

3/6/23 |

88 Responses

**45 Charter School Administrators | 29 Board Director | 8 Charter Parent/Employee | 6 Other Community Member**

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1. The IPCSC's mission is to cultivate exemplary charter schools. Achieving this mission is realistic in light of the agency's size and resources.

Average Score: 3.5

2. The decisions made by the IPCSC's governing body (the commission) demonstrate an understanding that the agency serves the public.

Average Score: 3.6

3. The IPCSC protects each school's autonomy to make decisions at the school board level.

Average Score: 3.9

4. The IPCSC holds each school accountable to the terms and metrics of the school's performance certificate.

Average Score: 3.9

5. The IPCSC's policies are clear.

Average Score: 3.5

6. The IPCSC's expectations for school performance are clear.

Average Score: 3.6

7. IPCSC staff are approachable and helpful.

Average Score: 3.7

8. Stakeholders have sufficient opportunity to provide feedback on matters of agency planning.

Average Score: 3.2

9. The IPCSC delivers valuable services and resources to schools.

Average Score: 3.5

10. Please list any additional resources you'd like to see the IPCSC provide.
  - It is always beneficial to help board members understand the difference between governance and supervision. These lines cannot be overstated or spoken of too often. Whatever resources you might have to help with this understanding would be most appreciated.

- Alternatives to state testing. More developmentally appropriate ways to assess charter schools. There are better alternatives
- Information for administrators new to IPCSC to develop understanding and identify resources.
- I would love to see expanded opportunities to get Just in Time training prior to key deadlines/activities.
- Love your support and diligence. Please keep filtering out the nonsense so that admin and teachers can influence students to optimal learning.
- If you are not a Bluum school there is not much help or services provided by IPCSC. We have never had an annual review that has been accurate and we haven't had to go to bat for ourselves in getting significant inaccuracies corrected, I have never heard a Bluum school complain about this - but I have heard of other non-Bluum schools complain about the same problem. IPCSC should provide support for charter school administrators with ways to hold their board members accountable to a set of ethics standards, similar to what all educators and admin are held to - this may be a bigger district/lea problem - but someone needs to start the conversation. As it is currently, board members can do awful things, and as long as they are breaking the law, there is no accountability for them. They can make poor decisions over and over again that impact the school greatly, they can harass, manipulate,
  - intimidate, and bully and there is no accountability.
- Another service that IPCSC should be providing is applying for and managing federal grants, not Bluum, as that would be a significant service. IPCSC should be going to bat for facility funding for charter schools. The presence of Bluum has created a has and has not culture within the charter school community. This is problematic for both the charter community, but also how the traditional districts view charter schools - as they judge them all as receiving these multi-million-dollar grants, but the reality is that is not the reality for a handful of charters. It is easy for IPCSC to turn its back and say, that is the charter's fault, but IPCSC had the ability to deny the charter. If they approved the charter and the school didn't have a health or legal contract in place, didn't have a curriculum in place for opening, etc. that is also on the IPCSC. What service is IPCSC providing to ensure these schools, that they approved, fix these problems As I see it, they are providing a punitive record, to cover themselves that they notified the school - but what are they doing to turn the school around? Every other state department entity works with the school to help find solutions, you can reach out and ask any agency anything and not feel that the information will be used against you - IPCSC it is the opposite, any information you provide WILL be used against you. I provided similar feedback last year and I felt that an effort had been made to improve relations, but in the end, I feel like I was manipulated.

Finally, another service that would be helpful is the development of a solution to bussing. Here is where I am coming from, the reality is that the bus driver shortage would be less of an issue if charter schools did not exist. I know this sounds like a bold statement to make, but what you have to realize is that there are areas of the Treasure Valley where 4-5 different districts/LEAs have buses that service the same neighborhoods/roads. Other cooperatives that would be helpful include a charter school driver's education cooperative. I do appreciate the following: employment opening notifications and notices of schools that have furniture that they want to rehome to other schools. Those are really the only services that I am aware of that the IPCSC currently provides.

- The PCSC does not provide consistency with their recommendations. Once a school follows a recommendation, the PCSC will twist around said recommendation and hold the school liable in their reporting.
- More hiring assistance for school leaders, greater advocacy at the state level for funding and against censorship and book banning.
- I don't even know what "resources" they provide if any at all. It feels like they're an oversight commission and if we're not doing our jobs as well as we should, I'm not aware of them providing resources, just reprimands. We are also often frustrated by the achievement metrics they create for our schools when we can't even replicate those or figure out how they got them. That's certainly not "transparent" or clear.
- A positive working relationship between the Charter School and the IPCSC staff is a critical piece for overall success to be had. The departure of Tamara Baysinger has dampened our relationship with the staff a bit. We hope to see that improve.
- potential opportunities for cooperative services with other charters or small districts. support to make connections maybe.
- Provide supportive services to improve schools
- Many of the so called "policies" that are supposedly part of "statute" actually aren't. Needs to provide measurements that are actually based on evidence of more than 1-2 years or that don't vary based on structure of a school. I have reviewed many of the charter renewals for current year and am shocked at some of the conditions for renewal that were imposed on the schools. As an MBA who has worked in schools, I can honestly state there is no basis for a lot of the conditions and unfortunately for the schools they don't feel they have an option to say no that they don't work. I have also talked with a few

schools and the annual reports and information coming for the commission constantly have errors.

- A set of charter school specific policies that pare down the unnecessary items loaded in the traditional public-school policies that are generally supported and provided.
- It is very difficult to contact IPCSC staff directly, by phone. It is a surprise when they answer the phone.
- An in-depth explanation in regards to how the calculations on the performance report are calculated and what measures we can use to gauge our progress in that area. Manual, training, etc. would be helpful.
- Commission staff that are forward thinking and in touch with the needs of the children of the State of Idaho. Staff who have not predetermined that certain applications will not be approved. Commission staff that serve applicants in a unbiased manner. Application evaluation that is consistent with State of Idaho law.
- We would like another "boot camp" for schools in operation for less than 3 years. We participated in one before opening but could use a refresher.
- We would love another "boot camp" training for new charter schools in operation for less than 3 years. We participated in one before opening but could use a refresher.
- Staff has huge bias against Virtual Charter Schools
- service oriented staff that are unbiased
- Trends of the surrounding community to facilitate the needs of education within the Charter sector. Help with creating an inviting climate that community members want to come to a Charter School.
- Public input on how to incorporate an increase of parent choice.
- It is always beneficial to help board members understand the difference between governance and supervision. These lines cannot be overstated or spoken of too often. Whatever resources you might have to help with this understanding would be most appreciated.
- I would like to see less politically driven scrutiny from staff and ask that they apply simple or straightforward criteria while evaluating a charter school application. There is little deference given to qualified board members, often with more experience in education than the entire staff. The application

process appeared to be constantly moving the goalposts. Frankly, the IPCSC staff are worse than they were five years to a decade ago. The executive director desperately needs to be replaced or she needs to brush up on customer service. I have no trust in her capabilities. She exemplifies the worst of bureaucrats.

- Fair!!!
- Honestly....I do not know much about the IPCSC. I am much more familiar with the ISBA
- While we appreciate real great changes made to the performance framework and metrics, there continues to be grey area on what type of data and calculation of data is being used, it is clear / accessible to the school or is it even appropriate. I would also like to see a change in Idaho code in which limits the PCSC at looking only at certain metrics like ISAT Proficiency/Cohort Grad Rate, many of which are not and have never been appropriate for at-risk and special populations. The attempt at Alternative measures are good ones but are not clear/transparent in terms of data sources and calculations. However, leaving Idaho code to only be focused on ESSA for PCSC Framework means schools that serve these populations are still being 'punished' for serving these populations instead of looking at other quality measures that highlight the work the schools do with these populations. There continues to be a philosophical split in terms of what PCSC's role is from the legislature, to the agency and to the general public. This needs to be addressed to avoid unnecessary controversy the role clear. Also, it does seem unfair that charters with for-profit EMO's are not accountable for finances the same way that independent charters are however, they do serve special population and serve a need/purpose. Perhaps there just needs to be an adjustment in the Financial measures so that accountability is unified/clear for everyone. Many in Idaho do not realize that Charters have really heavy accountability, some of which seems like overkill given they are already accountable as a public school.

11. Regarding opportunity to communicate with the IPCSC.

Average Score: 3.6

12. Regarding communication received from the IPCSC:

Average Score: 3.4

13. Regarding opportunity to network with other IPCSC schools:

Average Score: 3.8

14. Is there anything you think ought to be high priority for the IPCSC's continued improvement?

- Staffing up for the growth that is occurring to keep providing great support for current and future charters.
- Establish a "mom'sforliberty" chapter in Idaho
- Reasonable oversight rather than looking for reasons to criticize schools and mark them lower on performance reports.
- Continue to support keeping the media driven distractions away from school personnel.
- Everything I stated above, and the calculations on the annual evaluation need to be revisited because of changes in the law. Schools are penalized now for things that are out of their control. Let's keep the report focused on financial items that are the result of the schools' choices - the point of the report is to determine if the school is healthy. Additionally, Idaho charter schools are held to a MUCH higher accountability than ANY of Idaho's traditional districts. Districts have not required to have any cash on hand, but are encouraged to have 30-45 days of cash on hand when they are seeking bonds. IPCSC wants 60. Sadly, I think that the annual review needs revisiting again –
- Finding a way to treat all charter schools equal.
- Providing these "resources" that they speak of. Being more approachable and supportive instead of feeling more like rebuking and an unhappy boss.
- We have always been a staunch supporter of the IPCSC. Holding schools to a standard of accountability is the only way to have successful schools. It is too bad the traditional districts don't have our level of accountability.
- teacher and substitute teacher salary increase
- Increased collaboration with charter schools outside of the renewal process.
- Please see #3. There needs to be some significant changes. The commission is viewed as a bully.
- Connecting Strong Schools together.

- Last year, IPCSC tried to have a Charter Admin Zoom call to increase communication. The problem was that the charter schools had no input regarding the topic or time. To exaggerate to make the point, it was like: "If you want free speech, this is what you can talk about".
- Open communication with IPSCS members without the extraordinary efforts by IPSCS staff to stifle communication with publicly appointed commission members.
- You need to stop taking your personal opinion about politics out of how you govern.
- Review how staff recommendations are created and ensure spot checks are performed to ensure proper and fair processes are being applied across the board. It appeared during our effort to bring a fresh, new virtual charter to Idaho that there were an amazing amount of roadblocks thrown up to stop the effort, none of which I had seen in the past.
- Facilitate Governing Board and Leadership to collaborate and learn from each other. Share the good, bad and ugly to become more successful.
- information about upcoming board meetings, especially for a school who is on the agenda. A automatic notice of agenda would be helpful to charter school administrators so they know when their school is on the agenda for anything.
- Additional support for retaining teachers and grow your own leaders.
- Expansion of charter school opportunities and more assistance throughout the process than is offered today.
- I think there are charters (and many traditional public schools) who are not meeting basic expectations of academic success and financial solvency and should be looked at more closely. There might be other people, organizations or charters that could operate those schools with more fidelity and success. I would also like to see changes to the way charters are compared to local public schools. I don't think that automatically comparing a charter to the surrounding district should be the policy - especially if the charter draws its students from more than the surrounding district. That's a one size all fits approach and not what I expect from the Commission. We should all be working together to have effective schools that are enabling students to achieve at high levels. Charters often have very specific missions and approaches that often mean they don't look anything like the schools in the surrounding district. Charters should be compared to other similar schools (demographics, mission, approach etc). That said - any charter authorized by a district, should be judged against that district.

- Allowing parents to choose educational choice
- Include experienced charter school and/or traditional school executives/superintendents on the Commission and staff.
- Awareness and understanding of IPCSC
- More communication with the legislature so they understand the importance of charter schools.

15. Please provide any additional feedback you'd like to share.

- Thank you for your support. Staff is always friendly and available when needed.
- I want the IPCSC to still be around - I am just frustrated that Idaho Charter Schools in general have lost their way. The intention of charter schools in Idaho was to test new models of education and then push these models back into regular public education if they were successful. This occurred early on, but now we just have schools that multiply a bazillion times, for example, Gem Prep. I can see one replication to verify that the model replicates well, but once you have two campuses - the model should be offered out to traditional districts to implement in their schools. Idaho code specifically says that charters cannot form districts, yet we have charter groups that have "district offices" that manage all the various locations - how is this not violating Idaho code? Meanwhile, we have other models that national entities have said their model shows promise and other schools should take note - yet IPCSC staff and Bluum have made moves over and over to work against them. Thank you to the board member that made the point about a certain charter that is bucking the trend of performing better than their local district, yet they have significantly more low-SES students - this was a non-Bluum school and one that is rarely recognized.
- We would like the Commission to keep doing what they are doing. Hold schools accountable and better education.
- Given the issues raised by the new Attorney General regarding school board meetings, curriculum and related issues, it would be helpful for the Commission to take a stand supporting Charter Schools and their independent Boards.
- Jenn and her team are doing a great job.



- The Commission should initiate a formal, unbiased, review of its internal practices and provide review results to the legislature. The commission must provide for a "customer satisfaction survey" yearly which involves all stake holders.
- As a retired State Senator, I was appalled at the staff's very open bias towards virtual charter schools. Everything that was requested of our Board to get approved had been completed, yet more roadblocks kept being thrown up. It came to a point that the Board decided that until some MAJOR staff training or changes, we would never be successful... and THAT's not how this Commission is supposed to work, nor is it within their charter to tank virtual charter school efforts. Both Rep. Reed Demordaunt and I were disgusted at the feedback from the staffing effort that was taking place for the recommendation to the Commission. We've worked very hard during our careers in the Legislature to ensure all citizens and businesses have a level playing field for success. This process was by no means that. Sen. Marv Hagedorn
- Less govt intervention
- Revising some of the questions in the survey may be helpful. Some ask two different questions. Also, perhaps distinguishing between the IPCSC director, IPCSC staff, and IPCSC Commissioners would be helpful.