district funding formula under Title 20 applies. The district shall transfer funds to
15 the governing board of the public charter school that maintains the operational and programmatic autonomy
16 described in [sections 1 through 17].

17 (3) A public charter school may not charge tuition pursuant to 20-5-323 and may charge only fees that
18 may be imposed by noncharter public schools in the state.

19 (4) A student enrolled in a public charter school must be included in the resident school district's ANB
20 count.

21 (5) The county treasurer of the county in which a public charter school is located shall establish an
22 account for the public charter school separate from the accounts of the located school district.

23 (6) The county treasurer of a county in which a nonresident student resides shall by the first day of
24 each month from September through June of the school fiscal year transfer from the general fund account of
25 the nonresident student's resident school district an amount equal to 10% of the student amount to the county
26 treasurer of the county in which the charter school the student attends is located.

27 (7) For budgeting purposes, a public charter school must be considered a separate budget unit of the
28 located school district and must have its ANB calculated separately from the other schools in the district and

1 receive a basic entitlement calculated separately from the other schools in the district, except that a virtual
2 public charter school receives no basic entitlement.

3 (8) A public charter school is funded as follows:

4 (a) The county treasurer shall transfer to the public charter school's account from the located school
5 district's general fund account by the fifth day of each month from September through June of the school fiscal
6 year an amount equal to the sum of 10% of:

7 (i) the charter school's basic entitlement amount unless it is a virtual public charter school; and

8 (ii) the student amount for the located school district multiplied by the number of full-time resident
9 students enrolled in the public charter school.

10 (b) In addition to the amounts transferred in subsection (8)(a), the county treasurer shall by the fifth
11 day of each month from September through June of the school fiscal year transfer to the public charter school's
12 account any nonresident student amount transferred from the county treasurer of a county in which a
13 nonresident student resides as provided in subsection (6).

14 (9) A public charter school may expend funds according to its charter contract and is not subject to
15 budget restrictions under Title 20, chapter 9.

16 (10) A public charter school may obligate the public charter school to indebtedness and is solely
17 responsible for those debts. A public charter school is not responsible for any debt service obligations that exist
18 in the school district in which the public charter school is located.

19 (11) Nothing in [sections 1 through 17] may be construed to prohibit any person or organization from
20 providing funding or other assistance for the establishment or operation of a public charter school. The
21 governing board of a public charter school is authorized to accept gifts or donations of any kind made to the
22 public charter school and to expend or use the gifts or donations in accordance with the conditions prescribed
23 by the donor. A gift or donation may not be accepted if the gift or donation is subject to a condition that is
24 contrary to any provision of law or term of the charter contract.

25 (12) Money received by a public charter school from any source and remaining in the public charter
26 school's accounts at the end of a budget year must remain in the public charter school's accounts for use by the
27 public charter school in subsequent years.

28 (13) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

1 (a) "Located school district" means the school district in which a charter school is located.

2 (b) "Nonresident student" means a student attending a charter school who is not a resident of the
3 located school district.

4 (c) "Resident student" means a student attending a charter school who is a resident of the located
5 school district.

6 (d) "Student amount" means the dollar amount equal to the adopted general fund budget of a
7 student's resident school district minus any basic entitlement amounts then divided by the number of pupils on
8 which that budget was based.

9

10 **NEW SECTION. Section 16. Public charter school access to district facilities and land.** (1) A
11 public charter school has a right of first refusal to purchase or lease at or below fair market value a closed
12 public school facility or property or an unused portion of a public school facility or property located in a school
13 district from which the public charter school draws its students.

14 (2) A public charter school may negotiate and contract at or below fair market value with a school
15 district, the governing body of a college or university or community college, or any other public entity or for-profit
16 or nonprofit private entity for the use of a facility for a school building.

17

18 **NEW SECTION. Section 17. Public charter school account.** (1) There is a special revenue account
19 to be known as the public charter school account administered by the commission. The purpose of the account
20 is the receipt and expenditure of gifts, grants, legacies, devises, and donations given specifically for the
21 creation and operation of the Montana public charter school system.

22 (2) All donations must be from a private source and may not be expended for any purpose other than
23 for the benefit of qualifying public charter schools as determined by the commission. A gift or donation made
24 directly to a public charter school or schools is not prohibited by this section.

25

26 **Section 18.** Section 15-6-201, MCA, is amended to read:

27 **"15-6-201. Governmental, charitable, and educational categories -- exempt property.** (1) The
28 following categories of property are exempt from taxation:

1 (a) except as provided in 15-24-1203, the property of:

2 (i) the United States, except:

3 (A) if congress passes legislation that allows the state to tax property owned by the federal
4 government or an agency created by congress; or

5 (B) as provided in 15-24-1103;

6 (ii) the state, counties, cities, towns, and school districts;

7 (iii) irrigation districts organized under the laws of Montana and not operated for gain or profit;

8 (iv) municipal corporations;

9 (v) public libraries;

10 (vi) rural fire districts and other entities providing fire protection under Title 7, chapter 33;

11 (vii) special districts created pursuant to Title 7, chapter 11, part 10; and

12 (viii) subject to subsection (2), federally recognized Indian tribes in the state if the property is located
13 entirely within the exterior boundaries of the reservation of the tribe that owns the property and the property is
14 used exclusively by the tribe for essential government services. Essential government services are tribal
15 government administration, fire, police, public health, education, recreation, sewer, water, pollution control,
16 public transit, and public parks and recreational facilities.

17 (b) buildings and furnishings in the buildings that are owned by a church and used for actual religious
18 worship or for residences of the clergy, not to exceed one residence for each member of the clergy, together
19 with the land that the buildings occupy and adjacent land reasonably necessary for convenient use of the
20 buildings, which must be identified in the application, and all land and improvements used for educational or
21 youth recreational activities if the facilities are generally available for use by the general public but may not
22 exceed 15 acres for a church or 1 acre for a clergy residence after subtracting any area required by zoning,
23 building codes, or subdivision requirements;

24 (c) land and improvements upon the land, not to exceed 15 acres, owned by a federally recognized
25 Indian tribe when the land has been set aside by tribal resolution and designated as sacred land to be used
26 exclusively for religious purposes;

27 (d) property owned and used exclusively for agricultural and horticultural societies not operated for
28 gain or profit;

1 (e) property, not to exceed 80 acres, which must be legally described in the application for the
2 exemption, used exclusively for educational purposes, including dormitories and food service buildings for the
3 use of students in attendance and other structures necessary for the operation and maintenance of an
4 educational institution that:

5 (i) is not operated for gain or profit;

6 (ii) has an attendance policy; and

7 (iii) has a definable curriculum with systematic instruction;

8 (f) property, of any acreage, owned by a tribal corporation created for the sole purpose of establishing
9 schools, colleges, and universities if the property meets the requirements of subsection (1)(e);

10 (g) property used exclusively for nonprofit health care facilities, as defined in 50-5-101, licensed by
11 the department of public health and human services and organized under Title 35, chapter 2 or 3. A health care
12 facility that is not licensed by the department of public health and human services and organized under Title 35,
13 chapter 2 or 3, is not exempt.

14 (h) property that is:

15 (i) (A) owned and held by an association or corporation organized under Title 35, chapter 2, 3, 20, or
16 21; or

17 (B) owned by a federally recognized Indian tribe within the state and set aside by tribal resolution; and

18 (ii) devoted exclusively to use in connection with a cemetery or cemeteries for which a permanent care
19 and improvement fund has been established as provided for in Title 35, chapter 20, part 3; and

20 (iii) not maintained and not operated for gain or profit;

21 (i) subject to subsection (2), property that is owned or property that is leased from a federal, state, or
22 local governmental entity by institutions of purely public charity if the property is directly used for purely public
23 charitable purposes;

24 (j) evidence of debt secured by mortgages of record upon real or personal property in the state of
25 Montana;

26 (k) public museums, art galleries, zoos, and observatories that are not operated for gain or profit;

27 (l) motor vehicles, land, fixtures, buildings, and improvements owned by a cooperative association or
28 nonprofit corporation organized to furnish potable water to its members or customers for uses other than the

1 irrigation of agricultural land;

2 (m) the right of entry that is a property right reserved in land or received by mesne conveyance
3 (exclusive of leasehold interests), devise, or succession to enter land with a surface title that is held by another
4 to explore, prospect, or dig for oil, gas, coal, or minerals;

5 (n) (i) property that is owned and used by a corporation or association organized and operated
6 exclusively for the care of persons with developmental disabilities, persons with mental illness, or persons with
7 physical or mental impairments that constitute or result in substantial impediments to employment and that is
8 not operated for gain or profit; and

9 (ii) subject to subsection (2)(e), property that is owned and used by an organization owning and
10 operating facilities that are for the care of the retired, aged, or chronically ill and that are not operated for gain or
11 profit;

12 (o) property owned by a nonprofit corporation that is organized to provide facilities primarily for
13 training and practice for or competition in international sports and athletic events and that is not held or used for
14 private or corporate gain or profit. For purposes of this subsection (1)(o), "nonprofit corporation" means an
15 organization that is exempt from taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code and incorporated
16 and admitted under the Montana Nonprofit Corporation Act.

17 (p) property rented or leased to a municipality or taxing unit for less than \$100 a year and that is used
18 for public park, recreation, or landscape beautification purposes. For the purposes of this subsection (1)(p),
19 "property" includes land but does not include buildings. The exemption must be applied for by the municipality
20 or taxing unit, and not more than 10 acres within the municipality or taxing unit may be exempted.

21 (q) property leased, owned, or used by a public charter school established pursuant to [sections 1
22 through 17].

23 (2) (a) (i) For the purposes of tribal property under subsection (1)(a)(viii), the property subject to
24 exemption may not be:

25 (A) operated for gain or profit;

26 (B) held under contract to operate, lease, or sell by a taxable individual;

27 (C) used or possessed exclusively by a taxable individual or entity; or

28 (D) held by a tribal corporation except for educational purposes as provided in subsection (1)(f).

1 (ii) For the purposes of parks and recreational facilities under subsection (1)(a)(viii), the property must
2 be:

3 (A) set aside by tribal resolution and designated as park land, not to exceed 640 acres, or be
4 designated as a recreational facility; and

5 (B) open to the general public.

6 (b) For the purposes of subsection (1)(b), the term "clergy" means, as recognized under the federal
7 Internal Revenue Code:

8 (i) an ordained minister, priest, or rabbi;

9 (ii) a commissioned or licensed minister of a church or church denomination that ordains ministers if
10 the person has the authority to perform substantially all the religious duties of the church or denomination;

11 (iii) a member of a religious order who has taken a vow of poverty; or

12 (iv) a Christian Science practitioner.

13 (c) For the purposes of subsection (1)(i):

14 (i) the term "institutions of purely public charity" includes any organization that meets the following
15 requirements:

16 (A) The organization offers its charitable goods or services to persons without regard to race, religion,
17 creed, or gender and qualifies as a tax-exempt organization under the provisions of section 501(c)(3), Internal
18 Revenue Code, as amended.

19 (B) The organization accomplishes its activities through absolute gratuity or grants. However, the
20 organization may solicit or raise funds by the sale of merchandise, memberships, or tickets to public
21 performances or entertainment or by other similar types of fundraising activities.

22 (ii) agricultural property owned by a purely public charity is not exempt if the agricultural property is
23 used by the charity to produce unrelated business taxable income as that term is defined in section 512 of the
24 Internal Revenue Code, 26 U.S.C. 512. A public charity claiming an exemption for agricultural property shall file
25 annually with the department a copy of its federal tax return reporting any unrelated business taxable income
26 received by the charity during the tax year, together with a statement indicating whether the exempt property
27 was used to generate any unrelated business taxable income.

28 (iii) up to 15 acres of property owned by a purely public charity is exempt at the time of its purchase

1 even if the property must be improved before it can directly be used for its intended charitable purpose. If the
2 property is not directly used for the charitable purpose within 8 years of receiving an exemption under this
3 section or if the property is sold or transferred before it entered direct charitable use, the exemption is revoked
4 and the property is taxable. In addition to taxes due for the first year that the property becomes taxable, the
5 owner of the property shall pay an amount equal to the amount of the tax due that year times the number of
6 years that the property was tax-exempt under this section. The amount due is a lien upon the property and
7 when collected must be distributed by the treasurer to funds and accounts in the same ratio as property tax
8 collected on the property is distributed. At the time the exemption is granted, the department shall file a notice
9 with the clerk and recorder in the county in which the property is located. The notice must indicate that an
10 exemption pursuant to this section has been granted. The notice must describe the penalty for default under
11 this section and must specify that a default under this section will create a lien on the property by operation of
12 law. The notice must be on a form prescribed by the department.

13 (iv) not more than 160 acres may be exempted by a purely public charity under any exemption
14 originally applied for after December 31, 2004. An application for exemption under this section must contain a
15 legal description of the property for which the exemption is requested.

16 (d) For the purposes of subsection (1)(k), the term "public museums, art galleries, zoos, and
17 observatories" means governmental entities or nonprofit organizations whose principal purpose is to hold
18 property for public display or for use as a museum, art gallery, zoo, or observatory. The exempt property
19 includes all real and personal property owned by the public museum, art gallery, zoo, or observatory that is
20 reasonably necessary for use in connection with the public display or observatory use. Unless the property is
21 leased for a profit to a governmental entity or nonprofit organization by an individual or for-profit organization,
22 real and personal property owned by other persons is exempt if it is:

23 (i) actually used by the governmental entity or nonprofit organization as a part of its public display;
24 (ii) held for future display; or
25 (iii) used to house or store a public display.

26 (e) For the purposes of facilities for the care of the retired, aged, or chronically ill under subsection
27 (1)(n)(ii), the terms "retired" and "aged" mean an individual who satisfies the age and gross household income
28 limitations of 15-30-2338. The property owner shall verify age and gross household income requirements on a

1 form prescribed by the department. Applicants are subject to the false swearing penalties established in 45-7-
2 202."

3

4 **Section 19.** Section 20-1-101, MCA, is amended to read:

5 **"20-1-101. Definitions.** As used in this title, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the
6 following definitions apply:

7 (1) "Accreditation standards" means the body of administrative rules governing standards such as:

8 (a) school leadership;

9 (b) educational opportunity;

10 (c) academic requirements;

11 (d) program area standards;

12 (e) content and performance standards;

13 (f) school facilities and records;

14 (g) student assessment; and

15 (h) general provisions.

16 (2) "Aggregate hours" means the hours of pupil instruction for which a school course or program is
17 offered or for which a pupil is enrolled.

18 (3) "Agricultural experiment station" means the agricultural experiment station established at Montana
19 state university-Bozeman.

20 (4) "At-risk student" means any student who is affected by environmental conditions that negatively
21 impact the student's educational performance or threaten a student's likelihood of promotion or graduation.

22 (5) "Average number belonging" or "ANB" means the average number of regularly enrolled, full-time
23 pupils physically attending or receiving educational services at an offsite instructional setting from the public
24 schools of a district.

25 (6) "Board of public education" means the board created by Article X, section 9, subsection (3), of the
26 Montana constitution and 2-15-1507.

27 (7) "Board of regents" means the board of regents of higher education created by Article X, section 9,
28 subsection (2), of the Montana constitution and 2-15-1505.

1 (8) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of higher education created by Article X, section 9,
2 subsection (2), of the Montana constitution and 2-15-1506.

3 (9) "County superintendent" means the county government official who is the school officer of the
4 county.

5 (10) "District superintendent" means a person who holds a valid class 3 Montana teacher certificate
6 with a superintendent's endorsement that has been issued by the superintendent of public instruction under the
7 provisions of this title and the policies adopted by the board of public education and who has been employed by
8 a district as a district superintendent.

9 (11) (a) "Educational program" means a set of educational offerings designed to meet the program
10 area standards contained in the accreditation standards.

11 (b) The term does not include an educational program or programs used in 20-4-121 and 20-25-803.

12 (12) "K-12 career and vocational/technical education" means organized educational activities that have
13 been approved by the office of public instruction and that:

14 (a) offer a sequence of courses that provide a pupil with the academic and technical knowledge and
15 skills that the pupil needs to prepare for further education and for careers in the current or emerging
16 employment sectors; and

17 (b) include competency-based applied learning that contributes to the academic knowledge, higher-
18 order reasoning and problem-solving skills, work attitudes, general employability skills, technical skills, and
19 occupation-specific skills of the pupil.

20 (13) (a) "Minimum aggregate hours" means the minimum hours of pupil instruction that must be
21 conducted during the school fiscal year in accordance with 20-1-301 and includes passing time between
22 classes.

23 (b) The term does not include lunch time and periods of unstructured recess.

24 (14) "Offsite instructional setting" means an instructional setting at a location, separate from a main
25 school site, where a school district provides for the delivery of instruction to a student who is enrolled in the
26 district.

27 (15) "Principal" means a person who holds a valid class 3 Montana teacher certificate with an
28 applicable principal's endorsement that has been issued by the superintendent of public instruction under the

1 provisions of this title and the policies adopted by the board of public education and who has been employed by
2 a district as a principal. For the purposes of this title, any reference to a teacher must be construed as including
3 a principal.

4 ~~(16)~~ (17) "Public charter school" has the meaning provided in [section 3].

5 ~~(16)~~(17) "Pupil" means a child who is 5 years of age or older on or before September 10 of the year in
6 which the child is to enroll or has been enrolled by special permission of the board of trustees under 20-5-
7 101(3) but who has not yet reached 19 years of age and who is enrolled in a school established and maintained
8 under the laws of the state at public expense. For purposes of calculating the average number belonging
9 pursuant to 20-9-311, the definition of pupil includes a person who has not yet reached 19 years of age by
10 September 10 of the year and is enrolled under 20-5-101(3) in a school established and maintained under the
11 laws of the state at public expense.

12 ~~(17)~~(18) "Pupil instruction" means the conduct of organized instruction of pupils enrolled in public
13 schools while under the supervision of a teacher.

14 ~~(18)~~(19) "Qualified and effective teacher or administrator" means an educator who is licensed and
15 endorsed in the areas in which the educator teaches, specializes, or serves in an administrative capacity as
16 established by the board of public education.

17 ~~(19)~~(20) "Regents" means the board of regents of higher education.

18 ~~(20)~~(21) "Regular school election" or "trustee election" means the election for school board members
19 held on the day established in 20-20-105(1).

20 ~~(21)~~(22) "School election" means a regular school election or any election conducted by a district or
21 community college district for authorizing taxation, authorizing the issuance of bonds by an elementary, high
22 school, or K-12 district, or accepting or rejecting any proposition that may be presented to the electorate for
23 decision in accordance with the provisions of this title.

24 ~~(22)~~(23) "School food services" means a service of providing food for the pupils of a district on a
25 nonprofit basis and includes any food service financially assisted through funds or commodities provided by the
26 United States government.

27 ~~(23)~~(24) "Special school election" means an election held on a day other than the day of the regular
28 school election, primary election, or general election.

1 ~~(24)~~(25) "State board of education" means the board composed of the board of public education and
2 the board of regents as specified in Article X, section 9, subsection (1), of the Montana constitution.

3 ~~(25)~~(26) "State university" means Montana state university-Bozeman.

4 ~~(26)~~(27) "Student with limited English proficiency" means any student:

5 (a) (i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than
6 English;

7 (ii) who is an American Indian and who comes from an environment in which a language other than
8 English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English proficiency; or

9 (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an
10 environment in which a language other than English is dominant; and

11 (b) whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be
12 sufficient to deny the student:

13 (i) the ability to meet the state's proficiency assessments;

14 (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or

15 (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.

16 ~~(27)~~(28) "Superintendent of public instruction" means that state government official designated as a
17 member of the executive branch by the Montana constitution.

18 ~~(28)~~(29) "System" means the Montana university system.

19 ~~(29)~~(30) "Teacher" means a person, except a district superintendent, who holds a valid Montana
20 teacher certificate that has been issued by the superintendent of public instruction under the provisions of this
21 title and the policies adopted by the board of public education and who is employed by a district as a member of
22 its instructional, supervisory, or administrative staff. This definition of a teacher includes a person for whom an
23 emergency authorization of employment has been issued under the provisions of 20-4-111.

24 ~~(30)~~(31) "Textbook" means a book or manual used as a principal source of study material for a given
25 class or group of students.

26 ~~(31)~~(32) "Textbook dealer" means a party, company, corporation, or other organization selling, offering
27 to sell, or offering for adoption textbooks to districts in the state.

28 ~~(32)~~(33) "Trustees" means the governing board of a district.

1 ~~(33)~~(34) "University" means the university of Montana-Missoula.

2 ~~(34)~~(35) "Vocational-technical education" means vocational-technical education of vocational-technical
3 students that is conducted by a unit of the Montana university system, a community college, or a tribally
4 controlled community college, as designated by the board of regents."

5

6 **Section 20.** Section 20-4-101, MCA, is amended to read:

7 **"20-4-101. System and definitions of teacher and specialist certification -- student teacher**

8 **exception.** (1) In order to establish a uniform system of quality education and to ensure the maintenance of
9 professional standards, a system of teacher and specialist certification must be established and maintained
10 under the provisions of this title and a person may not be permitted to teach in the public schools of the state
11 until the person has obtained a teacher or specialist certificate or the district has obtained an emergency
12 authorization of employment from the state. This requirement does not apply to a teacher in a public charter
13 school as provided in [section 14].

14 (2) As used in this part, "teacher or specialist certificate" means a certificate issued or applied for
15 under 20-4-106. The term "teacher or specialist" refers to a person certified under 20-4-106.

16 (3) The certification requirement does not apply to a student teacher who is a student enrolled in an
17 institution of higher learning approved by the board of regents of higher education for teacher training and who
18 is jointly assigned by the institution of higher learning and the governing board of a district or a public institution
19 to perform practice teaching in a nonsalaried status under the direction of a regularly employed and certificated
20 teacher.

21 (4) A student teacher, while serving a nonsalaried internship under the supervision of a certificated
22 teacher, must be accorded the same protection of the laws as that accorded a certificated teacher and shall,
23 while acting as a student teacher, comply with all rules of the governing board of the district or public institution
24 and the applicable provisions of 20-4-301 relating to the duties of teachers."

25

26 **Section 21.** Section 20-5-323, MCA, is amended to read:

27 **"20-5-323. Tuition and transportation rates.** (1) Except as provided in subsections (2) through (5),
28 whenever a child has approval to attend a school outside of the child's district of residence under the provisions

1 of 20-5-320 or 20-5-321, the rate of tuition charged for a Montana resident student may not exceed 20% of the
2 per-ANB maximum rate established in 20-9-306 for the year of attendance.

3 (2) The tuition for a child with a disability must be determined under rules adopted by the
4 superintendent of public instruction for the calculation of tuition for special education pupils.

5 (3) The tuition rate for out-of-district placement pursuant to 20-5-321(1)(d) and (1)(e) for a student
6 without disabilities who requires a program with costs that exceed the average district costs must be
7 determined as the actual individual costs of providing that program according to the following:

8 (a) the district of attendance and the district, person, or entity responsible for the tuition payments
9 shall approve an agreement with the district of attendance for the tuition cost;

10 (b) for a Montana resident student, 80% of the maximum per-ANB rate established in 20-9-306,
11 received in the year for which the tuition charges are calculated, must be subtracted from the per-student
12 program costs for a Montana resident student; and

13 (c) the maximum tuition rate paid to a district under this section may not exceed \$2,500 per ANB.

14 (4) When a child attends a public school of another state or province, the amount of daily tuition may
15 not be greater than the average annual cost for each student in the child's district of residence. This calculation
16 for tuition purposes is determined by totaling all of the expenditures for all of the district budgeted funds for the
17 preceding school fiscal year and dividing that amount by the October 1 enrollment in the preceding school fiscal
18 year. For the purposes of this subsection, the following do not apply:

19 (a) placement of a child with a disability pursuant to Title 20, chapter 7, part 4;

20 (b) placement made in a state or province with a reciprocal tuition agreement pursuant to 20-5-314;

21 (c) an order issued under Title 40, chapter 4, part 2; or

22 (d) out-of-state placement by a state agency.

23 (5) When a child is placed by a state agency in an out-of-state residential facility, the state agency
24 making the placement is responsible for the education costs resulting from the placement.

25 (6) The amount, if any, charged for transportation may not exceed the lesser of the average
26 transportation cost for each student in the child's district of residence or 35 cents a mile. The average
27 expenditures for the district transportation fund for the preceding school fiscal year must be calculated by
28 dividing the transportation fund expenditures by the October 1 enrollment for the preceding fiscal year.

1 (7) The provisions of this section do not apply to a public charter school established under [sections 1
2 through 17]."

3

4 **Section 22.** Section 61-3-321, MCA, is amended to read:

5 **"61-3-321. Registration fees of vehicles and vessels -- certain vehicles exempt from**

6 **registration fees -- disposition of fees -- definition.** (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section,

7 registration fees must be paid upon registration or, if applicable, renewal of registration of motor vehicles,

8 snowmobiles, watercraft, trailers, semitrailers, and pole trailers as provided in subsections (2) through (20).

9 (2) (a) Except as provided in subsection (2)(b), unless a light vehicle is permanently registered under

10 61-3-562, the annual registration fee for light vehicles, trucks, and buses that weigh 1 ton or less and for

11 logging trucks that weigh 1 ton or less is as follows:

12 (i) if the vehicle is 4 or less years old, \$217;

13 (ii) if the vehicle is 5 through 10 years old, \$87; and

14 (iii) if the vehicle is 11 or more years old, \$28.

15 (b) For a light vehicle with a manufacturer's suggested retail price of more than \$150,000 that is 10

16 years old or less, the annual registration fee is the amount provided for in subsection (2)(a) plus \$825.

17 (3) (a) Except as provided in subsections (3)(b) and (15), the one-time registration fee based on the

18 declared weight of a trailer, semitrailer, or pole trailer is as follows:

19 (i) if the declared weight is less than 6,000 pounds, \$61.25; or

20 (ii) if the declared weight is 6,000 pounds or more, \$148.25.

21 (b) For a trailer, semitrailer, or pole trailer that is registered under 61-3-701, the annual registration

22 fee based on the declared weight is as follows:

23 (i) if the declared weight is less than 6,000 pounds, \$30; or

24 (ii) if the declared weight is 6,000 pounds or more, \$60.

25 (4) Except as provided in subsection (15), the one-time registration fee for motor vehicles owned and

26 operated solely as collector's items pursuant to 61-3-411, based on the weight of the vehicle, is as follows:

27 (a) 2,850 pounds and over, \$10; and

28 (b) under 2,850 pounds, \$5.

1 (5) (a) Except as provided in subsections (5)(b) and (15), the one-time registration fee for off-highway
2 vehicles other than a quadricycle or motorcycle is \$61.25.

3 (b) Whenever a valid summer motorized recreation trail pass issued pursuant to 23-2-111 is affixed to
4 an off-highway vehicle other than a quadricycle or motorcycle, the one-time registration fee is \$41.25.

5 (6) The annual registration fee for heavy trucks, buses, and logging trucks in excess of 1 ton is
6 \$22.75.

7 (7) (a) Except as provided in subsection (7)(c), the annual registration fee for a motor home, based
8 on the age of the motor home, is as follows:

9 (i) less than 2 years old, \$282.50;

10 (ii) 2 years old and less than 5 years old, \$224.25;

11 (iii) 5 years old and less than 8 years old, \$132.50; and

12 (iv) 8 years old and older, \$97.50.

13 (b) The owner of a motor home that is 11 years old or older and that is subject to the registration fee
14 under this section may permanently register the motor home upon payment of:

15 (i) a one-time registration fee of \$237.50;

16 (ii) unless a new set of license plates is being issued, an insurance verification fee of \$5, which must
17 be deposited in the account established under 61-6-158;

18 (iii) if applicable, five times the renewal fees for personalized license plates under 61-3-406; and

19 (iv) if applicable, the donation fee for a generic specialty license plate under 61-3-480 or a collegiate
20 license plate under 61-3-465.

21 (c) For a motor home with a manufacturer's suggested retail price of more than \$300,000 that is 10
22 years old or less, the annual registration fee is the amount provided in subsection (7)(a) plus \$800.

23 (8) (a) (i) Except as provided in subsections (8)(b), (8)(c), and (15), the one-time registration fee for
24 motorcycles and quadricycles registered for use on the public highways is \$53.25, the one-time registration fee
25 for motorcycles and quadricycles registered for off-highway use is \$53.25, and the one-time registration fee for
26 motorcycles and quadricycles registered for both off-road use and for use on the public highways is \$114.50.

27 (ii) An additional fee of \$16 must be collected for the registration of each motorcycle or quadricycle as
28 a safety fee, which must be deposited in the state motorcycle safety account provided for in 20-25-1002.

1 (b) (i) The annual registration fee for motorcycles and quadricycles registered for use on the public
2 highways under 61-3-701 is \$44.

3 (ii) The annual registration fee for motorcycles and quadricycles registered for off-highway use under
4 61-3-701 is \$44.

5 (iii) The annual registration fee for motorcycles and quadricycles registered for both off-road use and
6 for use on the public highways under 61-3-701 is \$88.

7 (iv) An additional safety fee of \$7 must be collected annually for each motorcycle or quadricycle
8 registered under 61-3-701. The safety fee must be deposited in the state motorcycle safety account provided
9 for in 20-25-1002.

10 (c) Whenever a valid summer motorized recreation trail pass issued pursuant to 23-2-111 is affixed to
11 a motorcycle or quadricycle, the one-time registration fee for motorcycles and quadricycles registered for:

12 (i) use on the public highways is \$33.25; and

13 (ii) both off-road use and for use on the public highways is \$94.50.

14 (9) Except as provided in subsection (15), the one-time registration fee for travel trailers, based on the
15 length of the travel trailer, is as follows:

16 (a) under 16 feet in length, \$72; and

17 (b) 16 feet in length or longer, \$152.

18 (10) Except as provided in subsection (15), the one-time registration fee for a motorboat, sailboat,
19 personal watercraft, or motorized pontoon required to be numbered under 23-2-512 is as follows:

20 (a) for a personal watercraft or a motorboat, sailboat, or motorized pontoon less than 16 feet in length,
21 \$65.50;

22 (b) for a motorboat, sailboat, or motorized pontoon at least 16 feet in length but less than 19 feet in
23 length, \$125.50; and

24 (c) for a motorboat, sailboat, or motorized pontoon 19 feet in length or longer, \$295.50.

25 (11) (a) Except as provided in subsections (11)(b), (11)(c), and (15), the one-time registration fee for a
26 snowmobile is \$60.50.

27 (b) Whenever a valid snowmobile trail pass issued pursuant to 23-2-636 is affixed to a snowmobile,
28 the one-time registration fee is \$40.50.

1 (c) (i) A snowmobile that is licensed by a Montana business and is owned exclusively for the purpose
2 of daily rental to customers is assessed:

3 (A) a fee of \$40.50 in the first year of registration; and

4 (B) if the business reregisters the snowmobile for a second year, a fee of \$20.

5 (ii) If the business reregisters the snowmobile for a third year, the snowmobile must be permanently
6 registered and the business is assessed the registration fee imposed in subsection (11)(a).

7 (12) (a) The one-time registration fee for a low-speed electric vehicle is \$25.

8 (b) The one-time registration fee for a golf cart that is owned by a person who has or is applying for a
9 low-speed restricted driver's license is \$25.

10 (c) The one-time registration fee for golf carts authorized to operate on certain public streets and
11 highways pursuant to 61-8-391 is \$25. Upon receipt of the fee, the department shall issue the owner a decal,
12 which must be displayed visibly on the golf cart.

13 (13) (a) Except as provided in subsection (13)(b), a fee of \$10 must be collected when a new set of
14 standard license plates, a new single standard license plate, or a replacement set of special license plates
15 required under 61-3-332 is issued. The \$10 fee imposed under this subsection does not apply when previously
16 issued license plates are transferred under 61-3-335. All registration fees imposed under this section must be
17 paid if the vehicle to which the plates are transferred is not currently registered.

18 (b) An additional fee of \$15 must be collected if a vehicle owner elects to keep the same license plate
19 number from license plates issued before January 1, 2010, when replacement of those plates is required under
20 61-3-332(3).

21 (c) The fees imposed in this subsection (13) must be deposited in the account established under 61-
22 6-158, except that \$2 of the fee imposed in subsection (13)(a) must be deposited in the state general fund.

23 (14) The provisions of this part with respect to the payment of registration fees do not apply to and are
24 not binding upon motor vehicles, trailers, semitrailers, snowmobiles, watercraft, or tractors owned or controlled
25 by the United States of America or any state, county, city, or special district, as defined in 18-8-202, or to a
26 vehicle or vessel that meets the description of property exempt from taxation under 15-6-201(1)(a), (1)(d),
27 (1)(e), (1)(g), (1)(h), (1)(i), (1)(k), (1)(l), (1)(n), ~~or (1)(o), or (1)(q)~~, 15-6-203, or 15-6-215, except as provided in
28 61-3-520.

1 (15) Whenever ownership of a trailer, semitrailer, pole trailer, off-highway vehicle, motorcycle,
2 quadricycle, travel trailer, motor home, motorboat, sailboat, personal watercraft, motorized pontoon,
3 snowmobile, motor vehicle owned and operated solely as a collector's item pursuant to 61-3-411, or low-speed
4 electric vehicle is transferred, the new owner shall title and register the vehicle or vessel as required by this
5 chapter and pay the fees imposed under this section.

6 (16) A person eligible for a waiver under 61-3-460 is exempt from the fees required under this section.

7 (17) Except as otherwise provided in this section, revenue collected under this section must be
8 deposited in the state general fund.

9 (18) The fees imposed by subsections (2) through (12) are not required to be paid by a dealer for the
10 enumerated vehicles or vessels that constitute inventory of the dealership.

11 (19) (a) Unless a person exercises the option in either subsection (19)(b) or (19)(c), an additional fee
12 of \$9 must be collected for each light vehicle registered under this part. This fee must be accounted for and
13 transmitted separately from the registration fee. Of the \$9 fee:

14 (i) \$6.74 must be deposited in the state special revenue account established in 23-1-105 and used for
15 state parks;

16 (ii) 50 cents must be deposited in an account in the state special revenue fund to the credit of the
17 department of fish, wildlife, and parks and used for fishing access sites;

18 (iii) \$1.37 must be deposited in the trails and recreation facilities state special revenue account
19 established in 23-2-108; and

20 (iv) 39 cents must be deposited in the Montana heritage preservation and development account
21 established in 22-3-1004 and used for the operation of state-owned facilities at Virginia City and Nevada City.

22 (b) A person who registers a light vehicle may, at the time of annual registration, certify that the
23 person does not intend to use the vehicle to visit state parks and fishing access sites and may make a written
24 election not to pay the additional \$9 fee provided for in subsection (19)(a). If a written election is made, the fee
25 may not be collected.

26 (c) (i) A person who registers one or more light vehicles may, at the time of annual registration, certify
27 that the person does not intend to use any of the vehicles to visit state parks and fishing access sites and may
28 make a written election not to pay the additional \$9 fee provided for in subsection (19)(a). If a written election is

1 made, the fee may not be collected at any subsequent annual registration unless the person makes the written
2 election to pay the additional fee on one or more of the light vehicles.

3 (ii) The written election not to pay the additional fee on a light vehicle expires if the vehicle is registered
4 to a different person.

5 (20) For each light vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, pole trailer, heavy truck, motor home, motorcycle,
6 quadricycle, and travel trailer subject to a registration fee under this section, an additional fee of \$10 must be
7 collected and forwarded to the state for deposit in the account established in 44-1-504.

8 (21) (a) If a person exercises the option in subsection (21)(b), an additional fee of \$5 must be
9 collected for each light vehicle registered under this part. This fee must be accounted for and transmitted
10 separately from the registration fee. The fee must be deposited in an account in the state special revenue fund.
11 Funds in the account are statutorily appropriated, as provided in 17-7-502, to the department of transportation
12 and must be allocated as provided in 60-3-309.

13 (b) A person who registers one or more light vehicles may, at the time of annual registration, make a
14 written or electronic election to pay the additional \$5 fee provided for in subsection (21)(a).

15 (22) This section does not apply to a motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, or pole trailer that is governed
16 by 61-3-721.

17 (23) (a) The \$800 and \$825 amounts collected based on the manufacturer's suggested retail price in
18 subsections (2) and (7) are exempt from the provisions of 15-1-122 and must be deposited in the motor vehicle
19 division administration account established in 61-3-112.

20 (b) By August 15 of each year, beginning in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019, the department of
21 justice shall deposit into the general fund an amount equal to the fiscal yearend balance minus 25% of the
22 current fiscal year appropriation for the account established in 61-3-112.

23 (24) For the purposes of this section, "manufacturer's suggested retail price" means the price
24 suggested by a manufacturer for each given type, style, or model of a light vehicle or motor home produced and
25 first made available for retail sale by the manufacturer."
26

27 **Section 23.** Section 61-10-214, MCA, is amended to read:

28 **"61-10-214. Exemptions.** (1) Motor vehicles operating exclusively for transportation of persons for

1 hire within the limits of incorporated cities or towns and within 15 miles from the limits are exempt from this part.

2 (2) Motor vehicles brought or driven into Montana by a nonresident, migratory, bona fide agricultural
3 worker temporarily employed in agricultural work in this state when those motor vehicles are used exclusively
4 for transportation of agricultural workers are exempt from this part.

5 (3) Vehicles lawfully displaying a dealer's or wholesaler's plate as provided in 61-4-102 and 61-4-125
6 are exempt from this part for a period not to exceed 7 days when moving to or from a dealer's or wholesaler's
7 place of business when unloaded or loaded with dealer's or wholesaler's property only or while being
8 demonstrated in the course of the dealer's or wholesaler's business. Vehicles being demonstrated may not be
9 leased, rented, or operated for compensation by the licensed dealer or wholesaler.

10 (4) Vehicles exempt from property tax under 15-6-201(1)(a), (1)(d), (1)(e), (1)(g), (1)(h), (1)(i), (1)(k),
11 (1)(l), (1)(n), ~~or (1)(o), or (1)(q)~~ or 15-6-228(4) are exempt from this part. The department of transportation may
12 require documentation of tax-exempt status from the department of revenue before granting this exemption."
13

14 **NEW SECTION. Section 24. Public charter school exemption.** A public charter school established
15 under [sections 1 through 17] is exempt from the provisions of Title 20 except as explicitly set forth in [sections
16 1 through 17].
17

18 **NEW SECTION. Section 25. Appropriation.** There is appropriated \$75,000 from the general fund to
19 the state public charter commission for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021, as a one-time appropriation to
20 commence operations, hire staff qualified to execute day-to-day operations, and approve authorizers for the
21 establishment of charter schools.
22

23 **NEW SECTION. Section 26. Notification to tribal governments.** The secretary of state shall send a
24 copy of [this act] to each federally recognized tribal government in Montana.
25

26 **NEW SECTION. Section 27. Codification instruction.** (1) [Sections 1 through 17] are intended to
27 be codified as an integral part of Title 20, and the provisions of Title 20 apply to [sections 1 through 17].

28 (2) [Section 24] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 20, chapter 1, part 2, and the

1 provisions of Title 20, chapter 1, part 2, apply to [section 24].

2
3 **NEW SECTION. Section 28. Nonseverability.** It is the intent of the legislature that each part of [this
4 act] is essentially dependent upon every other part, and if one part is held unconstitutional or invalid, all other
5 parts are invalid.

6
7 **NEW SECTION. Section 29. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2021.

8
9 **NEW SECTION. Section 30. Applicability.** A public charter school established under [sections 1
10 through 17] may not open or operate until July 1, 2022.

11 - END -