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
Wednesday, December 2, 2020 – 12:00 PM

This meeting will occur at the May Butler Center (55 S. Rodney – Helena, MT. 59601) and via Microsoft Teams. Due to the size constraints of our available conference room, maximum capacity at the in-person meeting is limited to six participants - including committee members (3) and the superintendent (1).

To participate remotely, please use this link: https://helenaschools.org/event/board-of-trustees-teaching-and-learning-committee-meeting-12-2-2020/.

Committee Purpose Statement: The Teaching and Learning Committee collectively works to operationalize the strategic priorities of the Helena Public Schools specifically in areas related to our goals and measures for teaching and learning.

AGENDA

I.   CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS

II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT: *This is the time for comment on public matters that are not on the agenda. Public matters do not include any pending legal matters, private personnel issues or private student issues. Please do not attempt to address such issues at this time or you will be ruled out of order. The Board cannot enter into a discussion during General Public Comment.*

III. REVIEW OF AGENDA

IV. REVIEW OF MINUTES FROM THE 11.04.2020 TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE MEETING

V.   ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION
   A. **Review/Discuss Preliminary Meeting Calendar/Topics**
      Collectively review and discuss our Montessori Program including:
      - Program Overview
      - Future Possibilities

VI. BOARD COMMENTS

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting:
January 6, 2021 | Hybrid Meeting (online/in-person)
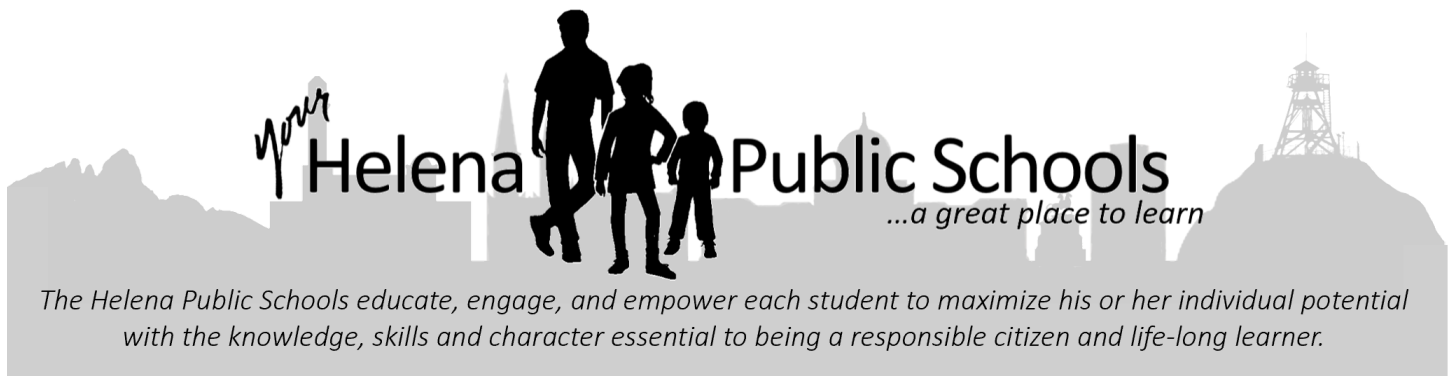
Board of Trustees – Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 4, 2020 – 12:00pm

MINUTES - DRAFT

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.

IV. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION
A. Review/Discuss Preliminary Meeting Calendar/Topics
Collectively review and discuss our Montessori Program including:
a. Program Overview
b. Future Possibilities

Background Information and Context:
This presentation is designed to provide HSD Trustees serving on the Teaching and Learning Committee and any other meeting participants with an update on our Montessori Program. As noted below, the presentation is designed to provide both an overview of the program and consider theoretical expansion possibilities. Please note that this is an Item for Information and does not include an associated Item for Action. Therefore, this is meant to be an informational update/discussion.

Overview of Presentation:
The presentation includes a total of 22 slides of information in association with the below outline.

- Overview of Program
- Historic Overview of Lottery
- Theoretical Expansion Possibilities
   New Pods
        - Overview
        - Pro/Con
        - Areas of Additional Inquiry
    Centralized Montessori Campus
        - Overview
        - Pro/Con
        - Areas of Additional Inquiry
- Feedback/Discussion & Next Steps

Purpose for Montessori Discussion:

Background + Context

Possibilities + Feedback

Please Note:

This presentation and subsequent discussion is designed to provide HSD Trustees and our HSD community with an update on our Montessori Program. This presentation includes two parts including (1) a program overview and (2) potential possibilities for future program expansion. This meeting and associated presentation does not include any action items or require any related decisions.

Montessori Discussion Overview:

- Overview of Program

- Historic Overview of Lottery

- Theoretical Expansion Possibilities

  New Pods
  - Overview
  - Pro/Con
  - Areas of Additional Inquiry

  Centralized Montessori Campus
  - Overview
  - Pro/Con
  - Areas of Additional Inquiry

- Feedback/Discussion & Next Steps
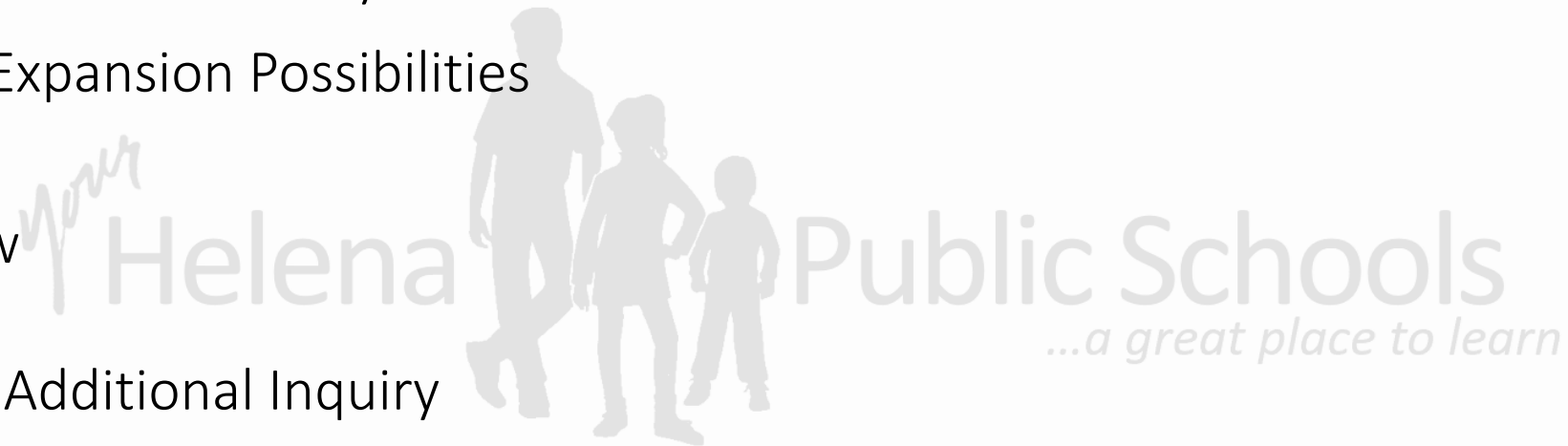
Overview of Montessori Program:

Our Montessori program utilizes multiage classrooms with grade-alike cohorts of 6 students per classroom.

Two (2) multiage (first, second, and third graders) classrooms become one (1) multiage upper classroom (fourth and fifth graders)

Lower Classroom (18)
6 First Graders
6 Second Graders
6 Third Graders

Lower Classroom (18)
6 First Graders
6 Second Graders
6 Third Graders

Upper Classroom (24)
12 Fourth Graders
12 Fifth Graders

Overview of Montessori Program:

Currently, our Montessori Program serves 163 students across nine (9) classrooms, at three (3) schools.
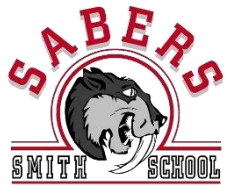
Smith Elementary
- Teachers:
    - Lower Pod: Callahan (16) and Wright (18)
    - Upper Pod: Beaver (21)

Broadwater Elementary
- Teachers:
    - Lower Pod: Harris (17) and Smith (16)
    - Upper Pod: Delaney (22)

Central Elementary
- Teachers:
    - Lower Pod: Casne-Fetz (16) and Kenney (18)
    - Upper Pod: Napoletano (22)

Historic Overview of Lottery:

- Applications are submitted during a student's kindergarten year, with students beginning in the multiage "lower pod" as first grade students.
- Data is recorded by home school and in accordance with the kindergarten class

Area	2020/2021		2019/2020		2018/2019		2017/2018		2016/2017		2015/2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
School A	8	10%	3	4%	5	8%	5	5%	2	2%	5	5%
School B	13	17%	10	12%	13	20%	26	26%	27	31%	23	21%
School C	2	3%	6	7%	2	3%	3	3%	5	6%	2	2%

- 36 student enter each year as first graders. Anyone not accepted via the lottery is added to the wait list.
- In addition to applications received from students attending the Helena Public Schools, we also receive applications from students/families enrolled in private schools.

Note: Thank you to the Helena Public Montessori Parents, Inc. for the historic data and context associated with the annual Montessori lottery

Historic Overview of Lottery:

Lottery applications by school, by class

Area	2020/2021		2019/2020		2018/2019		2017/2018		2016/2017		2015/2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Broadwater	11	14%	9	11%	9	14%	10	10%	8	9%	11	10%
Bryant	0	0%	4	5%	1	2%	2	2%	2	2%	4	4%
Central	18	3%	19	23%	11	17%	16	16%	16	18%	27	25%
Four Georgians	5	6%	5	6%	2	3%	2	2%	1	1%	10	9%
Hawthorne	3	4%	7	9%	7	11%	6	6%	7	8%	8	7%
Jefferson	8	10%	9	11%	6	9%	13	13%	9	10%	11	10%
Jim Darcy	2	3%	3	4%	3	5%	5	5%	4	5%	5	5%
Kessler	3	4%	3	4%	4	6%	1	1%	3	3%	1	1%
Rossiter	8	10%	3	4%	5	8%	5	5%	2	2%	5	5%
Smith	13	17%	10	12%	13	20%	26	26%	27	31%	23	21%
Warren	2	3%	6	7%	2	3%	3	3%	5	6%	2	2%
Other	4	5%	3	4%		0%	2	2%	1	1%	2	2%
Unknown					1	2%	8	8%	3	3%		
Total	77		81		64		99		88		109	
K district #	603	13%	581	14%	536	12%	580	17%	549	16%	577	19%
Females	36	47%	46	57%	28	44%	48	48%	46	52%	53	49%
Males	42	55%	35	43%	37	58%	51	52%	42	48%	56	51%

Note: Thank you to the Helena Public Montessori Parents, Inc. for the historic data and context associated with the annual Montessori lottery

Historic Overview of Lottery:

· Wait lists are maintained from first through fifth grade in accordance with each lottery year.

Year	Display Year	Applicants Not Accomodated	Total Applicants	Percentage Not Accomodated
13-14	2014	40	72	56%
14-15	2015	78	110	71%
15-16	2016	55	87	63%
16-17	2017	62	94	66%
17-18	2018	32	64	50%
18-19	2019	47	79	59%
19-20	2020	41	77	53%
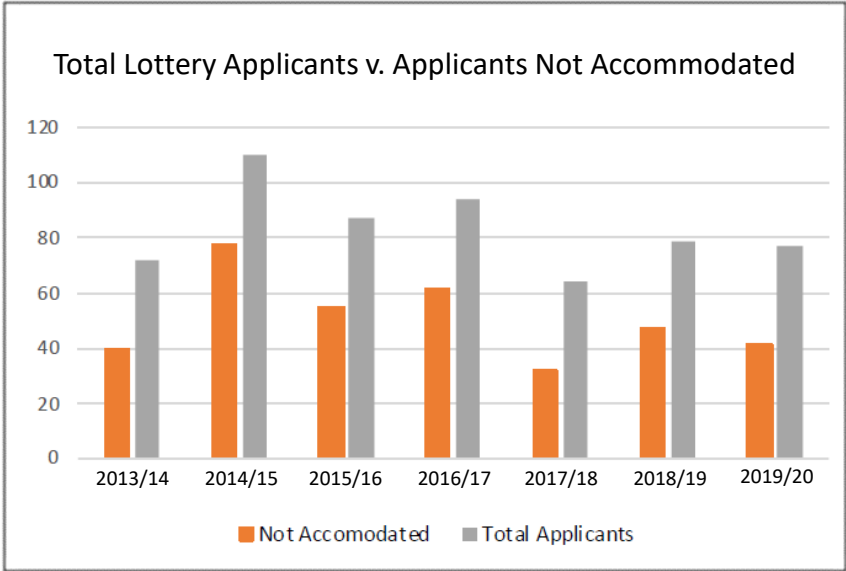
Note: Thank you to the <u>Helena Public Montessori Parents, Inc.</u> *for the historic data and context associated with the annual Montessori lottery*

Theoretical Expansion Possibilities:

Disclaimer: The below possibilities are theoretical in nature as no decisions (tentative or otherwise) have been made.

New Pod Possibilities

- Expansion of three classrooms (2 lower + 1 upper = pod) to a fourth elementary school

Centralized Montessori Campus

- Pro/Con on the future development of a Montessori-specific campus that is central to the district/community

New Pod Possibilities:

How would a new pod grow organically from within the school?
- Reserve a specific number of seats for only students that live within the school's boundary (guaranteed for the first three years while growing the pod – tentative once pod is fully enrolled)

2021/22: Open two lower grade classrooms with only First and Second Graders

1st (6) + 2nd (6) = Class of 12   + 1st (6) + 2nd (6) = Class of 12

2022/23: Add an additional class to each of the lower classrooms

1st (6) + 2nd (6) + 3rd (6) = Class of 18   + 1st (6) + 2nd (6) + 3rd (6) = Class of 18

2023/24: Add an additional class to lower and open upper classroom

1st + 2nd + 3rd = Class of 18   + 1st + 2nd + 3rd = Class of 18   + 4th (12) = Class of 12

2024/25: Full enrollment in both lower and upper classrooms

1st + 2nd + 3rd = Class of 18   + 1st + 2nd + 3rd = Class of 18   + 4th (12) + 5th (12) = Class of 24

Pro/Con for Expansion:

PROS	CONS
· Added choice for families & students · Unmet needs: Are there students/families that are traditionally not able to take part in Montessori due to family needs, transportation, etc.? · Consistency for any school with questionable enrollment sustainability	· Professional capacity to add a new pod (need for three teachers) · Schedule logistics

New Pod Possibilities:

To add a new pod of three classrooms, a school/campus would need to have the below available in order to be considered for this opportunity

Open classrooms (minimally two open classrooms with three being preferred)

An associated need, typically enrollment, that could be addressed through the addition of a Montessori pod

New Pod Possibilities:

| School	Classroom Space Available?	Program Need?
Broadwater	✗	Montessori Pod already in place
Bryant	Likely: Three classrooms could be repurposed	Possibly: Access/Interest in Montessori?
Central	✗	Montessori Pod already in place
Four Georgians	✗	✗
Hawthorne	Limited: One current classroom available	✗
Jefferson	✗	Possibly: Fourth highest Montessori interest
Jim Darcy	✗	✗
Kessler	Limited: One current classroom available	✗
Rossiter	✗	✗
Smith	✗	Montessori Pod already in place
Warren	✗	✗

New Pod Possibilities:

Needed Areas of Inquiry

- What are the expected impacts from this year's Kindergarten Class? Will more families opt to "redshirt" younger students?

- What is expected in terms of Bryant's long-term enrollment? How/when will the new housing development add students to Bryant's enrollment

- With a pod added to Bryant, what is the disproportionate impact to Helena Middle?

- What level of readiness exists within the school that would host this new pod?

Theoretical Expansion Possibilities:
Centralized Montessori Campus

Phased development of a centralized, Montessori-specific campus to serve as a district "magnet" for the program.
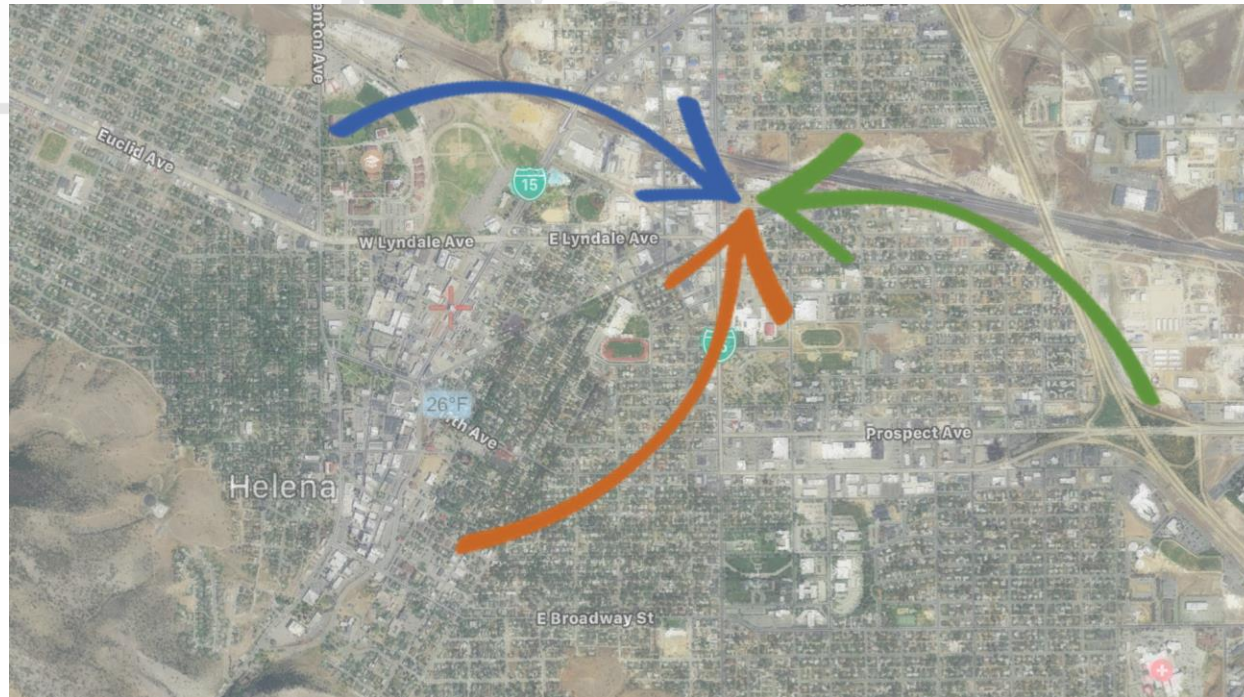
Theoretical Expansion Possibilities:
Centralized Montessori Campus

Like any centralized program, a dedicated Montessori campus has the potential of becoming a long-term value-add in terms of student transportation, the development of program-trained teachers, and a hub for Montessori-specific resources.

However, this often-deliberated idea would likely alter the cross-community nature of the Montessori program with classes/pods eventually phasing out of Smith, Central, and Broadwater to a central location.

Theoretical Expansion Possibilities:
Centralized Montessori Campus

Lincoln Campus:

- Interior Eight (8) classrooms + library + gym/cafe
- Modular*: Six (6) classrooms + restrooms
    - *currently the valued home of HSD Technology*
- Central to the intended (pre-pandemic) HSD transportation pattern
- Forthcoming boiler project will resolve heating issues

Pro/Con for Montessori Campus:

PROS	CONS
• Possible in/out county-wide transportation pattern?	• Significant program "change" synonymous with multiple unknowns
• Potential for program growth	• Potential loss of "home school" feel due to centralization?
• Alignment of scheduling needs	• Change of location for teachers/staff
• Shared supplies/materials	• Older campus with smaller classrooms
• Accommodates potential neighborhood growth at Central and Smith	• Loss of district "swing space"
• Purpose/identity for Lincoln campus	

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Theoretical Expansion Possibilities:
Centralized Montessori Campus

To develop without impacting current families ("grandfathering"), a long-term plan would need to be developed with the school coming online in 2025

T-minus 4 years
    2021/22: Incoming First Grade families notified of movement to Lincoln in Fifth Grade

T-minus 3 years
    2022/23: Incoming First Grade families notified of movement to Lincoln in Fourth Grade

T-minus 2 years
    2023/24: Incoming First Grade families notified of movement to Lincoln in Third Grade

T-minus 1 year
    2024/25: Incoming First Grade families notified of movement to Lincoln next year

Launch
    2025/26: All lower and upper pods shift to the Lincoln campus

Theoretical Expansion Possibilities:
Centralized Montessori Campus

Needed Areas of Inquiry

- How do teachers, current families, and potential families view this long-term possibility?

- How have other centralized Montessori schools faired by comparison to the regionalized "pods" model?

- Would centralizing Montessori help/hinder our current Montessori sites?

- Could a new pod be added, bringing the total number of annually-available Montessori seats to 48?

- Are the additions of Pre-Kindergarten and/or Kindergarten a possibility?

- Would transportation be possible and at what cost?

- What fiscal resources would be needed across the next five years to bring a centralized campus online?

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Teaching & Learning Committee
Helena Public Schools

Monthly Agenda Items
2020/2021

September 2, 2020 Committee Meeting
· Overview of Summer Planning Efforts/Accomplishments

October 7, 2020 Committee Meeting
· Development of Monthly Committee Topics
· Standards-Based Grading Update

November 4, 2020 Committee Meeting:
· Review/Discuss Preliminary Meeting Calendar/Topics
· Technology Department Overview

December 2, 2020 Committee Meeting
· Montessori Program

January 6, 2021 Committee Meeting
· Assessment Platform Update
· Draft 21/22 High School Course Offerings

February 3, 2021 Committee Meeting
· Assessment Platform Update
· Performance Matters Overview (post mid-year)

March 3, 2021 Committee Meeting
· Social-Emotional Supports (Part I: Overview and Tier I)

April 7, 2021 Committee Meeting
· Social-Emotional Supports (Part II: Tier II and Tier III)

May 7, 2021 Committee Meeting
· Survey Update

June 4, 2021 Committee Meeting
· TBD