



Superintendent
Tyler Ream, Ed. D
324-2001

Business Manager
Janelle Mickelson
324-2040

Board Work Session

Ray Bjork Learning Center
1600 8th Avenue, Helena, MT 59601

Tuesday January 28, 2020

3:30 p.m. Tour
4:00p.m. Meeting

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted

Luke Muszkiewicz, Board Chair
Terry Beaver, Board Vice Chair
Sarah Sullivan, Trustee
Jeff Hindoien, Trustee
Elizabeth “Libby” Goldes, Trustee
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee – Excused
Siobhan Hathhorn, Trustee
John McEwen, Trustee - Excused

Dr. Tyler Ream, Superintendent
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Stacy Collette, Human Resources Administrator
Sean Morrison, Special Education Administrator
Sean Maharg, Special Education Administrator
Joslyn Davidson, Administrator
Pat Boles, Technology Administrator
Kalli Kind, Director of Support Services
Jane Shawn, Helena Education Association President
Tim McMahon, Activities Administrator

Guests:

Erin Maxwell, RBLC Principal

Ray Bjork Learning Center Staff

Todd Watkins

Lisa Cordingly, Helena Education Foundation

Brian Cummings, Jim Darcy Elementary Principal

Mike Tolin, Staff Member

Doug Baker, Rossiter Elementary Principal

John Stilson, Central Elementary Principal

Steve Thennis, HHS Principal

Dave Thennis, CR Anderson Principal

Deb Jacobsen, Hawthorne Elementary Principal

Trish Klock, Bryant Elementary Principal

Lisa Lowney, Kessler Elementary Principal

Jill Nyman, Smith Elementary Principal

Craig Crawford, Access to Success

Tia Wilkins, Warren Elementary Principal

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Luke Muszkiewicz called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes at this time.

III. PRESENTATION

A. Ray Bjork Learning Center

Principal Erin Maxwell, accompanied by her staff, presented information related to Ray Bjork Learning Center (RBLC) who is made up of 4 Special Education Teachers, 1 General Education Teacher, 7 Special Education Paraprofessionals, 3.7 Speech/Language Pathologists, .2 Occupational Therapist, .2 Physical Therapist, .5 School Psychologist, 1 CSCT Therapist, 1 CSCT BI, Trailhead PreK and K staff to include 1 Special Education Teacher, and 3 Special Education Paraprofessionals. Support Staff including; 1.5 janitorial staff members, 1.5 chefs, and 1 Secretary. The PEAK gifted and talented program at RBLC is composed of 3.5 Full Time Employees.

The mission of RBLC is directly in line with Helena Public School District to challenge and empower each student to maximize individual potential and become a competent, productive, responsible, caring citizen.

RBLC staff talked about the screening process for PEAK and Gifted and Talented Services district wide. Students with three areas of exceptionality in the standardized testing categories and/or staff delivered categories are identified for services. Any

student not identified through the initial screening process, but who warrants a closer look, can proceed to the referral process for further investigation.

Gifted Education range in a variety of interventions across the different grade levels. Grades 3-5 have one partial day of gifted curriculum delivery at RBLC where they experience interdisciplinary, authentic, and apprentice-style learning experiences. Grades 6-8 have twice-weekly gatherings that happen during zero, lunch and advisor periods. They also have monthly 2-day seminars that are offered offsite with authentic and expert-led experiences. Grades 9-12 have weekly gatherings that are evening meetings at RBLC. They also attend multi-day symposia and have college opportunities.

PEAK has a great parent involvement with focused discussions, expertise sharing with job shadowing, speaker series, GT resource library, and leadership conferences.

RBLC preschool has 16 age 3 students, 46 age 4 students, and 20 age 5 students attending, currently. These children are found through special education with child find, family outreach, head start, transfer, and parent referral. They are also found through general education with head start partnerships and applications.

RBLC serves their students in using a creative curriculum. They use second step social emotional curriculum, zoo phonics, handwriting without tears, and Heggerty literacy curriculum.

RBLC currently serves 135 students ages 3, 4, 5 with speech-language impairments or delays. All head start students are screened. The services provided at RMDC is speech-language only students that parents bring weekly to sessions. RBLC is special education and grant preschool classrooms. Head Start classrooms: RMDC with 3, RBLC with 3, HHA with 1, Bryant with 1 and the valley site with 1.

RBLC has family engagement with fall fest, parent/teacher conferences, winter program, Ray Bjork Spring Carnival, the end of year BBQ, and Helena Early Learning Partnership – preschool parent group. RBLC is also partnered with several partnerships for 2019-2020 school year.

The Board Chair, Luke Muszkiewicz and Sarah Sullivan commended the staff of Ray Bjork Learning Center pointing out that this is the first work session that RBLC has had in years. The board pointed out their appreciation for Ray Bjork Learning Center staff for all that they do, as sometimes these vital jobs go unnoticed.

IV. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Item for Action:

1. Approval of 2020-2021 School Year Calendar

Josh McKay presented the calendar to the Board of Trustees

Motion: Libby Goldes moved to approve the 2020-2021 School Calendar.

Sarah Sullivan seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None

Vote: 6-0 The motion carried

B. Consent Items:

1. Board of Trustees Work Session – November 19, 2019 Minutes

2. Resolution to Dispose of Personal Property – Technology Surplus

Motion: Sarah Sullivan moved to approve the Consent Action Items.

Libby Goldes seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None

Vote: 6-0 The motion carried.

C. Items for Information:

1. Multi-Year Budget Projection

Dr. Tyler Ream introduced Todd Watkins, with Todd Watkins Consulting Services, LLC, to give the presentation about the district's multi-year budget projection. Mr. Watkins thanked everyone for being here, giving the bottom-line up front that the revenue stream of the district isn't keeping up with the expenditures.

Mr. Watkins pulled data from the district business office for the 19-20 fiscal year as well as projected financial data for the 20-24 fiscal years as it pertains to the Elementary and High School General Fund. The data pulled was wage information from Helena Educational Association (HEA) – licensed teachers, counselors, and librarians, secretaries, administrators, independent staff, paraprofessionals, and custodians.

The financial data that is presented will be in three primary areas including; wage costs by employee units, wage/benefit costs as a function, projected general fund budgets for five years.

Based upon the wage data provided, the increase from 19-20 to 20-21 is anticipated to be approximately \$456,256 of which \$377,650 pertains to the Elementary District and \$78,596 is related to the High School District.

For 2019-20 the percentage for the Elementary General Fund wage/benefit to total budget was 92% while the High School General Fund wage/benefit to total budget is 87%. Statistical information provided by American School and University's annual report on best practices indicate the level of wage/benefit expense to total budget should be approximately 85-90%.

Funding driven off of enrollment are made based upon the District's analysis of current enrollment within the District. Funding estimates from the state of Montana indicate 1.29% to 1.6% of projected inflation increases over the time period. Increases above inflation are dependent upon the current economy of the State of Montana. The district is using the "highest budget without a vote" which provides funding without an additional local levy being requested.

The projected wage cost increase from 2019-20 to 20-21 is \$456,256. The projected wage increase trend each year thereafter will approximate \$1.1 million. The Elementary share of the annual increase for each year thereafter is anticipated at \$569,198 while the High School share is at \$310,686.

The District can anticipate that the wage and benefit increase from 19-20 to 2023-24 will exceed the estimated annual budget increase without a vote. Mr. Watkins recommend that the District review and consider the following; After implementing the ERI (early retirement incentive) the District should carefully consider to either not replace the retiring teacher or replace the retiring teacher at the minimum salary schedule level so as to maximize savings. The District should strongly consider not replacing support staff that resign or retire. The District should provide step only increases for 2020-21 and beyond to comply with bargaining unit and legal requirements until such time that either enrollment increases consistently and/or increases in State funding provides sufficient revenue that keeps pace with expenditures. The District needs to develop an alternative salary schedule for Certified Staff that is more affordable over the next 3-5 years. Analyze student teacher ratios and other staffing ratios to determine if staffing is adequate, overstaffed or understaffed according to Montana accreditation standards. Analyze custodial and maintenance staffing based upon square footage of facilities being maintained. American School and University provides an annual report of best practices in this area. The District should also carefully consider and review all other elements of the annual operating budget that could cause the projected deficit to increase in size. For example, energy cost increases, increases in material costs for instructional, library, guidance, and special services, increased O&M costs such as cleaning materials, cleaning equipment, and contract services. Review the rated capacity of each elementary and middle school and determine if each facility is being used to its rated capacity (example; are all classrooms being utilized). Consider using a Program Review Committee consisting of Board members, Administrators, Teachers, Support Staff, Consultants, and Community members to educate everyone on the finances and program costs in your District. This can be a difficult process but well worth the effort should you need to implement budget reductions and/or request voter approval for additional levies to support the programs of the District.

Consider presenting voter approved levies that are available to the District to fund Safety and Security personnel, and Technology personnel via the Building Reserve and Technology Funds of the District. Administration and Board consult with local legislators about funding alternatives for Montana Public Schools as property tax fatigue is very predominant throughout the State and has become the primary funding source for Schools, Cities and Counties.

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz commended Mr. Watkins on his hard work with Ms. Mickelson and Ms. Collette. Mr. Muszkiewicz appreciated the recommendations made by Mr. Watkins and is thankful for the relationship that has been built. Mr. Watkins is a great resource for the Helena School District.

Trustee Sarah Sullivan asked if there were any structural problems found within the budget. Mr. Watkins explained that the funding system is a problem, but not the formula. The deficit disappears in 2023-24 due to enrollment increase, inflationary increase, and you stop losing students to East Helena.

While there aren't any projected levies in the projected budget plan, Ms. Mickelson said that she could get that information after Trustee Jeff Hindoien inquired about levies.

Trustee Terry Beaver asked if plugging our teachers into the salary schedule of another district would help fix the problem. Ms. Stacy Collette explained that she did not have the answer for that, while Mr. Watkins explained that it could possible help and it could show what is causing the budget issues, however, it is hard tell given the uniqueness of Helena Public Schools.

Mr. Watkins also explained that there will be staff loss with loss of students district wide.

VI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Tyler Ream had nothing more to add, but commended Ms. Janelle Mickelson, Ms. Stacey Collette, and Mr. Todd Watkins for their hard work in putting the budget projection together.

VII. BOARD COMMENTS

None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other topics for future meetings and no public comment on issues not on the agenda, the meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m. by Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz. The

next Regular Board Meeting will be held on February 11, 2020. The next Board Work Session will be held Kessler Elementary School on February 25, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Luke Muszkiewicz, Chair

Jessica Evans, Recording Secretary

Date