



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 – Policy Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 3, 2021

MINUTES

Attendees

Committee: Others:

Libby Goldes, Committee Chair	Tyler Ream, Superintendent
John McEwen, Committee Member	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Jennifer McKee, Committee Member	Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Terry Beaver, Trustee	Tim McMahon, Activities Director
	Stacy Collette, Human Resources Director
	Elizabeth Kaleva, District Attorney
	Jane Shawn, HEA President
	Christine Roberts, member of the public
	Justin Stolp, member of the public

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm by Committee Chair, Libby Goldes.

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested to the agenda.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

IV. REVIEW OF THE 02.02.2021 POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES

The committee reviewed minutes from the 02.02.2021 committee meeting.

V. PRESENTATION OF POLICIES FOR FIRST REVIEW

A. Policy 1902: Alternative Grading

Dr. Ream provided an overview of the policy, describing it as a guiding document outlining already utilized processes during the declared emergency and effective through June 30, 2021. This policy allowed for students to choose a “pass/fail” option for classes rather than letter grades. This policy also allowed

students who received an “incomplete” for a class the opportunity to receive a passing grade within the grading period; this semester’s grading period will end June 30, 2021, correlating with requirements for Fall activities eligibility. Dr. Ream clarified the policy did not supplant Montana graduation requirements or any requirements stipulated by a student’s 504 or IEP plan.

Ms. Kaleva asked how this policy affected the selection of Valedictorians and Salutatorians. Dr. Ream responded it would be outlined within administrative procedures. Ms. Kaleva asked how a “pass” would be weighted compared to a letter grade. Dr. Ream replied there was no weight to a “pass;” it would count neither for nor against a student’s GPA.

After a discussion on the policy, the committee determined Lines 16-36 worked best within administrative procedures and should be removed from the policy. Ms. Ridgway agreed to remove the section and adjust the language in Line 38 to accommodate the change.

Ms. Goldes asked how “incompletes” affected a student’s ability to participate in graduation ceremonies. Mr. McKay replied high schools had found there was more finishing effort from students at the end of a school year if they needed to pass all course work to participate in ceremonies.

Ms. Goldes asked how the June 30, 2021, deadline had been determined. Ms. Kaleva replied it was set by Montana High School Association to determine participation eligibility for fall sports. Dr. Ream added the intent of recovering an “incomplete” was to ensure students didn’t end up one credit short of graduation. He added there were more students facing this issue than last year, and more last year than previous years.

The committee agreed to forward the policy to the board for approval due to the timeliness of the issue.

B. Policy 1905: Face Coverings as Personal Protective Equipment

Ms. Ridgway described this policy as one of the COVID-related policies adopted by the board last spring.

Mr. McEwen asked if schools routinely provided masks to students. Ms. Ridgway replied schools were provided masks for students who did not have them/forgot them and received weekly shipments.

Ms. McKee referenced Lines 51-53 and asked for confirmation that discipline was in line with other school-specific discipline. Ms. Ridgway confirmed.

The committee agreed to present the policy to the full board for approval due to the timeliness of the issue.

VI. PRESENTATION OF POLICIES FOR GENERAL REVIEW – FIRST READING

A. Policy 1000: Legal Status and Organization

Ms. Goldes informed the committee the following policies would not be taken to the full board unless there were changes to the intent and context.

Ms. Kaleva told the committee Policy 1000 was a required policy provided notice of the school district as a governmental entity established by the state of Montana to plan all the district’s operations. It also

detailed the composition of the board and designations between the elementary district and high school district trustees. No changes were made to the intent of the policy.

B. Policy 1005: Governance

Ms. Kaleva informed the committee this was another required policy. This policy detailed trustee voting, the definition of “meeting,” student representatives, and the limitations of school board members. No changes were made to the intent of the policy.

C. Policy 1010: Powers and Duties of the Board of Trustees

Ms. Kaleva told the committee Policy 1010, another required policy, outlined the responsibilities of the board as they related to district operations. No changes were made to the intent of the policy.

D. Policy 1015: Goals, Mission, and Vision

According to Ms. Kaleva, this policy was reviewed in 2019, but it was important to keep current since goals of one board may not be the same for the next. Ms. Goldes asked if community partnerships were included in this policy. Ms. Ridgway replied they were. Ms. Goldes recommended changing “community partnerships” to “educational partnerships.” The committee agreed. No changes were made to the intent of the policy.

E. Policy 1020: School Board Elections

Ms. Kaleva told the group this policy mandated school board elections were non-partisan elections held to standard Montana election law standards. It also determined each election would be held the first Tuesday after the first Monday in May. Any individual qualified to vote could run for the board using the process for declaration outlined in the policy. This policy was last changed in 2016 and typically did not change unless there was a change to Montana law. No changes were made to the intent of the policy.

F. Policy 1025: Board Member Term of Office

Ms. Kaleva said this policy outlined how trustees officially took office, which was only after taking an oath of office from the county superintendent or his/her representative. The oath was then filed with the clerk of court, and the election was certified and filed. If a trustee was re-elected, he/she needed to be sworn in after each three-year term. Also, a trustee held his/her term until a successor took the oath of office. No changes were made to the intent of the policy.

The committee agreed to discuss the last two policies on the agenda at the next committee meeting.

VII. BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Beaver referenced Policy 1902 and asked if continued instruction through the summer for students with an “incomplete” in a class conflicted with teachers’ contractual obligations. Dr. Ream replied at the conclusion of a teacher’s contract, the administrator assumed responsibility of class completion.

Mr. Beaver referenced Policy 1905 and asked for confirmation that the state of emergency would remain in effect until the board rescinded it. Dr. Ream clarified the date on the policy was June 2021, but the board could rescind it prior to that date or extend it through additional board action.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Chair, Ms. Goldes, adjourned the meeting at 1:11pm.