



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 – Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting

May Butler Center | 55 S. Rodney Ave
Wednesday, September 11, 2019 – 12:00pm

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Sarah Sullivan, Committee Chair	Luke Muszkiewicz, Trustee
Libby Goldes, Committee Member	Terry Beaver, Trustee
Siobhan Hathhorn, Committee Member	Tyler Ream, Superintendent
	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
	Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
	Jane Shawn, Helena Education Association President

I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting was called to order at 12:03pm by Committee Chair, Sarah Sullivan.

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None was offered.

IV. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

A. Founding a Purpose Statement for Teaching and Learning Committee
Ms. Sullivan began by addressing the objectives of the meeting as: determining a purpose statement, deciding what to do with the committee, and determining a time to meet. She then provided background information on the committee, which was formed at the Board of Trustees Retreat on July 10, 2019 to monitor progress on the three of the strategic priorities pertaining to teaching and learning. Dr. Ream said the 2019-2020 strategic priorities have been designed as tools to show where the district would like to be and yearly evaluations on progress; goals for each year are determined by results from the last year. Ms. Goldes mentioned that certain priorities affect others, and each committee must work together to be successful.

Helena Public Schools Board of Trustees

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Ms. Sullivan next suggested developing a purpose statement. Dr. Ream added that the committee could determine who will be responsible for deliverables, what actions the district can take this year to move towards the priorities, and an evaluation for success. Ms. Sullivan added the committee should establish how to operationally determine goals and measures. Dr. Ream stressed the importance of incorporating social and emotional development into the measures, adding that if a student is struggling emotionally, there should be tiers of response in place similar to the academic responses. Ms. Sullivan drafted the purpose statement as follows: the purpose of the Teaching and Learning Committee is to operationalize our strategic priorities in regard to teaching and learning goals and measures. She asked if the purpose statement should include making recommendations to the board. Dr. Ream answered the committee will make recommendations as needed. He added the committee will provide data to help determine where the district should allocate resources. Mr. McKay emphasized the importance of being able to allocate resources. He addressed the idea of taking what a Helena citizen will look like in 2030 and determining how the district can allocate resources to get students there.

B. Strategic Priorities: Next Steps

Ms. Sullivan said the first step will be to ensure each student is engaged in learning opportunities that are authentic, meaningful, and relevant. Dr. Ream said educators want to know what the standards are and what concepts students must master, but they don't want someone to tell them what to do every step. They want to be able to tie curriculum to providing an education that is authentic, meaningful, and relevant. Ms. Sullivan asked how educators measure if reteaching is effective. Mr. McKay and Ms. Hathhorn answered with a few examples currently in place within schools. Dr. Ream added that on the scale of mastery, the focus for a long time has been to get to mastery and how to reach kids who haven't gotten to mastery. He said there have been questions recently on what to do for kids who have deep mastery of a skill. He said it's important to bring educators together to allow them to determine what is mastery, what to do for kids who aren't at mastery, and what to do for kids past mastery. Ms. Ridgway said that measurement would be easier at the elementary level, but more challenging the higher the grade. Ms. Hathhorn asked what the standardized percentile was for teachers. Mr. McKay answered that an 80% or higher standard is currently in place. He added that the national standards are higher than STAR, but that the district could set its own standards. Ms. Hathhorn suggested the committee compare Helena's standardized test scores with surrounding areas and asked for confirmation that the district is looking at more than just STAR. Mr. McKay answered that with STAR, teachers are good at dissecting the data. Dr. Ream said the district is continually looking for feedback on how it measures information as a system, and how to gauge forward progress. He added that success is defined as the rate of students achieving one year's growth in one year's time, and the district is trying to determine in STAR is providing that information. If not, the district and teachers would have to determine an alternative method of assessment.

C. Developing District Measures and Targets

Dr. Ream addressed the importance of measuring attendance and potentially dropout rates. He continued that Access to Success has 60 new students this year, and almost all of them are under the age of 18. Dr. Ream said that a school age child must drop out of school in order to enroll in Access to Success, so most of the attendees are Helena School District dropouts. Ms. Hathhorn asked if the district could consider them as a different dataset. Dr. Ream answered that the

district could, but the state would still report them as dropouts. Ms. Goldes asked how many of the Access to Success students start and finish the entire program, and Ms. Ridgway agreed to supply that information to the committee. Dr. Ream said the district does not collect ANB for Access to Success students, but the district could restructure the model to consider those kids students, which would pay for staffing costs. Dr. Ream said that in terms of measuring, the committee needs to ask: Are you at school? Are you connected to school? If the answers are no, statistically a student is going to struggle.

Dr. Ream said he would also like to see the district follow graduates to see if they are enrolled in a two-year program, four-year, military, career path, or floating a year after graduation – what graduates do as a result of their diploma. He added if that was something the committee wanted to look at, they would first need to establish a baseline.

Ms. Hathhorn asked what was being done to improve attendance. Dr. Ream answered that some teachers were doing home visits at the high school level, and schools have set goals for attendance. Mr. McKay continued that some attendance factors don't come from school, but that highlighting and working on attendance were priorities. Ms. Hathhorn mentioned the direct correlation between lower SBAC scores and poor school attendance. Dr. Ream said poverty is a significant factor in attendance, and in high school, if a student does not feel connected to the school, he/she will opt into any other environment. Ms. Goldes said a school's community space should be viewed as a place for supporting the community. She wondered if this could be a way to connect adults to the school and increase attendance. Ms. Sullivan said the committee should look at options for measuring student connectiveness. Dr. Ream said he would look at options and bring them to the next committee meeting. Ms. Hathhorn asked if the district could get this survey sent out by the end of the school year. Dr. Ream confirmed the district would if all the tools were in place. Ms. Sullivan said action items for the next meeting would be to look at options for surveys and to put together deliverables and goals. Dr. Ream added district administration would put together an external document explaining what the district priorities are – not a strategic plan, more of a "why." Ms. Hathhorn said that would be a good idea. Ms. Goldes suggested highlighting an administrator or teacher to personalize the document. Dr. Ream added the need for it to be a workable document.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT/BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Beaver expressed concern in terms of data measurement and analysis, saying there is not enough continuity in board members to develop studies and understand the data to be applied practically. He suggested tackling problems immediately recognizable, referencing specifically the Gifted and Talented program, problems at the middle school level, and technology classes not being utilized at the high schools. He said he didn't want the committee to become so nebulous that it became irrelevant. Ms. Sullivan said the committee could discuss if they wanted to address specific programs. Dr. Ream said he wanted to be sure the committee was addressing all 8,000 students, not just a small percentage.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 1:25pm by Ms. Sullivan. The next Teaching and Learning Committee meeting will be October 2, 2019.