



Superintendent
Tyler Ream, Ed. D
324-2001

Business Manager
Janelle Mickelson
324-2040

Board of Trustees Special Session
Ray Bjork Center (1600 8th Ave) and via Microsoft Teams
Friday, February 19, 2021
9:00am

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: Present unless otherwise noted

Luke Muszkiewicz, Board Chair
Siobhan Hathhorn, Board Vice Chair
Terry Beaver, Trustee
John McEwen, Trustee
Sarah Sullivan, Trustee
Jennifer McKee, Trustee
Libby Goldes, Trustee (online)
Jennifer Walsh, Board Member

I. CALL TO ORDER/ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Luke Muszkiewicz called the meeting to order at 9:00 am and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No Change

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. ITEM FOR INFORMATION

1. Superintendent Finalist Interviews
 - a. Dr. Kevin Aten

Dr Kevin Aten

Q: What tools and techniques do you utilize to support staff and encourage personal growth and development?

A: There will be short-term and long-term needs for staff regarding the pandemic. Some people are having more trouble than others. Some will need emotional support. Some are coming back with trauma. They may have lost someone or have ongoing issues from having COVID themselves. We want to give people confidence. There are also professional learning needs. Some will need pieces that others do not. There is no going back. The workplace has changed, and the needs of students and families have changed. We must be conscience of how we respond to the staff and to families. He always trains on what it means to be warm and welcoming. His staff has agreed to always get back to people within 24 hours with some kind of response. It will involve stakeholders. One size fits all staff development does not work. We need to help people where they are. There is a teacher shortage, and we need to retain the staff we have. He looks forward to the challenge.

Q: Where do you want to see Helena Public Schools and Helena's students and staff in 1 year and in 5 years, and how do you chart a course to get there?

A: Helena School District #1. That says it all. He is inspired by what he saw the day before this final interview. He wants Helena to be the district of attraction and not to worry about what other districts are doing. Short term he would look at credit recovery for high school students. Learning recovery will be a need for elementary students. There is research from other disasters like Hurricane Katrina, that shows that we can make this up. However, for Juniors and Seniors who are looking towards graduation, that is a priority. For the 1-year goal, he will work on credit recovery at the higher level and for the longer term he will focus on learning recovery at the lower levels. For staff, we need to start as early as yesterday to find out what is needed. He is always looking at the horizon. People need to know where the district is going. We need to have communication, culture, input, and order. If communication is lacking, culture will fail. If people feel that they do not have input, then order suffers. All four must be aligned to keep Helena as the number 1 school district. In 5 years, he wants the district to be the model for how to do this right. He wants to be the model for how the districts should support students, and make sure they graduate on time and that our younger kids are back to grade level. There will be a brighter day because he believes in the power of public education and the power of educators. If you put a group of educators together in one room and ask them to solve a problem, they not only solve it, but it comes out better then you could have ever expected.

Follow up: Can you talk about how your experience helps to put into operations the Strategic Plan not only with students but also with trustees?

The strategic priorities for the Helena schools show 6 priorities. They are an amazing 6 buckets. The current plan that he developed is on one piece of paper. Each area can have its own action report. He believes that one person should oversee each of the 6 areas. As an example, the budgetary priority would put Janelle in charge because that makes sense. So, her job would be to align and make sure we stay on focus for that priority. Then every 4 months, he would come

back to the plan to “scrub” it. You can look and make sure it is working or not working and then you can make changes. You do this to stay on the same page as the trustees. And you make it very public, so the community knows we are focusing and getting somewhere. You never want it to get stale. First priority would be to have a plan for each of the 6 priorities and make it actionable.

Q: What are the best approaches to gain and maintain trust and respect? Describe a time where you believe you were successful in overcoming a distrust or disrespect issue or situation.

A: Trust and respect and everything that are good and wholesome in a school district are built at the speed of relationships. We often do not trust people because we do not know them. Sometimes the issue can also be cultural which can also be a relationship issue. So, the first part is that trust and respect are earned. But the currency of that is relationships. Superintendents do not have a magic wand. Having relationships and sitting down with people is important. He does not love sitting across a table from anyone. He loves to sit in a circle and put down the phone or computer. Our work is hard, so we need to build relationships. In October 2015, he was able to work out a plan forward in 2 hours after others could not do it in 80 hours. Salaries improved, moral improved and a bond passed. There are countless examples that happen in school every day. He uses listen, empathize, agree, and follow up. He truly listens to concerns and assumes they are coming from a place of positive content. What can we agree that we can fix? Then he follows up with them. If you do not do that, then people think you do not care. That interrupts the relationship. One of the joys of his job is helping to find solutions. People sometimes come to him huffing and puffing and leave feeling heard. Be kind and give people grace and space.

Follow up: What do you do when there are just too many concerned parents? How do you prioritize?

A: If a mass of people all has the same concern, he must take a look. Is it safety or something else? The safety concerns he can get right to. Other concerns can be more complex. You may have to listen to one who is a representative of the group by having a meeting. Make sure to really understand and follow up on what we can do and will do. People want to be heard and see changes made. People want personalization. We cannot do all things for all people, but we should do what we can.

Follow Up: People should maybe start at the lowest level and if its an issue with a teacher, then go to the Principal. Problems with the Principal would go to the Assistant Superintendent. Individual parents don't necessarily know how that works. Would you change that practice?

A: This is the chain of command question. One of his non negotiables is the chain of command. As an example, questions about homework in a certain classroom should not go straight to the Board. He encourages that all staff be trained in getting back to people because then problems can be worked out and not have to go to the higher levels. Email is for confirmation and not

conversation. Picking up the phone and having a meeting is going to be more effective. Zoom and TEAMS and all the other things have made it easier to take care of this.

Q: Describe a time when you implemented a change that was innovative or necessary to enhance or correct a problem in a program. What was the change? What steps did you take to devise the approach and what was the outcome?

A: True innovators are problem solvers. There are countless small examples. The most inspiring solutions that have come out of problems were when we put the team of people at the levels which the problems were occurring in the room. He stayed out of the room and he gave them the space they needed. They came out with a 3-tier intervention plan. The freshman coming into his high school had different schedules and shorter or longer interventions. In Bayfield, the old elementary was vacant and crumbling and he saw that as an opportunity. He involved the community. Now there is a college, a school-based health clinic, a food share, and a daycare co-op. It is also the site of the alternative high school and they have access to the other things in the building. They work and volunteer at the food bank. Great leaders find a way to say yes. He dreams big. The food bank is now putting in a grow dome. If there is a way to say yes and do it together, he will find the way. Its easy to chase shiny objects but we need to find solutions with those that are involved. Educators get the job done.

Q: What are your thoughts on meeting the social emotional needs of staff? Are you familiar with the Montana Behavioral Initiative or a similar approach to student behavior? What is your experience?

A: His whole dissertation is around positive behavior support: Supporting behaviors and restorative practices. If the culture and behavior are right, that is everything. Behavior at its most simple level is to get into or get out of. We understand behavior until we get to be parents. When kids do things in school, it is usually to get out of things. For a child who understands this, the best place in their mind is the office. But they are not in the classroom and that is not good. We need to understand. We are not talking punishment we are talking consequence. Restorative practices with kids work well. Kids understand that having that conversation is not just saying I am sorry. Its talking about understanding and how it makes the kids feel. With age comes wisdom and we have all been there so we can encourage as well. We must give space and grace and kindness. We have personnel and personal. Do not take it personally. That kid did not come to school today to make you upset. We need to provide soft landings. In the high school where he was principal, the minorities and kids in poverty did not want to leave his school. We must teach behavior and what we expect and be warm, welcoming, caring adults. One plugged in adult can help a kid overcome everything. Even disengaged kids make a relationship with someone. Kids who were expelled from other districts did well with his school. He did it together as a staff. Some kids have a lot and need a lot. Kids cannot learn if the social emotional part is not right. Safe ride to school matters. Warm lunches matter.

Follow up: How would you approach from the district level. We have some very effective behavior programs but they vary from school to school. Is it more effective to have a master plan or more effective for each school to work independently in that area?

A: Two neighboring schools might approach things differently. We teach what we expect. From a district standpoint, it should be expected that each school have a plan but beyond that, you must look at the data. If school A has low incidence of behavioral issues and B has high incidents, then you have to let that data rule. Make that a district priority. Go back and “scrub” the data and make changes. Sometimes different things will work for different schools and the different populations. Caring staff looking at the situation and working with families and kids is what will work.

Q: Our students have experienced a COVID lag, similar to the summer lag that is common. Students will vary in their lag time from 0-12 months. What processes would you employ to alleviate this missing learning period for elementary, middle school and high school students?

A: There are some students who have done well in the online environments and we do not want to run them through things they don't need. iReady assessments will help show where kids are. The reports are already out there. Reading is down much less than expected. Math is more but less than expected. There must be a phased approach. There is more time with elementary students. We must work with stats. There is not an appetite to go all summer. Kids and families are tired. We can maybe do enrichment though the summer. In a past school where learning was down, he did education bell to bell. Kids were not released early. They did not wait at the door for the bell. He protected every minute of learning. With high school now we have more pressing issues. We have credit issues, and we have graduation. His wife is currently teaching all online. She has 15 or 20 that have not even engaged. That is an emergency for Juniors and Seniors. If those young people want to graduate, we must craft a plan for credit recovery and doing this in the summer is tough on teachers. Middle School is just in the middle. There is a longer time, but they need a lot of social emotional support. We can break kids into groups and have some do summer this year and some next year to catch up. But we need kids to be back in front of teachers before the lag gets too big. There will not be enough federal dollars to fix all this. The way we fund this will also be a critical conversation.

Follow Up: You mentioned part of the plan is to offer a summer opportunity to the students. If there is opposition from teachers or the community, do you see there is time to offer that in the time that we have?

A: Yes. There will be families that say no way. We must have intervention periods. Maybe we do a chunk of after school. Next year will have to look different. You can also offer a 0 hour. There is motivation in things like that. We must continue to monitor the data. How much prescription do we need to write for this? It is going to take some time, but we will get there.

Q: What is the Superintendents role in Special Education leadership and how to you evaluate whether the Special Education programs (which are a broad category) are meeting the needs of students?

A: He has a long history of being very clear about special services and individual learning for students. For too long, Special Education was a dead end. His leadership is a commitment to the fact that it is a service and a way to provide skills and provide the kids that need a little more, a

little more. It's another non-negotiable. In education, the term main streaming is used. What he wants is instruction for all children that can benefit and be delivered by a caring teacher. An ideal model has all services coming into the schools. Once kids get to the school they do not want to leave. Transitions are hard for kids with behavioral issues. Staff should know who these kids are to be able to provide the supports. Where he is now, you can stay in school until you are 21 if you need the help. The programing should follow the children. Look at the data, the families, and the needs. Vocational rehab and job coaches can be brought in for the older kids. He does not have to be the one doing it, but people know it is a non-negotiable for him. It builds respect and trust and confidence, and it builds a community.

Follow Up: Could you elaborate a bit more on how you would evaluate how Special Education programs are as productive as you would like? How about for the learning disabled?

A: They learn differently. They need extra. They should still be taking the assessments. We look at the kids who are on an IEP or 504 plan and look at the different genders. At that program and school, we must look at the numbers. If we see a place where the achievement is not the direction that we need it, we need to "scrub" that data and sit with the staff and give them license to say, get off the horse and fix it. You can do the assessments as many times a year as you need to see where they are. The data sets you free to do what you need to do and make the changes. Be hard on the problem and not on the people.

Q: Although schools offer a variety of programs, academic achievement is at the heart of our educational mission. How do you measure academic success and identify areas of need at the district level, school level and for student sub groups and how would you address these areas of need and make sure improvement plans are implemented at all levels within the district?

A: District level data is great from a dashboard. Districts should get a dashboard. Trustees can see how we are doing overall but, it does not help teachers in the classroom. It helps us to advocate at the top level. Its easy to get caught up in state testing numbers but, it is easy to get caught up in one snapshot. The other part of the measurement is the iReady assessments, etc. Those can be done more often and shows us where our kids are at this space and time. These measurements make sense at the classroom level. Teachers can read and understand it. It shows teachers where to go next and that is ideal. The other piece that the research says is clear is that children should be involved in smart goals. Kids know what they are good at and what they need to work on. Having improvement plans that include smart goals for kids are important. Behavioral objectives should also be included. What are we doing for authentic learning at the higher levels? When he was at a high school with a reading problem, they took all high school teachers to elementary classrooms and they learned how to be reading teachers. He had a shop teacher who did not know how to introduce reading into his classroom. They got online and found a story on CNN about a safety violation, and someone had fallen into a fan. The kids read that story because it was interesting. That shop teacher became a wonderful reading teacher. All of us must put in the plan and work on it. They put up data walls in the office and made their

goals public. That teacher was a dear friend. He was tragically lost to suicide later. So, he wants to celebrate and honor him and what he did.

Q: If you could design the perfect centralized office and leadership team, what strengths and skills would you seek to compliment any weaknesses in your skillset.

A: In the true colors training, he is an orange. He is an idea guy. He looks ahead at the horizon. He is an innovation guy. But sometimes innovation without purpose, without why, without communication is chaos. He is looking for people who can do the nuts and bolts. You must be supportive to each other. He is looking for people who can map things out and keep them going. He always has a laptop and can sneak in little times to work. He wants people around him who have been principals too. He serves and supports principals. That experience is key. There are some people who are inspiring coaches, but he also needs people who have sat in that chair. He is a big personality and has a lot of energy. So, he needs people who are high energy. He says he may be a bit impatient, so he wants to see things happen. He wants to see forward progress. He will listen, learn, and lead. This district seems to have great people and be organized well. He wants a team who is completely honest. If his team can come up with a good solution, he can sell it. He wants to be number one every day for the kids and families. Some people fear talent. He does not. He wants great people on his team. Kind, smart and honest. More brains are better than one. But it does take talent to manage talent.

He thanks everyone for the last few days to see the inspiring work being done in the Helena school district. He thanks the trustees for being so caring. Students were in every way the best example of what Helena has to offer. He spoke about music and sports and mock trial and it was all very inspiring. He is a fierce advocate of public education. He is committed to making the transition if chosen. The school district in the capital needs a higher level of advocacy and he has experience with that. He has experience with human resources and the labor unions and bargaining. He has the experience as a Superintendent. He is a bold leader. He is an innovator. He understands this is a tough job. He thinks this process has been amazing. He would be honored and blessed to be part of the team.

RECESS

b. Mr. Rex Weltz

Mr. Rex Weltz

Q: What tools and techniques do you utilize to support staff and encourage personal growth and development?

A: He works to build strong relationships and provide an opportunity. In Polson, they invited teachers to participate in a personal development and training plan and then those plans were implemented throughout the year. At the end of the year, they were revisited to make sure they were working. We want our teachers and staff to grow. We would offer a certain amount of

money for development. Staff would post what they are reading as well so students can see that their teachers are developing too. Agreements with the unions and supporting it financially.

Q: Where do you want to see Helena Public Schools and Helena’s students and staff in 1 year and in 5 years, and how do you chart a course to get there?

A: He wants to be great, and he wants the district to be great. He wants input from the Board and the internal and external community. He wants to work to identify what that looks like. He wants to be a district where kids want to be as well as educators and he wants them to stay. That’s something that would be part of the strategic plan in a 1, 3 and 5-year plan. In the first 5 days he would set the priorities and in the first year, develop that in the plan. He would look at what has been accomplished and where we need to go. There is money available to help schools recover from COVID. One of his connections in Montana are people who can develop a strategic plan. We must reach out to external stakeholders. He is excited to reach out and find out what people see as strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. He would reach out to the faith-based community and civic organizations and see what the district can improve. Internal conversations are also important. In Polson, the strategic plan was built at a retreat. He brought people to the table and these are the people who will be involved in implementing. Those plans should mimic what we and the community want.

Follow Up: How do you see the Board interfacing with the central office staff who work under the Superintendent?

A: There is often a day or two to put together a plan then everyone goes back to their corners. He has no reservations for the Board interfacing with administrators or office personnel. He would only ask for a heads-up so there are no surprises. Not everything has to run through the Superintendent. There is nothing he would have to hide. We have the freedom to build that into the Strategic Plan. When we do this, we put a timeline and who is responsible for each area. So, he would trust the Board to be in touch with the people who oversee each area. He knows we are all in it for the right reasons.

Follow Up: The Strategic Plan is based on data but is also a bottom-up kind of process so people can get together and submit their wish lists:

A: Yes, teachers and principals need to have the ability to say what their needs are and what they are seeing at the ground level. Principals needs to let everyone know what they need in their specific building. Bottom up, top down to meet in the middle. The Strategic Plan needs to be a moving document. The district needs to know what their beliefs are. One person cannot run the Strategic Plan. Many people need to know how to build them and run them.

Q: What are the best approaches to gain and maintain trust and respect? Describe a time where you believe you were successful in overcoming a distrust or disrespect issue or situation.

A: His career has been built around building trust and respect. You cannot ask for it or demand it. You have to role model it first before it comes back to you. Actions speak volumes. You must be trustworthy and humble and willing to admit when you make mistakes. Strong

relationships are trust relationships. An example, in Polson, during Homecoming was the Color Wars. Kids dressed in a particular color for each class to see how many in each class dressed up. A lot of kids participated and one of the colors was white. A couple students put white power on their t-shirts. That created an issue, especially on a reservation. They were asked to take them off and they did but they took pictures in the shirts and they went viral. It was very offensive to the tribal council and the native families. He had to call the tribe and apologize. He owned the mistake. He did not defend, just owned it and it built respect. When you try to excuse things, you can lose trust. You must be humble. He also had to reverse a hiring decision because he felt it was a mistake. The community must know that we are willing to admit that we make mistakes too and we are also learning, especially in things like this pandemic.

Q: Describe a time when you implemented a change that was innovative or necessary to enhance or correct a problem in a program. What was the change? What steps did you take to devise the approach and what was the outcome?

A: Its never easy. Change is not always easy. There is a lot of unfinished learning now. When we ask teachers to assist with a kid, it has been before or after school. He has some issue with that, so teachers do not get burned out. He had a program when remediation was not working well. He implemented a time and support program for the kids not meeting classroom expectations. He strategically brought key members of the staff together to see how they can fix it. When they were included, they got excited about it. He took the staff to go visit another place using it. It was not forced; it was what they wanted to do. All the students were analyzed every month. All students with a D or F were looked at. 3 to 4 minutes were carved off each class period to create a time between 2nd and 3rd period. That was a core flex window. They went to the teacher they were failing and worked with them. All C, B and A students, had some freedom within the campus. They reduced the students failing by 50% or better. It had to be well managed. They worked hard and were motivated to get done so they had that freedom period. It also helped teach students how to manage their time. This could be used coming out of COVID.

Follow up: Would you feel the need to revisit it to see if changes need to be continually made?

A: Change in personnel effects programs. When someone took over that program for him, they had a bit different spin, and his changes were effective too and they hit up on other needs.

Follow Up: For the emotional aspect of that change, there was an element of pressure for students to get done to join friends. Was there shaming for the students who were still needing to participate?

A: Similar to what we see in meals when kids run out of lunch money. We did a good job of marketing it and showing them that we really cared about the grades. It was more self-inflicted than anything. Student body took care of each other which is what he saw in the Helena High Schools as well.

Q: What are your thoughts on meeting the social emotional needs of staff? Are you familiar with the Montana Behavioral Initiative or a similar approach to student behavior? What is your experience?

A: Core Flex was partnered with Link Project and the Boomerang Project. He has experience presenting on these. At a presentation, he presented to Steve Bullock during a rainstorm in a graduation effort. It was part of the MBI initiative. Very familiar. Social emotional learning has always been a top priority even before the pandemic. He was part of a pilot program for therapists in school. Not all students have the ability to get to a therapist, so he brought them in to the school. He also started the Sandy Hook Promise. They partnered with Ronan School District. It starts with hello. They did depression screening. They then followed up with anyone who red flagged. He lost 2 friends in high school to suicide. Outreach services were then provided. Conversations were had with parents. That was hard but important. He also worked with the special education populations. He was one of the first to start unified school. It is a part of Special Olympics that is all year long. He would participate with the Special Ed students in Missoula.

Follow Up: What can we do at the lower levels for social emotional.

All the foundations need to be laid in early elementary and the key is with the teachers so its important to make sure the teachers are trained. Also, the relationships with the parents. He would also refer to experts. He would also be open to a districtwide curriculum. Its already started.

Q: Our students have experienced a COVID lag, similar to the summer lag that is common. Students will vary in their lag time from 0-12 months. What processes would you employ to alleviate this missing learning period for elementary, middle school and high school students?

A: It is here and already being talked about. The lack of learning is not a gap. There will need to be an approach to assess the student learning or lack of that. iReady is a better assessment tool and it will need to be used. Rossiter 2nd grade teachers are studying 1st grade standards and all the way on up. The previous grade standards will be used as well and be able to teach what was missed. He would do that K-5. Time and support are a big piece. Understand and access. He would never pull kids out of core instruction. There would be other pull-out time to regain what was lost. Core 1 instruction must be great. We may have to work on acceleration. Students are out at 2:20 now and he is having groups of kids who need that help staying later. Working on having transportation to support that as well. In Middle School, we will see as a consequence, that every student in the nation will have to put together a plan. In Polson, there were a team of teachers to help students struggling and he has a plan for doing these things. They are not long-term fixes, but the schools will need more bodies in the classroom to help students catch up. The students who struggle are resilient though. They always find a way, so we will get them through. The students who he is more concerned about are the ones who have never had to struggle, and they are hitting a wall right now. They do not know how to recover from the struggles. High achieving students are struggling K-12 grades and we need to keep an eye on them. Plans in individual schools will have to be different. Morning and evening sessions can help.

Follow Up: The transportation opportunities are exciting. How would you rate your priority for that post COVID?

A: He would never want it to go away. The priority will always be to keep the programs that support kids as long as we can fund those. Grant opportunities can help but when those run out, we want to be able to keep the program and not cut them.

One of the best partnerships that came out of COVID was the one between transportation and the meal services. Those buses took meals to families and built connections with families and thousands were served.

Q: What is the Superintendents role in Special Education leadership and how to you evaluate whether the Special Education programs (which are a broad category) are meeting the needs of students?

A: His role is support and cheerleading. How you measure the success and evaluate that is when he just stops in to see the interactions and he is looking for rich experiences. Talking with parents about student's success is important. He has a heart for the special needs students. He has never been in a school that supported as well as Polson High, but he saw it as well at Capital High. For a couple of years, the Homecoming King was a student with disabilities. He rode the float, and it was an amazing experience for the students to accept adversity. The students protected that population. He champions them. The culture he establishes and expects is emulated through the entire building. Our Special Ed directors are held at a high regard because it is a tough job. He is constantly trying to get more resources.

Follow Up: You hangout with the students and talk with them to see what's going on. As a Superintendent, how will you be able to spend that time with so many schools to include?

A: It is safe to say, he does not know. The beauty is he still gets to stay around kids. We need to ground ourselves in the business of what we do. He will work to schedule that time. He will pop into schools he has not seen yet first. He wants to see adults, but he really wants to see kids too.

Q: Although schools offer a variety of programs, academic achievement is at the heart of our educational mission. How do you measure academic success and identify areas of need at the district level, school level and for student sub groups and how would you address these areas of need and make sure improvement plans are implemented at all levels within the district?

A: That is the heart of what the schools do. Parents send kids to school and want to make sure they are healthy and safe. Assessment is a 3-legged stool. It needs to start at the classroom level. What are the assignments? What does the teacher value? The second part is benchmark exams and standards like iReady. The third part is the end of year testing and things like ACT. That is a triangle of data that we can assess. On from that, the benchmark exams need to be examined through PLCs to see what students are and are not learning. Those programs built in between the core classes will help to address what they are not meeting. Self-embedded professional development is also important. It will take time. Its imperative that we make time during PLCs to do this work. We need to value teacher's time. The other part as well, is spending time with the

curriculum developers. We have a strong admin team, and he can't wait to get with them to find out their thoughts as well.

Q: If you could design the perfect centralized office and leadership team, what strengths and skills would you seek to compliment any weaknesses in your skillset.

A: We need varying strengths. He has weakness and he does not want them to all be like him. He is looking for people who are passionate, energetic, and want to do the work for the kids. He wants student centered people. Energy means a lot. He has a lot of energy and wants people who will keep up. He is not very patient, and he needs someone who can also slow him down a bit. Carl Elliott...great at slowing him down and being that person for him that he can talk to and that will tell him to refocus. He wants a Janelle, who is great at numbers. He tasks his office to get out once a month and see a school. They need to remember why we are in this business. He does believe that we get into times when we lose focus, and he does not ever want to do that. The office is there to support schools.

Follow Up: You talked about the strength we have in our principals in terms of academics and assessment. Yesterday we talked about mentorship and a relationship you had with a principal who is now a AA Superintendent. How do you incorporate the former and gain wisdom from the later?

A: Kirk Miller spent time in Class B and then went Class A and is now AA. A lot of his knowledge of the legislature comes from him. This time when talking to him he was looking for understanding of what he was getting into. He gave him info and told him that he just cannot do it all. He will be a mentor that he can chat with once a month for help. He is also connected with and friends with other Superintendents in other larger schools who he will network with and who will help him. He has connections throughout the state at all levels. He is well connected with the Montana High School Association. He has connections with legislatures.

Follow Up: 4 questions ago, you talked about screenings you did for suicide prevention. Is there any data showing that that was successful?

We used to not talk about it and not hype it. Its not the case anymore. We bring people in to do developments. We need to discuss it and talk about it with students and families. He would hope that those hard discussions helped and if it helped one person, it was successful. He will always err on the side of students. They screened every kid and so he would maybe change that and maybe do it at different periods. But he does not have data and doesn't know if they ever could have that kid of data. Possibly an anonymous survey would work. Parents have said thank you for the information and it has pushed them to take care of the issues. Kids coming out of COVID are more susceptible so having conversations with families are important. It shows that we care about the kids.

He is not a big personality. Its not about him but it is about the kids. He does not brag a lot. If something goes well its because someone worked hard to achieve that. If something goes wrong, he will own that. Extreme Ownership, written by a Navy Seal tells us to own everything and as a leader he does that. He is a good leader. He cares about kids and he has good connections. He

will make mistakes, but he is the right choice. He connects well with people and he has passion. He leads by example and works hard. He is relatable. He checks the box of what the community is looking for. He is willing to do the work and he will do it well. He would also like to thank Rossiter for their patience with him while he has been elsewhere in this process.

2. Lunch and Superintendent Feedback Review

3. Superintendent Background & Reference Checks – CLOSED SESSION (Personnel Specific: This portion of the meeting will be closed because the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure. MCA 2-3-203)

B. ITEM FOR ACTION

1. Select Superintendent Finalist

Public Comment is open. There is a 3-minute time limit. Focus on advocating for the Superintendent you want as opposed to speaking against the one you do not. Please stick to info you have learned from the interview process and engagement sessions. Be respectful, civil and within the privacy rights of either candidate. None.

Trustee Comment:

Trustee Hathhorn: She would like to thank the candidates. Both are wonderful human beings, and she thanks them for spending time with the Board. Both are strong candidates. There were over 100 community members who met with them the day before along with administration, staff, and students. She thanks everyone who submitted comments and it was very close in tally marks. The community feels the candidates are valuable. Her decision is a team approach, and because the candidates were similar in assets, she believes Mr. Weltz could build the strongest team to take the district out of COVID and into an area growth. He was very innovative. He is trustworthy and honest and humble. He also has good connections with other specialists. Her choice is Mr. Weltz.

Trustee Walsh: She would echo the thoughts of Trustee Hathhorn in being happy with the community involvement. Both are high energy and have a passion for students. Mr. Weltz has implemented several programs that were impressive, and he presented very specific actions to address district concerns both in relation to the pandemic and outside the pandemic. He has attainable plans and goals for the district. He would be open to using expertise of other staff and stakeholders and not try to do it all alone. She also recommends Mr. Weltz.

Trustee Beaver: The job of Superintendent in Helena school district #1 requires academic preparation, personal commitment, professional competence and above all the ability to work with the over 1000 employees of the district. The Superintendent

most importantly must serve the 8000 students in their educational endeavors. He supports Mr. Weltz for the position.

Trustee McEwen: The most important thing the Board does is hire the Superintendent and this is a close call. As the public comments suggested, the community is split. Both have strong characteristics that would make them strong administrators for our district. When he first read the resumes, Dr Aten was the best on paper in a variety of ways. The interviews showed that academically he was strongest in that regard. As he read comments, that was also pointed out. He is leaning towards Dr Aten because of that. He has a wider experience, and he is a good communicator. As he toured, he was very personable and approachable. However, Mr. Weltz, he was also well liked. Following them around was like watching two children in a candy store. Both are passionate about the kids.

Trustee Sullivan: She echoes what everyone else has said and it has been a tough one. Both are delightful, highly qualified, committed, and passionate. The community is split. They have strong skills sets but are different and she is looking at what we need in the district right now. Many people have already worked with Mr. Weltz and they like him. He is a strong leader and will remain in the community, so that pushed Mr. Weltz over the edge for her.

Trustee McKee: This was a very difficult choice. It was inspiring to spend time with two people who put so much passion and time into public education and really share the vision of what public education should be. In the end there can only be one choice and she can appreciate that Mr. Weltz is already familiar with how small the amount of people doing the job are and he is already successful at his school. He explained how he would function as a team and what specifically he has done. She supports Mr. Weltz.

Trustee Goldes: She thanks both candidates for the time and energy that went into the process and everyone who helped make arrangements and met with the candidates. Also, the community and the Board and the hours invested are appreciated. We have 2 candidates who meet the requirements. Mr. Weltz resonated with her. She was concerned in the social emotional health of the students, and she was very heartened to hear the programs he implemented in Polson and he will bring an understanding to that area. He is a good team player and humble. For those reasons, she supports Mr. Weltz.

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz: He thanks the Board for their comments and their work in the process. He appreciates everyone spending the time yesterday and completing the feedback forms. It is a hard decision, and the process did its job. The process started in October and it has been a process that has tried to engage everyone. It started with 29 and ended up with 2 and both are extraordinary. Dr Aten is very strong; he is a distinguished educator and he interviewed very well. He did a great job interacting with everyone. He has learned as a Board Member though; it is about a team working together and as he got to know Mr. Weltz there were a few things that put him on top. His reference checks were outstanding. His relationships throughout the state will put him at an advantage to enact meaningful change and run the district

from day one. He also appreciates his humility. He was clear about what he was good at and proud of his accomplishments but did not hesitate to talk about his weaknesses and admit he needs strong people around him to be successful. He is an internal candidate who already gets along well with the current Superintendent and its an opportunity for a meaningful transition process that can start sooner rather than later. That puts him in a great position to lead from day one. His preference is Mr. Weltz.

Motion: Trustee Hathorn makes a motion to recommend Mr. Weltz as the new Superintendent. Second by Trustee Sullivan.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment:

Trustee Sullivan: Wants to thank Chairman Muszkiewicz for all the hard work that he has put into this process.

Trustee McEwen: While he spoke in favor of Dr Aten, he will certainly support the motion. He would prefer the Board be unanimous.

Vote: Motion carries 8-0.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT None.

V. BOARD COMMENTS None.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other topics for future meetings and no public comments on issues not on the agenda, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Luke Muszkiewicz, Chair

Gretchen George, Recording Secretary Date