



The Helena Public Schools educate, engage, and empower each student to maximize his or her individual potential with the knowledge, skills and character essential to being a responsible citizen and life-long learner.

Board of Trustees – Facilities & Maintenance Committee Meeting

May Butler Center | 55 S. Rodney Ave
Monday September 9, 2019 – 12:00pm

MINUTES - APPROVED

ATTENDANCE

Terry Beaver, Committee Chair	John McEwen, Trustee
Jeff Hindoin, Committee Member	Sarah Sullivan, Trustee
Siobhan Hathhorn, <i>excused absence</i>	Tyler Ream, Superintendent
	Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
	Kalli Kind, Facilities Director

I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting was called to order at 12:03pm by Committee Chair, Terry Beaver.

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None was offered.

IV. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

A. Parameters for forthcoming Demographics Study

Dr. Ream said he had been unable to find an existing RFP for the previous demographics study, and Mr. Hindoin answered that since the expense was under the fiscal threshold required for an RFP, one may not have been sent. Ms. Kind offered additional details on the previous process by stating that the district had an agreement with Cropper for software updates each year showing the requested slices of data. She added that since she started with the district, the district has been able to see the same information from Edulog, but in real time. Mr. Beaver requested clarification that the information from Edulog only shows current students. Ms. Kind answered that was correct: Edulog is unable forecast data or estimate growth. Mr. Beaver asked if the district had access to current data to which it could compare the forecast from Cropper. Dr. Ream answered he could pull together that data during the October pull date.

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Dr. Ream continued that the previous study forecasted through 2020, and some elements extended through 2025. He noted while some areas of the study have been validated – specifically growth of young families in the north valley – some data has decreased in accuracy with time – such as the projected decline in enrollment at Smith, and a slight decline in age and sex demographics projected after 2020. He also mentioned that East Helena High School couldn't have been factored into the study. Dr. Ream asked if Cropper provided any kind of soft data, mentioning some concerns about the northeast valley being too far from Helena Middle School and Helena High School for families to see them as viable secondary options. He continued that if the next demographics study looks at birth rates, the district will assume children in that area will go to Warren, but he would be interested to know if that is the perception of residents and if the demographics study can include that type of information.

Mr. Beaver asked if students in the northeast valley are located within the Helena district and choose to go to East Helena, does the Helena district pay East Helena. Dr. Ream answered that parents pay East Helena for those students, and East Helena receives the ANB, but the Helena district maintains the tax base. Mr. Beaver asked if it would benefit the district to change the boundaries so those students would be in the East Helena district. Mr. Hindoin answered that a district never wants to lose its tax base. Mr. Beaver asked if Spokane Creek was in the East Helena district, and Ms. Ridgway answered yes. Dr. Ream added that transportation does go around the north side of East Helena to pick up students.

Dr. Ream noted that no housing information was used – or at least cited – in the previous study. He thought the study did look at overall real estate trends. Mr. Hindoin added that new construction plays a larger role, especially multi-family housing, but he wasn't sure how that could be measured in a study. Mr. McEwen asked whether Mountain View Estates families went to the East Helena schools. Mr. Hindoin answered that the elementary district boundaries were already drawn so those students would attend East Helena schools; the subdivision was just annexed into the city of Helena to access to the infrastructure. Mr. Beaver requested real estate trends – specifically for multi-family housing – be including in the next demographics study.

Mr. Hindoin asked if the district has looked at the data from the boundary change study conducted by Great Falls schools and Missoula schools. Ms. Kind added that Billings schools recently went through a demographics study, in which Cropper was involved. Mr. Hindoin continued that it might be beneficial to see their underlying data set. Dr. Ream asked if Great Falls and Missoula conducted the demographics study because they knew – and their community knew – that they were going to go through some redistricting. Mr. Hindoin answered that he thought the objective was clear. Ms. Ridgway mentioned that on the Great Falls website, there was an entire section dedicated to redistricting plan information. She added that Cropper did the study. Mr. Hindoin said that using previously established survey questions would also decrease lead time. Dr. Ream added that he thought the existing demographics report was well-built; the data is just no longer valid. He mentioned looking at how the trends from the last study have played out and what are the projections for the next six years. Mr. Beaver recommended including data from Montana City and Clancy as it affects the high school level. Dr. Ream noted that the previous study was primarily elementary focused. He added that one way to capture more high school data would be to look internally at where out of district high school students have historically come from.

Mr. Beaver mentioned another unmeasured aspect being enrollment in private schools, and that there would be potential for the Helena district to recruit those students. Ms. Ridgway mentioned the district can't offer the religious piece, which is the caveat of most local private schools. Mr. Beaver asked how the district could get data from students enrolled in private schools or being home schooled. Ms. Sullivan said that data would be available through the County Superintendent. Ms. Ridgway looked at the Helena Christian Academy's enrollment and verified 160 students were enrolled in the prek-12 school. She added that St. Andrew's has 187.

Mr. McEwen requested clarification that Dr. Ream said the 2016 demographic study is not useful anymore. Dr. Ream clarified that there are pieces that are useful; it's just helpful to have current data when making decisions affecting the future. He added that it's hard to tell the public the district is making decisions based on four years old data. Ms. Kind added that it would be beneficial to be able to share with the public what the district could expect with the addition of three new schools. Ms. Sullivan shared a few FAQs that should be presented to the public as a result of a new demographic study. She added that the district should have the new demographics data prior to asking for another bond.

B. Parameters for forthcoming Demographics Study

Dr. Ream clarified the next steps will be to look at the data from the Great Falls and Missoula studies and what processes were used. Mr. Hindoin confirmed, adding that the next study should focus on the high school level. Dr. Ream said that for the last bond, there was more focus on the status of the facilities needing to be replaced instead of looking at projected growth and demographics.

Dr. Ream recommended district leadership develop specs to send to the committee for approval.

Mr. Hindoin asked how Edulog pulled data – if it was pulling PowerSchool data. Ms. Kind answered that it was data that transportation used for routing buses that worked with PowerSchool. Mr. Hindoin asked if it included every student – not just the ones outside the two-mile radius around schools. Ms. Kind answered that it did. Mr. Hindoin said the district had to determine the purpose of the study and communicate it accordingly with the public. Dr. Ream added that there is some concern around Helena being designed to have two feeder schools and what happens if one falls significantly in enrollment if there's not a solution in place – the district can't use the historical structure any longer.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT/BOARD COMMENTS

None offered.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 12:42pm by Mr. Beaver. The next Facilities and Maintenance Committee meeting will be October 7, 2019.