



Superintendent

Tyler Ream, Ed. D

324-2001

Business Manager

Janelle Mickelson

324-2040

Board of Trustees Work Session

Helena Middle School
1025 N Rodney, Helena MT 59601

Tuesday November 17, 2020
4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: Present unless otherwise noted

Luke Muszkiewicz, Board Chair
Siobhan Hathhorn, Board Vice Chair, excused
Terry Beaver, Trustee
Libby Goldes, Trustee, excused
John McEwen, Trustee
Jennifer McKee, Trustee
Sarah Sullivan, Trustee
Jennifer Walsh, Board Member (via video conference)
Claire Downing, Student Representative

Dr. Tyler Ream, Superintendent
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Stacy Collette, Human Resource Administrator
Kalli Kind, Director of Support Services
Jane Shawn, Helena Education Association President
Principal Cal Boyle, Helena Middle School

Assistant Principal Dawn Rowling, Helena Middle School
Gary Myers, IT
Tim McMahon, Activities Director
Brian Cummings, Jim Darcy Elementary Principal
Rex Weltz, Rossiter Elementary Principal
Mike Tolon, IT

Many Guests of the Helena School District

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Luke Muszkiewicz called the meeting to order at 4:08pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

One change was made to the agenda as Trustee McKee needed to leave early. Principal Boyle's presentation was moved to after New Business and before the Superintendent's Report.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Item for Action

1. Request for approval of MDT temporary construction easement at Jim Darcy. Facilities Administrator Kalli Kind explained that a roundabout will be constructed at Lincoln Rd and Montana Ave. This will begin during the summer of 2021. This will impact the East parking lot of Jim Darcy School. This parking lot is mostly used for parent drop off and pick up. MDT will always keep access to the school open throughout the project which is estimated to take up to 2 years. When they are done, they will redo the drive, fence and walkway that will be impacted at their expense. They will give a 10-day notice before starting. Trustee Beaver asked if the project will impact the speed limit on that road for any reason? That information is not known at this time.

Motion: Trustee McEwen moved to approve the MDT temporary construction easement permit. Trustee Beaver seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None

Vote: 6 -0 The motion carried

B. Consent Action Items

1. Approval of the October 13, 2020, Board Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of the October 27, 2020, Board Work Session Minutes
3. Approval of Personnel Actions

Motion: Trustee Sullivan moved to approve the Consent Action Items as presented. Trustee Beaver seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None

Vote: 6 -0 The motion carried

C. Reports

1. Montana School Boards Association Report

At the last meeting, the Montana School Board Association (MTSBA) Report was postponed. Trustees McKee, Sullivan, Goldes and Chairman Muszkiewicz attended the Delegate Assembly. Trustee McKee reported information taken from the assembly included the following: MTSBA seems to understand what we can expect going forward. Schools will need to pare back what they ask for to only include those things that are most needed. Inflationary increases were built into the school funding formula. They are hoping to protect their previous progress in this area. They are also proposing a change to how the inflationary increase for the cost-of-living increase is calculated. This shouldn't have a fiscal note associated with it as it will not have an impact until the next 2-year budget cycle.

V. PRESENTATION

Chairperson, Muszkiewicz opened with thanking the school for working so hard to stay open through the COVID pandemic. Principal Cal Boyle and Assistant Principal Dawn Rowling presented information to the Board regarding Helena Middle School.

Principal Boyle reported that Helena Middle School (HMS) currently has 47 teachers, 13 of which are new in the last 2 years. Principal Boyle has been at the school since 2006 and has seen much turnover. All middle school teachers are doing DLI as well for the 2020-2021 school year. Up to this point, they have also had 3 student teachers who have helped ease the staffing shortage burden. Unfortunately, their student teachers will be done at Thanksgiving.

HMS houses the Therapeutic Treatment Center for the area. This is a partnership with Shodair. There are currently 12 students enrolled in this program and 4 staff members. The school has both CSCT, which is the in-class support that partners with Shodair, and SBOT, which consists of a weekly session with a counselor that partners with Intermountain Children's Home.

The current student population at HMS is 761 students. This number is bigger than recent years. Principal Boyle feels 800 would be full capacity. Of the students enrolled at HMS this school year, 219 of the students are DLI only. The absentee rate is approximately 20% on most days, which includes both students and staff absences. At HMS, 19% of the student population is also enrolled with the special education program. This number has been rising over the years and this takes a considerable amount of money to run at a high quality.

HMS also has a program called the Angel Fund as they are a Title 1 school. This fund provides families with the resources they need. They usually have approximately 110

students as a part of this program at a cost of \$16,000. This year they have only 51 involved at an approximate cost of \$7,400.

The Comprehensive Literacy Grant is a District grant that provides approximately \$600,000/year. There is a 9-member Literacy team that meets monthly. This team helps develop the framework for the school. They do walk throughs with the Principal and Assistant Principal. The Literacy Team will stop into different classes periodically to see how things are going and get a better idea of what is working, what is not working and what they are seeing. This information is collected in an application after each visit and compiled to give them a better idea on how they can improve.

The 2020/2021 iReady diagnostics look different this year because kids left in March when school closed, came back for a short period in August and then had to test. This changed the benchmarks that they would be working with. Approximately 30% of students are in highest range. All students were included in this testing.

School Climate is different this year, but staff are trying to keep morale up. They use the Bob Positives to recognize students for who they are and celebrate them. 135 Bob Positives have been given out this year. It is more difficult this year for students to have those great moments and they are in a much more controlled and stricter environment. The students are recognized in front of their class.

Some clubs are still meeting. Most that can meet are doing so using TEAMS online. The number of clubs available this year is drastically lower than in past years but anyone who can continue a club is trying to do so. The school believes it is important to keep kids attached and engaged as much as possible at this time.

The current school model has students at school 2 days a week and Distance Learning the other 3 days. 33% are A day students, 33% are B days students and 33% are DLI. All kids are doing the same work. There are 6 class periods a day and the day starts at 8:05 and concludes at 1:40. There is currently 1 teacher who is DLI full time. There is an aide in the classroom during this time. Ms. Shockley, Mr. Toivonen and Mr. Lowney were used as examples of how the classrooms are working. Teachers use TEAMS calendars to create class invites for students and the teachers stay busy with those meetings. Through TEAMS they can see if a student has opened a document, made any progress on a document and how much time was spent on the document. Most students in the classroom are using laptops even while at school. Mr. Boyle explains that this is to keep things for the kids consistent as they transition back and forth between school and home during the week. At the conclusion of the in-person school day, teachers are available from 1:40 to 2:50 to help DLI kids.

Chairperson Muszkiewicz expressed his appreciation to Principal Boyle and HMS staff and understands how difficult the previous months have been. He then called for questions and/or comments from the Board

Trustee Sullivan echoed Chairperson Muszkiewicz's appreciation and asked Principal Boyle to share this with his staff. She asked if the school has physical space to accommodate 800

kids should the need arise. Principal Boyle does believe there is enough space. He stated that some classrooms are only used a few periods a day and could be used every hour to accommodate the full 800 if needed. Trustee Sullivan also asked if the goal of Therapeutic Treatment Center Program was to transition students into regular classrooms and wondered how that worked with CR Anderson Middle School (CRA) students. She asked if the students were bussed back and forth from CRA to HMS to participate in the Therapeutic Treatment Center program. Principal Boyle responded, that it was very student/family dependent. Some decide to stay at HMS, while others choose to go back to their home school. The hope is that these kids will transition back into the general student population. For her final question, Trustee Sullivan asked what they do in the Harry Potter Club. Principal answered all things Harry Potter, potions, spells, wand movements and the whole deal.

Trustee McEwen asked if there were other teachers that used the same model as the math teacher shown as an example in the presentation. Principal Boyle responded not at HMS. He noted that other schools may have more than one teacher using that model. Capital High School, for example has 22 proctored classrooms. HMS only has one. Trustee McEwen commented that he assumed the classroom with a proctor and classroom aide is an added COVID expense. Principal Boyle confirmed his assumption.

Trustee Beaver asked if the school was attempting to create any extra-curricular or intermural activities. Principal Boyle responded that some attempts have been made. For example, the Cross-Country Coach created a virtual cross-country team and found an app where kids can record and share their workouts and times. Trustee Beaver commented that there may be an opportunity to explore more individual and dual activities rather than team activities. He mentioned badminton, golf and power lifting as examples. Principal Boyle agreed. The challenge is keeping cohorts separate from each other. He stated PE classes have also found things like Frisbee and sledding that are more conducive to social distancing. Trustee Beaver asked if any HMS were attending classes at the high schools this year. Principal Boyle responded, no. He attributed it the fact there were so many unknowns at the start of the school and also because the math classes have been expanded at HMS. Trustee Beaver also asked Principal Boyle to extend his gratitude to all of his staff.

Student Representative, Claire Downing expressed her appreciation for the presentation and commented that she found it interesting to see the differences between her experience at Helena High School (HHS) and what is being done at HMS. There are a lot of similarities, but also many differences. She commented that she appreciated that Principal Boyle is encouraging all teachers to teach the same thing to all groups of students. She has many classes doing different things and teachers having different interpretations. Having everyone do the same thing leads to a more consistent day for students.

Chairperson Muszkiewicz asked if the enrollment in DLI has increased since the beginning of the year. Principal Boyle responded that it is in constant flux. Chairperson Muszkiewicz commented that he really appreciated the clips showing Ms. Shockley and Mr. Toivonen's classrooms. He feels it is really important for Trustees to see what actually happens in the

classroom and Principal Boyle did a great job of helping Trustees see that. Chairperson Muszkiewicz also asked Principal Boyle to extend his gratitude to all of his staff.

Trustee Walsh, also expressed appreciation to Principal Boyle and his staff for the creativity used in trying to include everyone and keep kids connected. She asked if parent/teacher conferences are in the works and Principal Boyle explains that they are this week and will be done through TEAMS as well. He is happy with the response from families in participating this way and says approximately 85% of families have confirmed attendance.

VI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr Ream reports that COVID cases and trace contacting continue to cause issues with attendance and with staffing. Schools in surrounding counties are looking at closing and a few already have. Helena schools are right on the line of not being able to continue to properly staff. Montana's cases are at 49,496 at the time of this meeting. While Lewis and Clark Counties numbers are lower than other counties of similar size, we are still in the red. Schools are relatively safe with masking and social distancing, but the issues arise with what kids are doing outside of school. Thanksgiving and Christmas are expected to show a rise in cases.

VII. BOARD COMMENT

Thank you to Dr. Ream, Mr. Myers, and Mr. Tolon for getting the meeting going. The Board is hopeful that the Thanksgiving break will allow for rest for all the staff. There was a question asked about the recruitment progress for a new Superintendent. Documents have been posted and the firm is beginning to advertise. HYA is the job posting site to be used. They are also reaching out to anyone who has been recommended as a candidate for the position.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other topics for future meetings and no public comment on issues not on the agenda, the meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m. The next Board Work Session will be January 26, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

Luke Muszkiewicz, Chair

Gretchen George, Recording Secretary

Date