



Superintendent
Tyler Ream, Ed. D
324-2001

Business Manager
Janelle Mickelson
324-2040

Board of Trustees Meeting

Due to the response of COVID-19 this meeting was held virtually on Zoom as well as in person at Capital High School

Tuesday August 11, 2020

5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

The Board of Trustees Meeting of the Board of Trustees was called to order by Chair Luke Muszkiewicz over the Zoom platform at 5:35 p.m.

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted

Luke Muszkiewicz, Board Chair
Siobhan Hathorn, Board Vice Chair
Sarah Sullivan, Trustee
Jennifer McKee, Trustee
Elizabeth “Libby” Goldes, Trustee, absent, excused
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee
Terry Beaver, Trustee
John McEwen, Trustee

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

Steve Thennis, Helena High School Principal
Dave Thennis, CR Anderson Middle School Principal
Brett Zanto, Capital High School Principal
Trish Klock, Bryant Elementary School Principal
Deb Jacobsen, Hawthorne Elementary School Principal
Wynn Randall, Access to Success Principal
Erin Maxwell, RBLC Principal
Jill Nyman, Smith Elementary School Principal
Lisa Lowney, Kessler Elementary School Principal
Nick Radley, Four Georgian's Elementary School Principal
Brian Cummings, Jim Darcy Elementary School Principal
Drenda Nieman, Lewis and Clark Public Health Official

Many Guests of the Helena School District

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Luke Muszkiewicz called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Items for Action

1. Certify the Trustees' Financial Summary – Elementary Fiscal Year 2019-2020
Janelle Mickelson presented the information to the board. School districts account for the receipt and disbursement of all money belonging to the district in accordance with the methods prescribed by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI). The Trustees' Financial Summary (TFS) is the annual financial report prescribed by the OPI. The deadline for amendments with this is December 10th. As a result of the Covid-19 virus, fiscal year 2019-20 proved to be a unique year for school finance and a very challenging year to close out. Essentially all normal purchasing ended on March 17, 2020, leaving some funds with larger than normal cash balances, while other funds experienced unusual expenditures and even losses. The high school general fund ended the year with a larger than normal cash balance primarily due to the tuition paid by East Helena K-12. The cash balance was transferred to the interlocal fund. The Governor's Emergency Declaration issued in March allowed for Covid-19 related expenditures to be paid with transportation funding. Accordingly, school food expenditures totaling \$342,553 and \$55,211 in technology expenditures were paid for out of the transportation fund. Although these expenditures were not anticipated in the budget, the First Student contract was

also renegotiated, and the District only paid approximately 75% of the original negotiated amount, which left a larger than normal cash balance in the transportation fund. The cash balance was transferred to the interlocal fund. Although revenues in the school food service fund were down approximately \$300,000, expenditures were also down, primarily because of the assistance from the transportation fund. The food service fund ended the year with a positive cash balance of approximately \$88,623. Over the course of approximately two years technology needs in the elementary have outpaced resources, which has depleted the elementary technology fund. The fund ended the year with a cash balance of only \$88,822.52, approximately \$511,000 less than the previous year and nearly \$790,000 less than fiscal year 2018. The cash balance of \$3,549,897.85 in the building fund reflects that we are nearing the end of the bond projects. At year-end, after all cash transfers, the interlocal fund had a cash balance of \$5,519,665.07 of which \$506,087.33 is earmarked for school building budgets. The day care fund ended the year with a loss of approximately \$92,760. The Superintendent's Recommendation is to certify the TFS and direct the clerk of the district to submit the report to the county and OPI.

Motion: Sarah Sullivan moved to approve the Certification of the Trustees' Financial Summary – Elementary Fiscal Year 2019-2020. John McEwen seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 The motion carried

2. Certify the Trustees' Financial Summary – High School Fiscal Year 2019-2020

Janelle Mickelson presented the information from the Elementary TFS along with the High School TFS to the board at the same time as the above information. This is a separate motion from that of the Elementary TFS approval.

Motion: Siobhan Hathhorn moved to approve the certification of the Trustees' Financial Summary – High School Fiscal Year 2019-2020. Sarah Sullivan seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 The motion carried

3. Final Budget Adoption Elementary Fiscal Year 2020-2021

Janelle Mickelson presented the information to the board. The highlights of the budget include salary increases to teachers, administration, independents, and custodians received steps. Para Educators received a 9% increase. Secretaries receive a 12% increase. Carpenters received a \$.50 per hour

increase. Negotiations with craft positions have not occurred prior to the preparation of this document. Health Benefits increased \$40. There was a decrease in teacher salaries reflecting savings from retirements and include steps for the new year and replacement teachers- this decrease was \$1,281,745. The decrease in administration salaries reflect savings from retirements and one position not being filled- this decrease was \$24,237. Other budgeted increases were utilities and property. Utilities had a 4% increase, based on historical data. Property and liability insurance increased 34% due to \$41 million in new property added. In the General fund the elementary Average Number Belongings (ANB) increased by 94. An inflationary increase of 1.83% was provided for the basic and per-ANB entitlements, quality educator payment, Indian Education for All payment, American Indian achievement gap payment, and data for achievement payment. The special education instructional block grant rate increased from \$151.53 to \$152.88 and the special education related services block grant increased from \$50.51 to \$50.96. The threshold to determine disproportionate costs was also raised. Operating reserves in the elementary are 7.16%. Transportation also saw an increase to the budget due to the COVID19 response. The district continues to make efforts to address the increasing special education costs by performing a thorough analysis each year to identify resident students with special needs who are receiving one-on-one services. The increase in the elementary tuition fund budget reflects the increase cost associated with these services. The decrease in the high school tuition fund budget reflects shifts in staffing. Other expenditures included in the tuition fund budgets include charges for day treatment services for resident students and charges from county and/or regional detention facilities for resident students detained in the facilities. The elementary school has a perpetual technology levy of \$520,500. Over the course of approximately two years technology needs in the elementary have outpaced resources, which has depleted the elementary technology fund. The amount budgeted reflects the unspent cash balance re-appropriated to fund the current year budget. The total elementary debt service budget is \$5,030,075. The elementary levy is \$1,250,000- annually. Remaining fund balance for budget in the elementary was \$1,969,484.44. Based on fiscal year 2020 payments, the district estimated the funding amount to be 98% of the allocation to the district. The estimated School Major Maintenance Aid is \$230,171.22 for the elementary. The total building reserve budget is \$3,778,184.44 in the elementary. The Superintendent's recommendation is to adopt the final budget as presented and to further submit the budget to the Office of Public Instruction and the County Superintendent of Schools.

Motion: John McEwen moved to approve the Final Budget Adoption Elementary Fiscal Year 2020-2021. Sarah Sullivan seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 The motion carried

4. Final Budget Adoption High School Fiscal Year 2020-2021

Janelle Mickelson presented the information to the board from above with additions about the high school budget. The High School ANB decreased by 134. Helena High School District will receive state and county transportation reimbursements for the routes. The contract with First Student increased by 9.75%. An improvement project for a bus drop off location at Capital High School was also incorporated into the budget. The decrease in the high school tuition fund budget reflects shifts in staffing. Other expenditures included in the tuition fund budgets include charges for day treatment services for resident students and charges from county and/or regional detention facilities for resident students detained in the facilities. The small increase in the adult education budget is related to increases in salaries and benefits and a more realistic conservative approach to budgeting. The Remaining fund balance for the budget in the high school was \$587,081.03. The High School will receive \$18,685.55 in state technology aid. Taxpayers approved 10-year building reserve levies in both the elementary and high school in November 2013, with the levies beginning in FY 2015, leaving three (3) years remaining after this budget year. The estimated School Major Maintenance Aid is \$146,902.44 for the high school. The total building reserve budget is \$2,758,714.60 in the high school. The Superintendent's recommendation is to adopt the final budget as presented and to further submit the budget to the Office of Public Instruction and the County Superintendent of Schools.

Motion: Siobhan Hathhorn moved to approve the Final Budget Adoption Elementary Fiscal Year 2020-2021. Sarah Sullivan seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 The motion carried

5. Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Plumbers and Pipefitters and Mechanics Collective Bargaining Agreement

Stacy Collette presented the information to the board. The HPS and the Plumbers & Pipefitters and Mechanics Unions, reached a tentative agreement on Monday, August 3, 2020. The Unions ratified the tentative agreement to the contract unanimously. The District negotiation team recommends ratification. There will be a two-year agreement. Increase the cafeteria contributions each year as determined by the Health Benefits Committee. Their wages will increase \$1.00 an hour and the leave section has slightly changed. HPS and the Plumbers and Pipefitters and the Mechanics have had a long-standing collaborative relationship and continue to foster that through negotiations and good communications. We had a lengthy multi-day discussion of the interest to convene a labor management forum for issue discussion. This agreement supports the directive of the Board to support our employees and address issues relative to the district budget. The

Superintendent's recommendation is to approve and ratify the collective bargaining agreement as agreed upon between HPS and the Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Mechanics Craft Council Agreements.

Motion: John McEwen moved to approve and ratify the HPS-Plumbers and Pipefitters and Mechanics Collective Bargaining Agreement. Sarah Sullivan seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 The motion carried

6. Approval of HHS land sale, MDT project: MDT/HHS land sale, MDT project
The information was presented to the board by Kalli Kind. MDT is continuing with construction of the ADA sidewalk project which impacts district property from Boulder Ave to Billings Ave. In March 2019, the board of trustees approved MDT to acquire 185 sq. ft of land and 119 ft of easement on the HHS property from the stop light on Montana Ave. to Billings Ave. The purchased property was for stop light utilities and future servicing of the light. During construction, MDT determined an additional 104 sq. ft. of district property is required for the stop light signal control. The purchase price is \$500 for the additional 104 sq. ft. of property. A resolution drafted by the HSD legal counsel is provided; Whereas Helena School District ("the District") owns the real property legally described as, A tract of land in Helena High School Block 3 of COS 3128576, Lewis and Clark County, MT containing 104 sf ("Property"); Whereas the Montana Department of Transportation ("MDT") seeks to purchase the Property for stop light signal controls; Whereas, the Property is unsuitable for the school purposes of the District; Whereas, the District wishes to sell the Property to MDT. Be It Resolved; the trustees of Helena School District have determined that the Property be sold in compliance with MCA 20-6-604. Be it Further Resolved that this resolution shall become effective 14 days after notice of this resolution has been given in compliance with MCA 20-6-604. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to take all necessary action to effectuate the sale of the Property to MDT. Be it Further Resolved that all monies resulting from the sale of the Property shall be credited to the general fund, or other appropriate fund, at the discretion of the trustees. It is asked by Kalli Kind that the Board of Trustees approve the purchase of this land.

Motion: Sarah Sullivan moved the approval of HHS land sale, MDT project: MDT/HHS land sale, MDT project. John McEwen seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 The motion carried

7. Approval to proceed with land negotiations, HSD & MBI: HSD/MBI Land Swap memorandum, Smith property, MBI property appraisal, HSD property appraisal.

Kalli Kind presented the information to the board. The HSD property north of the Smith Elementary School track was previously developed into picnic/park space by the Montana Board of Investments for their employee's use, via legal agreements with the Helena School District. This property is not used by the HSD or Smith Elementary School. The Montana Board of Investments also owns an undeveloped piece of property located on California Street between Smith School and the Delta Hotel. Through collaborative conversations with Dan Villa, Montana Board of Investments Executive Director, a potential land swap opportunity has been discussed. Both properties were independently appraised. MT board of Investment Property, 1.815 acres valued at \$290,000. Helena School District Property, approximately .6 acres valued at \$120,000. The Board of Investments has voted to authorize Mr. Villa to negotiate sale of their California Street property with the HSD. Preliminary documents have been drafted by their attorney and are ready for our legal counsel's review. The terms would be a no cash sale on the part of the Helena School District with the respective tracts changing hands and abandonment of all easements affiliated with the properties. I am respectfully requesting the board's approval to negotiate the land sale/swap contingent on your final approval at a subsequent meeting. This will allow time to ensure the documents meet both party's needs.

Motion: Terry Beaver moved the approval in order to proceed with land negotiations, HSD & MBI: HSD/MBI Land Swap memorandum, Smith property, MBI property appraisal, HSD property appraisal. Siobhan Hathorn seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 The motion carried

8. Approval of Policy 9150: School Closure

Barb Ridgway presented the policy to the board. This policy will be included in the new 9000 Series, School Facilities. It is required as a result of a legal settlement when Ray Bjork Elementary School was closed. This policy has had two readings.

Motion: Sarah Sullivan moved to approve Policy 9150 as presented. John McEwen seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 The motion carried

9. Approval of Policy 9035: Capital Assets
Barb Ridgway presented the policy to the board. This policy will be included in the new Series 9000, School Facilities. It was formerly Policy 7035. It has been updated to align with current accounting requirements. This policy has had two readings.

Motion: Siobhan Hathhorn moved to approve Policy 9035 as presented. Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 The motion carried

10. Approval of Policy 7060: School Safety
Barb Ridgway presented the policy to the board. This policy has been updated to reflect statutory changes. It also authorizes the Superintendent to implement safety measures to the health and safety of District personnel, students and visitors. This policy has had two readings

Motion: John McEwen moved to approve Policy 7060 as presented. Terry Beaver seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 The motion carried

A short break was taken at 6:41pm and resumed at 6:50pm.

11. Declaration of an Unforeseen Emergency
Dr. Tyler Ream presented the information to the board.
The COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic continues to challenge the health of our Helena community. With cases steadily rising since late June, the threat of COVID-19 has become an everyday reality. Just this past week, Lewis & Clark Public Health reported our county's highest number of positive cases in a single week (08/07 Community Briefing). While the Helena Public Schools have spent the last three months steadily planning for the 2020/2021 school year, COVID-19 virus activity within our community remains an ever-present threat. This threat is expected to remain for the foreseeable future including the whole of the 2020/2021 school year.

The Helena Public Schools have worked to incorporate the above guidance along with recommendations and insights from several noted national organizations. Collectively, this guidance formed the foundation of our efforts to design and draft our 2020/2021 Opening of Schools Plan. This purposefully iterative document provides our district with a foundation for making health/safety related decisions across the entire 2020/2021 school year. With no vaccine or breakthrough therapeutic approved, we anticipate the threat of COVID-19 to continue to pose an ongoing threat to our students, employees,

and families across the entire 2020/2021. For this reason, the superintendent is recommending that the Helena Public Schools Board of Trustees declare a local emergency in accordance with Montana Code Annotated 20-9-806 through June 30, 2021.

In accordance with Montana Code Annotated 20-9-806, the Board of Trustees may declare a local emergency providing the Helena Public Schools with needed flexibility should schools need to be closed intermittently throughout any portion of the coming school year.

In recognition of the ongoing and potential threat of COVID-19 on the students, employees, and families of our Helena Public Schools, Dr. Ream proposes that the Board declare an unforeseen emergency within the meaning of that term as set forth in Title 20, Chapter 9, Part 8, to become immediately effective and to continue through June 30, 2021.

Motion: Terry Beaver moved to approve the declaration of an unforeseen emergency, as presented. Siobhan Hathhorn seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 The motion carried

12. Consideration/Approval of 2020/2021 Opening of Schools Plan
Dr. Tyler Ream presented the information to the board.

This draft plan comes to you as a result of months of planning. It is the combined effort of over one-hundred and forty volunteers who dedicated their summer to countless meetings, presentations, and deliberations. Candidly, these volunteers have powered us through these summer months with their time, passion, ideas, and ongoing commitment to our students, staff, and community. While a simple thank you is insufficient, these volunteers are deserving of our sincere gratitude for all that they have contributed across these summer months. Additionally, this draft also comes as a result of hundreds of emails received across the last two months from students, parents, educators, and community members. Two such emails, received one recent Sunday night within minutes of one another, encompass the breadth of feedback that we have received. Both messages were exceptionally well written, filled with thoughtful insights and well-considered recommendations. One, crafted by a high school student, specifically cited the value of being physically back in school to aid both the academic needs of our students as well as their social/emotional health. The second email, sent by the parent of an elementary-age student, clearly recommended school closure as we start the year. This message cited recent increases in local COVID-19 cases and potential exposure concerns should students return in-person in late August. Encompassed within these two emails, received on a single Sunday evening,

is the challenge of this coming school year. Yes, our Helena schools have been through a pandemic before, but much has changed since the Spanish Flu of 1918/1919. Today, news is instantaneous, and information is shared across the globe at astounding speed. Yet, at times this summer, I have briefly paused in the hallway of the May Butler Center and looked at the pictures of past Helena superintendents. At the beginning of that long lineup of images is John Dietrich, superintendent from 1910 to 1929. I wonder what plans they had in place the last time Helena was impacted by a pandemic. While much was different, I imagine that many of our priorities align. As they prepared for the 1919/1920 school year, safety and the health of students, employees and family members was likely at the top of their list. The academic, physical, social, and emotional needs of students were likely ever-present as they considered various models. Communication, while different, was at a premium as parents and families looked for details. While the Spanish Flu occurred over one hundred years ago, many of our priorities remain the same today. We want the best for our students, our families, and our community. We want to make correct decisions in this regard, even when the variables around us are constantly shifting. We want to transcend this virus and come together as a cohesive, supportive community. This draft plan was built on those priorities including 1) health and safety for all, 2) social and emotional supports as needed, and 3) a continuous dedication to provide the best possible teaching and learning environment, regardless of known challenges (equity). For some, the plan will read as thoughtful, detailed, and well-considered. For others, none of the developed options will seem to meet the needs of your family. Ironically, both may be true, and I accept full responsibility. Yet, what is included in this plan represents our best efforts to date as we struggle to overcome something for which few were prepared to engage. I am proud of our collective efforts and commit that we will continue to refine, revise, and update this plan as we work to continually improve. Part of our planning process related to the 2020/2021 school year included a full consideration of this past spring as we worked to collectively analyze what went well, what did not go well, and how we can improve as an organization. Key to this process of reflection was data including insights gained from surveys administered in June and July. These insights along with feedback gained from emails, conversations, and the outstanding context provided by members of our planning teams, helped form a foundation for improvement as we approached planning for the 2020/2021 school year. Paired with an unparalleled amount of guidance, we collectively sought to build upon learning in an effort to grow and improve. As noted below, these areas of learning helped inform our collective efforts to design, plan, and prepare for a school year full of unknowns. As we journey forward together, these areas of note will be important to consistently remember.

Consistency is Key: Students and parents alike reported that inconsistencies across classrooms hindered understanding. It was requested that specific technology tools and practices be employed district-wide in order to provide

as much consistency as possible should remote/blended learning become necessary. · Frequent Communication but Within Reason: Parents/families reported appreciating frequent communication. However, daily communication was a reported hindrance and monthly communication left too many unanswered questions. Weekly school/district communication seemed to be preferred. · Family Connect = Student Connection: Time and time again, our connection with a family helped determine our enduring connection with a student. As we consider the 2020/2021 school year, it is imperative that we quickly develop trusting relationships with our students and their families. · Grace, Understanding, and Flexibility: More than anything, students, educators, and families stressed the need of providing one another with grace, understanding, and flexibility during this ongoing time of uncertainty. As we move forward together, it will be vital that we regularly remember that everyone is collectively enduring an international crisis that our current generations have never previously experienced. Therefore, things will not be perfect, and we must work to consistently support one another in order to thrive during this time of ongoing stress, anxiety, and fear.

The CDC recommends all people 2 years and older wear face masks. Governor Bullock's mask-related order recommends all people 5 years of age and older wear a cloth face covering in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. While schools were not included in the original order, the Helena Public Schools has aligned our health/safety protocols to include this requirement. · All students, employees, and visitors must wear a mask properly at all times unless the student or staff member has a medical contraindication for wearing a mask verified by a medical provider (MD, DO, NP, HSD 2020/2021 Opening of Schools Plan – Page 9 PA only). Students choosing not to wear a mask will not be allowed in the building or on district buses as alternative education opportunities are available. · Masks/face coverings must be worn, and six feet of distance must be maintained in all music, theater, band, and choir classes if events are allowed in a particular phase. · Masks/face coverings are required to be worn by everyone on the bus during school bus transportation. · Preferably, masks/face coverings should be provided by the student/family, but extra disposable/reusable face masks are available at the school for any student, employee, and/or visitor. Reusable masks/face coverings provided by families should be washed daily or before the next day of use. · Transparent face coverings provide the opportunity for more visual cues and should be considered as an alternative for younger students, students who are deaf and hard of hearing, and their teachers. · Supervised mask breaks can occur throughout the day. Breaks should occur when students can be six feet apart and ideally outside or at least with the windows open. Students may remove masks for nutrition breaks, and meals. Physical distancing is another important practice that helps mitigate transmission of the virus. The CDC has recommended maintaining a physical distance of six feet between individuals. Checking for symptoms each

morning by families and caregivers is critical and will serve as the primary screening mechanism for COVID-19 symptoms. Schools should provide information to families to support them in conducting this symptom check and families should not send their children to school if they exhibit COVID-19 symptoms. Schools will provide a checklist of symptoms and other guides to help families and students.

As we approach the start of 2020/2021 school year, several upgrades and modifications will have been made to our schools and district facilities. Upgrades and modifications include:

- Upgraded air filtration: Our district operations team is working to ensure that the filtration systems within our central heating and/or air conditioning systems are upgraded to the highest possible specifications. These upgraded filters improve air quality, circulation, and ventilation. In addition, the use of fresh-air returns remains an ongoing part of our air circulation/ventilation design.
- Designated hallway traffic patterns: Each school will be working to designate student/employee traffic patterns within each building. If possible, these practices will include one-way halls to reduce congestion and ensure opportunities to remain safely distanced when on campus.
- Partitions and other distancing structures: Most of our schools and buildings have undergone renovations in recent years that provide for distancing options for school-based front office personnel. However, in offices open to the public that have not completed such upgrades, partitions are being included to ensure both visitors and employees are provided opportunities to safely distance.

Handwashing and hand sanitizing: Handwashing removes pathogens from the surface of the hands. While handwashing with soap and water is the best option, alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60 percent ethanol or at least 70 percent isopropanol) will be available to all students/staff when handwashing is not available. Students will be asked to wash and/or sanitize in and out of their classrooms as part of a general practice. As much as possible, schools will work to cohort students to keep group sizes to a minimum. This practice is expected to be part of lunch and/or recess efforts and may necessitate block scheduling at the secondary level.

In order to minimize transmission of COVID-19, schools will have an isolation space available for students displaying COVID-19 symptoms. Symptomatic students will be cared for by the nurse and/or other trained personnel but will not have access to other students and/or employees. It will be imperative that parents immediately come to school and pick up a symptomatic child when called. **Health and Safety/PPE Supplies:** Schools will have an inventory of standard healthcare supplies (e.g., masks and gloves). Use of additional supplies may be optional based on the type of tasks performed (e.g., teachers do not need to wear gloves while teaching but may need to wear them during necessary contact with students, such as providing physical support to students with disabilities).

Students and employees who are not feeling well are asked to stay home and not report to school/work. As part of our above-noted daily symptom screening efforts, we are asking that each individual and/or family screen for COVID-19 symptoms prior to departing their place of residence. Individuals who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 at school will be cared for in isolation until they can be picked-up by a parent/guardian and/or safely return to their place of residence. Should a student or employee test positive for COVID-19, Lewis & Clark Public Health will work with the Helena Public Schools nurses to determine if any contacts exist within the school. As defined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), a close contact is an individual who has been within six (6) feet of a laboratory confirmed case for at least fifteen (15) minutes. As a school district, we cannot determine the exposure of potential contacts as this process must be completed in accordance with Health Information Privacy laws (HIPAA). Any determined contacts will need to be cleared for return by county health officials before they can resume in-person attendance. Any student or employee who tests positive for COVID-19 will need to be medically considered and found to be recovered before discontinuing self-isolation and returning to a school or work location.

All identified, laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 will be investigated and managed by professionals associated and/or affiliated with Lewis & Clark Public Health (LCPH). Should a student and/or employee test positive for COVID-19, an immediate decision will be made in concert with LCPH as to whether the school must close immediately for a determined period of time. Each situation investigated and managed by LCPH is unique and therefore, both short- and long-term closure decisions will need to be made on an individual basis. Schools may close for 24 to 48 hours or longer as deemed necessary by local school and county health officials. Families are encouraged to develop contingency plans for childcare in anticipation of such occurrences if COVID-19 remains an active threat to our local, community health. In association with the previously discussed information, pertaining to immediate school closure, any decision to reopen a school will be made in concert with Lewis & Clark Public Health. Schools will remain closed until declared safe for reopening.

As we approached planning for the 2020/2021 school year, health professionals across multiple organizations advised us to create a multifaceted plan that, by design, could ebb and flow with the predicted, ever-dynamic conditions associated with this current pandemic. In response, we created the below model (figure 3) to actively prepare for everything from school as normal in phase three to the physical closure of schools in phase zero. Phase zero includes our most restrictive environment with students attending school only through remote learning. These restrictions lessen in terms of intensity as phases move from zero to three. Additionally, the intensity of remote services purposefully changes in terms of intensity as we move through the phases.

While the fully remote nature of phase 0 requires online participation for all students, we anticipate that remote learning will be present in each of the noted phases. This is especially true for any student and family that may choose to attend school this year through an entirely remote version of school.

As we worked through the development of each phase, we carefully considered each of the following areas: Needed Safety Precautions/Protocols: Per the above-noted guidance on page 8, our adherence to the numerous health and safety recommendations is foundational to each of the designed phases. While these practices are not always conducive to the optimal learning environment, we continuously placed health and safety as our top priorities as we worked to develop these plans for the 2020/2021 school year. · Flexibility: Each of the designed phases were developed to provide our schools and families with maximum flexibility given the ever-changing conditions of this pandemic. While it would have been easier to develop a two-phase approach (open and closed), health professionals continually stressed the development of options including the hybrid, alternate to closer model associated with phase one. Consistency: One of the more challenging elements of designing our multi-phase plan was the assurance of consistency during a pandemic that has continually posed multiple inconsistencies. While challenging for all involved, we chose to align bell-times across phases one and two to ensure a consistent, day-to-day schedule. HSD 2020/2021 Opening of Schools Plan – Page 12. Time for In-Person and Online Learners: A never utilized element of our daily schedule includes providing teachers with time to meet the needs of students that are both attending school in-person and via a remote environment (Digital Learning Initiative). Simply put, there is not enough time in each day to do both without making changes to our schedules. Even with the addition of remote resource teachers, we felt it was important for online learners to retain a sense of connection to their home school, teachers, and peers. Needed Transportation Changes: Formerly utilized practices associated with transporting students to and from school are not advisable given the current precautionary environment. Therefore, we have worked to redesign our entire transportation structure to ensure the safest possible environment for our students and employees. Our new transportation practices for the 2020/2021 school year include no more than 24 students on a bus at one time. This will allow students to sit one per seat unless they are residing in the same household. Additionally, transportation patterns were aligned specifically to school attendance boundaries to ensure the shortest possible ride-times for our learners. These changes eliminate the possibility of transporting students from multiple schools on one bus at the same time. Additionally, we have worked to eliminate transfer points that require students to exit one bus and enter another as part of their route.

Phase III (Normal) Normal local and state operations w/ continued precautionary General Descriptors: In-person learning environment for all students, each school day, five days a week. Normal school operations with optional limits on gathering sizes. Modified bell schedule to accommodate

transportation and ongoing remote learning needs - Elementary Bell Schedule: 8:45am (start) to 3:30pm (end) - Middle School Bell Schedule: 7:50am (start) to 2:35pm (end) - High School Bell Schedule: (Zero Period) 7:40am – (First Period) 8:35am to 3:20pm (end). Health precautions/practices continued to include the below-defined safeguards. Extra-curricular activities/events in accordance with MHPA guidelines. Health Precautions/Practices: Face masks are encouraged for all students, employees, and visitors and may be mandated by specific teachers/classrooms. Distancing of six feet encouraged but not mandated in all spaces. Normal on-campus visitor procedures. School/district facilities open utilizing normal facility-use procedures.

Phase II (Modified) Modified local and state operations with gathering sizes limited to fifty or less General Descriptors: In-person learning environment for all students each school day, five days a week. Modified bell schedule to accommodate transportation and ongoing remote learning needs - Elementary Bell Schedule: 8:45am (start) to 2:20pm (end) - Middle School Bell Schedule: 8:05am (start) to 1:40pm (end) - High School Bell Schedule: (Zero Period) 8:09am – (First Period) 8:55am to 2:35pm (end) · Modified school operations designed to limit group sizes to fifty individuals or less - Closed high school campus prohibiting off-campus lunch - Cohort lunch and recess groupings to limit student exposure. In-person learning environment with a blended learning option available for students that cannot attend school in-person via the Digital Learning Institute (DLI). Rolling-Start opening schedule to begin the school year. Extra-curricular activities/events in accordance with MHPA guidelines and approval by Lewis & Clark Public Health. Childcare available through SACC. Health Precautions/Practices: Face masks are required for all students, employees, and visitors unless a physician documented contraindicated reason. Distancing of six feet mandated unless precluded due to the physical space. Visitors not allowed beyond school office without special permission. Fieldtrips limited, pending principal approval. External use of school/district facilities limited to after-hours pending district and/or health department plan approval.

Phase I (Alternate to Closure) Restricted local and state operations w/ gathering sizes limited to ten or less General Descriptors: Alternate-to-Closure Model: Blended learning model utilizing both in-person and remote learning on an alternating day basis with students attending in-person two consecutive days per week and engaging in remote instruction on the other three. Alternating day model (AACBB schedule²) reduces school capacity to half of the normal operating numbers thus, maximizing distancing and reducing exposure - AACBB schedule will allow family attendance schedules to remain consistent across schools/grade levels (same-family children will be assigned to the same attendance/remote days) - Learning will occur in person, on-site for two days per week, with the remaining three days per week occurring remotely · Modified bell schedule to accommodate transportation and ongoing remote learning needs - Elementary Bell Schedule: 8:45am (start) to 2:20pm

(end) - Middle School Bell Schedule: 8:05am (start) to 1:40pm (end) - High School Bell Schedule: (Zero Period) 8:09am – (First Period) 8:55am to 2:35pm (end). Modified school operations designed to limit group sizes to fifteen individuals or less - Closed high school campus prohibiting off-campus lunch - Static lunch and recess grouping to limit student exposure · Food services will follow this blended model with breakfast and lunch being provided to students in physical attendance and as a “grab & go” option for students/families assigned to attend digitally on a specific day. Rolling-Start opening schedule to begin the school year. Extra-curricular activities/events in accordance with MHSA guidelines and approval by Lewis & Clark Public Health. Childcare, including employee childcare, available through SACC Health Precautions/Practices: Face masks are required for all students, employees, and visitors unless a physician documented contraindicated reason. Distancing of six feet is always mandated, in all spaces. Visitors are not allowed beyond school offices unless for emergency reasons approved by the principal. School/district facilities are closed to external facility-use.

Phase 0 (Closure) Active Stay-at-Home Order and/or localized necessity to physically close schools General Descriptors: Schools physically close for a defined period. Teaching and learning transitions immediately to an entirely remote environment. Remote services environment immediately activated including food services for any/all families.

Digital Learning Initiative (DLI) Students who remain enrolled but digitally attend school via online learning General Descriptors: Throughout Phases I and II, families will have the option of selecting an all-digital learning model that will allow their child/children to remain enrolled and active in their school/class but attend via remote learning. Students/families may remain online in Phase III through the development of individualized plans for service. Students will be supported by Helena Public Schools educators through online teaching and support services. Students will have full access to all curricular and technology resources

Currently, “if-then” indicators that clearly inform movement between phases remain difficult to accurately define. As illustrated below in figure 4, each of our phases was designed in anticipation of varied states associated with local community health. Essentially, the better our community health here in Helena, the more options we have in terms of school models. To assess community health, we actively partner with Lewis & Clark Public Health (LCPH) to better understand what is occurring locally. In concert with the Governor Bullock’s Reopening the Big Sky plan, LCPH developed a set of indicators that they actively monitor and communicate. These indicators are used to assess our local capacity to monitor, test, and treat individuals who contract COVID-19.

As we approach the 2020/2021 school year, it is likely that we will need to utilize multiple phases across the coming ten months. Parents and families should be aware that scaling down (moving downward in phase) can occur without prior notice. Similar to last March, health conditions locally or within a given school can necessitate an immediate shift to closure. This would occur with as little as one day of prior notice. Families that require childcare are encouraged to develop contingency plans should care become an immediate necessity due to school closure decisions. While we will strive to provide childcare throughout School Age Child Care (SACC) program, health conditions may preclude such services from being offered on a continuous basis throughout the school year. Scaling-up is expected to occur with notice as those changes will likely be more predictable and parents/families will receive upwards of two weeks of notice before a phase changes in an upward direction (example: moving from phase one to phase two).

First, in order to provide a safe, healthy, and aligned environment across phases, increased teacher/employee training and professional development will be required. Typically, collective time provide for training/professional development prior to the start of a school year is limited. Given our increased needs as we prepare for the coming school year, additional time for training/professional development will be required. Second, our students and educators have largely functioned in a remote environment for the last five months. Aside from designated services provided across the summer months, few have been in an in-person, teaching and learning environment since mid-March. In order to effectively transition back into our schools, small, designated groups/cohorts will be needed in an effort to provide both physical and emotional safety. Small student groupings will allow educators to better develop needed relationships and provide more one-to-one opportunities. Third, our students have likely developed needs, both academic and social/emotional, since the onset of this pandemic last March. Small student groups across the first few days of school will assist teachers in assessing student needs so that we can effectively plan according to student needs. Finally, students need time to reorient themselves and become comfortable in school. Small student cohorts will provide meaningful opportunities in this regard with the small-group support of educators and other support personnel. Many routines have changed since students were last in school and a dedicated adjustment period can better support a physical and cognitive shift back to school.

When our students return to school, their needs may be very different. To facilitate a successful school start, HSD has created guidance for school-based teams in order to be proactive in considering, planning, and implementing both procedural and substantive aspects of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities and other vulnerable student groups. Ongoing guidance for school-based teams will focus on several noted priorities including safety, health, and the welfare of all students; provision of

FAPE; identification of the need for and provision of compensatory services; consistent and detailed documentation of services and supports; and consistent communication with families regarding the Individualized Education Program (IEP). HSD has aligned the priorities, supports, and services of special education with general education. These priorities focus on academic as well as auxiliary supports needed to close achievement and opportunity gaps that existed before and may have changed since last school year. The needs of our students receiving special education services and other vulnerable students will be aligned to individualized supports and resources. These students and their families/caretakers will be at the forefront of team planning when creating district and/or school-level plans. Our planning response includes professional development, technical assistance, and/or training opportunities which includes educators/specialists who play a vital role in the provision of services to students with disabilities and vulnerable student populations. This includes but is not limited to teachers, special education staff, bus drivers, general education staff, paraprofessionals, and administrators.

During any crisis, personal or public, emotional needs are intensified. The pandemic of 2020 has taken this intensification to an entirely new level as our community, state, nation, and world seek to endure the rigors of this ongoing crisis. Educators and families alike are working through levels of fear and anxiety that surpass norms of what we have previously experienced. As we approach this 2020/2021 school year, social and emotional supports (SES) will be a vital component to our collective ability to endure and thrive amidst crisis and confusion.

In order to create a safe and sound educational environment and ensure access to a quality public education for all students our employees must be assured the school environment is safe. This engagement summary is a snapshot of resources and services available. As opportunities arise, this document will be updated and revised.

School/district provided childcare remains an active part of our planned phases for the 2020/2021 school year. These services include the provision of employee childcare as part of Phase I. Staffing, resources, and precautionary restrictions may preclude schools from providing consistent childcare across the entire school year but as needs arise, we are committed to working identify solutions. Specifics pertaining to childcare via our School Age Child Care (SACC) program are forthcoming and will be added to this draft plan once finalized. The District needs to try to help students on a case to case basis, or we will lose students.

If there are questions, it is highly recommended to email Dr. Ream.

Public Comment:

Howard DesRosier – Helena School District parent, thanked the board for them allowing them to come in person. Two boys in the district, one at CHS and one at CRA. Their families experience with virtual was highly ineffective. Their high school boy wanted to get a job while virtual learning was going on because he could get all his schoolwork done within four hours. That is not quality education. Teachers in person is vital for a quality education. Concerned about the mental state of the children.

Jake West – Helena School District Teacher and Union Member, thanked the board and the Administration. After much thought, I feel it is not safe to start in phase III or IV. The plan mentions a lot of “ifs” or “when possible” which is not acceptable. The safety portion has been left unmentioned. There are too many unknowns and the staff are part of the education system as well. Please consider remote learning more until there is a handle on this pandemic so we can focus on returning to school in a safe manner.

Reg Hageman – Helena School District – CHS teacher, and parent elementary, middle, and high school students. Working on the decision board, I feel like we were cutting corners. The safety of staff and students have not been addressed well. Our community needs consistency. To yo-yo between phases will be difficult. The safety of 9,000 community members is in our hands. Remote learning is the only guarantee that the safety of our community is ensured. It is not an easy decision, but to be safe should be the decision.

Jane Shawn – Helena Education Association President, thank you to everyone for the time spent on the plan. HEA conducted a survey of both teacher and paras based on if they were comfortable with returning to school in phase I. Currently 420 responses of 625 members, 44% are comfortable, 56% are uncomfortable or have serious reservations about returning to school. State data says 30% are somewhat comfortable. There are in depth concerns from teacher and paras. First thing, everyone wants to go back, however, they do not necessarily feel comfortable, but they will for their students. Face to face relationships are extremely important and meaningful, but teachers do not want to put the students and their families in harms way. Instruction and what would it look like? What formats will lessons be in? If we cannot do groups due to social distancing, how can students learn on their levels? What will a para job look like? Health safety, how will this be achieved? How we will we distance with tables and not desks? Questions about childcare, will childcare be provided? What happens if I have to quarantine multiple times throughout the year? Covid leave is only so long. Mask lunch breaks are indicated, how are we going to protect ourselves and our students? Will I have extra planning time if I have to teach online and in person? Many questions have not been addressed in the plan. They may have been addressed, but they have not been communicated to the educators. What may be true today, may not be true tomorrow. The unanswered questions

about which phase we will be starting in is causing high anxiety amongst our educators.

Adam Clinch – Helena School District Teacher - Based on Mr. DesRoiser's comments, I wanted to make a comment. Our staff tried to juggle tasks when starting the virtual learning. We tried to ensure rigor is there. I respect his comments, however, please consider what this new in person would look like this fall. It will not be what it was prior to the pandemic. The concerns are valid, but fixable.

Tillman McAdams – Helena School District – thank you for offering both virtual and personal. There are different ideas and opinions right now. Regarding risk preventatives – I think those numbers on the dashboard would be helpful. Asymptomatic effects on the children are not there. The at-risk people are the ones we need to protect by wearing our masks and keeping our distance. We have never faced a pandemic like this; however, we have seen the flu. However, we are looking at 1.24% with flu being 1.25%. There has been an ultimate negative impact. Statewide we are looking at the same rate as the flu. The data is skewed.

Darbi Linder – Helena School District Teacher at CRA- thank you to Dr. Ream for his leadership and I feel very safe knowing he is guiding the plan for our schools. I am a part of the summer planning committee- everyone's best intentions have been brought to the table. Everyone is doing their best to let their voice be heard to do what is best for all students. I want to clarify my answer to Jane Shawn's survey. There were two answers, yes you are comfortable or no you are not comfortable with returning to school. The guidelines weren't presented to staff appropriately. Nurses are encouraging teachers. Their insecurities and lack of competencies with this pandemic, they didn't have a choice. It's important to keep in mind that there are a lot of teachers ready to lace up their boots and do their job. That side of the story has not been addressed. I am ready to get back to work with my students. Just having dialogue with students has filled my bucket and has excited me to get back to the classroom. Transitional years, to be able to meet with our students in any kind of classroom environment is going to create a relationship that will be invaluable for the rest of the year. It will set us up for success. I do feel very safe.

Jessica Reynolds – Helena School District teacher. Death rate may be low, but the long-term effects of COVID on folks who have survived need to be factored in the long-term plan. I want to go back to school, however I do not want to put my students in harm way. Adequate PPE need to be provided for all staff and students. For speech therapy, we need clear masks. I would like to hear more about how we can provide these, because we will be going through these things at an alarming rate. We have a lot more planning to do. We must be flexible.

Kevin Ward – Helena School District teacher at CHS. Often we think of teachers as front line folks for putting our students first. It's a big ask to ask for staff to cut off extended family if we are afraid of spreading

COVID to our own family. Even though the children might not get sick, it will be the teachers that will get sick. We are the ones that will have to live with that and possibly make our own family/spouse sick.

Motion: John McEwen moved to approve the 2020/2021 Opening of Schools Plan as presented. Sarah Sullivan seconded the motion.

Board Comment: This is an evolving document with changes that will occur. The board is voting on a plan where Dr. Ream can determine/implement phases and phase changes.

Vote: 7-0 The motion carried

A short break was taken at 9:43pm and resumed at 9:51pm.

B. Consent Action Items

1. June 9, 2020 Board of Trustees Minutes Meeting Minutes
2. June 25, 2020 Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting Minutes
3. July 14, 2020 Board of Trustees Retreat Minutes
4. Approval of Personnel Actions
5. Approval of Warrants

Motion: Sarah Sullivan moved to approve the Consent Action Items. Siobhan Hathorn seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None

Vote: 7-0 The motion carried.

C. Reports

1. Policy Committee Report

Trustee McEwen reported that the policy committee handled all the policies that were brought to the regular board meeting this evening.

2. Budget and Finance Committee Report

Trustee McEwen reported that the committee handled all the budget and finance subjects that were brought to the regular board meeting this evening.

3. Health Benefits Committee Report

Trustee McEwen reported that the committee has not met during the summer. They will be implementing the new benefits that were approved on 1 October – the increase premium, hearing aid benefits, and COVID benefits.

4. Montana School Boards Association Report

Trustee Muszkiewicz reported that MTSBA has refocused on providing information to the school districts with this ongoing issue of a pandemic. Trying to provide clarity to district administrators and trustees. MTSBA is trying to advocate more with the governor's office around funding.

5. Helena Education Association Report

Jane Shawn reported that she can send the survey to the board, if necessary. HEA is welcoming Maria Foote as a new Vice President. Several educators attended virtual webinars and events over the summer. A great number of educators worked on the summer committees and were thanked for their work.

V. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Dr. Ream wanted to wrap up the discussion from today. It is a tough evening and I thank you all. I appreciate the comments shared, but I am candidly concerned. I cannot fight against a virus and a pandemic and the colleagues and the families that I care about. I cannot fight against a virus, a pandemic, politics, and social media. If we cannot find a way to actively come together, we will fail. I really do care and value my colleagues, their families, their health, their mental well beings. Like wise I care about our children and those things and their futures. There hasn’t been a single minute that those thought haven’t been in my head or those of my colleagues. These are not due to the lack of effort or lack of creativity. Any failures to date aren’t a result of those things. I am proud of the effort of my colleagues. We haven’t taken a day off since mid-March. Thank you to those who gave their time this summer. They deserved to have time off and they didn’t. I knew this night was coming, regardless of the plan. I knew what the comments would be. I appreciate and respect the candor of the comments. I’m sorry for my shortcoming of serving as your Superintendent, thank you for the opportunity.

VI. BOARD COMMENTS

Trustee McKee thanked Dr. Ream for his hard work. The plan is solid, and we are all very thankful for you. Trustee Muszkiewicz thanked Dr. Ream as well. Dr. Ream inspires the members of the community and we are thankful for the sacrifices you and your family has made.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other topics for future meetings and no public comment on issues not on the agenda, the meeting adjourned at 10:22 p.m. The next Regular Board Meeting will be held on September 8, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Luke Muszkiewicz, Chair

Jessica Evans, Recording Secretary

Date