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
Wednesday, November 4, 2020 – 12:00pm

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Committee:	*Others:*
Sarah Sullivan, Committee Chair	Tyler Ream, Superintendent
Siobhan Hathhorn, Committee Member	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
	Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
	Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum & Instruction Administrator
	Stacy Collette, Human Resources Director
	Gary Myers, Education Technology Coordinator
	Jane Shawn, HEA President
	Christine Roberts, member of the public
	Jim Penner, member of the public

I. **CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS**
The meeting was called to order at 12:07pm by Committee Chair, Sarah Sullivan.

II. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**
There was no public comment.

III. **REVIEW OF AGENDA**
No changes were requested.

IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
The minutes from the October 7, 2020, committee meeting were reviewed.

V. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION**
A. **Review/Discuss Preliminary Meeting Calendar/Topics**
The committee reviewed the proposed calendar of topis for future committee meetings. Dr. Ream recommended adding a Montessori discussion to the December agenda, during which the committee could discuss program expansion opportunities. The committee agreed.

Future committee meeting topic would include an overview of the fall assessment program in December, a review of high school class offerings in January, a Performance Matters update in February to discuss midyear data and future plans for utilization, an emotional and social support discussion in March and April, and a survey update in May. Dr. Ream recommended leaving June open. The committee agreed, and Ms. Sullivan recommended keeping a running list of other topics.

B. Technology Department Overview

Dr. Ream prefaced the presentation by voicing his appreciation for the staff in the Technology Department and noting this presentation would be given twice – once for the Teaching & Learning Committee and once for the Budget & Finance Committee.

Mr. Myers described the department assessment as an opportunity to address ongoing staffing issues, assure the department was supporting the district's mission, and rethink the department so it runs efficiently and effectively.

Mr. Myers stated his priorities for the department assessment were addressing immediate staffing needs, conducting focus groups with stakeholders, meeting with each member of the department, addressing the work order backlog, and sending tech support to each building.

Mr. Myers spoke to the expectation changes for the department, which included having a staff of 10 or fewer for the last two decades, a daily user increase from 1,000 to 9,000 in less than a year, a significant increase in Microsoft Teams traffic, the necessity for increased connectivity, comparable districts' technology staffing, and the volume of help desk tickets.

Mr. Myers provided the committee with feedback from each of the focus groups.
- The teacher focus group noted their appreciation for Microsoft Stream and iReady, though they weren't as supportive of PowerSchool.
- The administration focus group highlighted the challenges in the relationship between technology and infrastructure – security cameras, boilers run by an app, and secure access points to name a few. The administration focus group also noted the importance of streamlining the onboarding process for new staff from a technology standpoint.
- The family/student focus group praised the consistency on the Teams platform and asked for the ability to connect directly with the Technology Department on tech issues. Logins remained an issue with this focus group.

Mr. Myers divided the scope of the technology department functions into three categories: tech operations, which included firewalls, servers, sound systems, repairs, etc.; shared functions including inventory, budgeting, and vendor agreements; and technology applications, which included things like software, account management, vendor/textbook uploads, teacher support, and PowerSchool.

From this assessment, Mr. Myers outlined the immediate changes he had implemented:
- Hire additional Tier 1 support staff
- Hire a department secretary
- Revise the salary matrix to retain and support staff

- Establish a new department organization chart
- Send "triage" teams to each building
- Maintain a dedicated help desk

Mr. Myers provided an overview of the proposed organization chart for the committee with descriptions of each position.

Ms. Hathhorn voiced her appreciation for the presentation, especially for the focus on the end result – getting teachers and student set with what they need. She noted the website – one of the major communication pieces with the district - was not generally up to date. Mr. Myers replied it was one of the Educational Technology Coordinator's roles. He added it involved providing teachers with training to update their individual class pages and working with Michelle Skinner to make sure everything was up to date and we are communicating effectively. Ms. Hathhorn stated her long-term vision for the department was to reorganize the org chart and to hire more people. She noted it was important to work with the Budget Committee to make sure it was something the district could afford. Ms. Sullivan mentioned COVID-19 has provided an overview to update the technology department to make it more efficient. She recommended the presentation be given to the full board.

VI.   BOARD COMMENTS
No additional comments were offered.

VII.   ADJOURNMENT
The meeting was adjourned at 1:15pm by Ms. Sullivan.