



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, September 07, 2021

MINUTES

Attendees

Committee: Others:

Libby Goldes, Committee Chair
John McEwen, Committee Member
Janet Armstrong, Committee Member

Rex Wertz, Superintendent
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Brian Cummings, Assistant Superintendent
Stacy Collette, Human Resources Director
Elizabeth Kaleva, District Counsel
Jane Shawn, HEA President
Jennifer McKee
Luke Muszkiewicz
Keith Schubert

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 05.04.2021 POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES

The committee reviewed minutes from the 05.04.2021 committee meeting.

V. PRESENTATION OF POLICIES FOR THIRD READING/REVIEW

A. **Policy 1027: Board Member Conflict of Interest**

The committee discussed that these first six policies have already been reviewed by the board once, and that after today they would be ready to be reviewed at the full board meeting. There were no questions or changes brought up regarding Policy 1027: Board Member Conflict of Interest.

B. **Policy 1035: Board Development and Self Evaluation**

There were no questions or suggested changes brought up regarding Policy 1035: Board Development and Self Evaluation.

C. **Policy 1040: Board Member Expenses**

On line 20, the committee changed the word spouse to guest. On line 20, the committee changed the words other unrelated expenses to expenses unrelated to district business. Line 20 now reads: The District will not pay for or reimburse expenses for alcohol, expenses of a guest, entertainment, or expenses unrelated to district business.

D. **Policy 1055: Communication to and from the Board**

There were no questions or suggested changes brought up regarding Policy 1055: Communication to and from the Board.

E. **Policy 1060: Committees**

There were no questions or suggested changes brought up regarding Policy 1055: Communication to and from the Board.

F. **Policy 5056: Vacation**

Additional language was added to Policy 5056 based upon the last policy committee meeting. The additional language states in lines 14 and 15: Administrators not covered by a collective bargaining agreement who accrue vacation will be paid for earned hours that exceed the allowable accrual. Mr. John McEwen asked if the language should be changed to all staff not covered by a collective bargaining agreement, rather than administrators. The committee discussed if the language should say administrators and independents. The committee asked if this a benefit that should be given to everyone or only administrators. It could become a budget issue if staff members are not taking vacation. Committee Chair Libby Goldes said she would be hesitant to make a change of that nature until we have more information such as a cost analysis and comparing what other Double A districts do. It was discussed that the committee may want to look and see if we have provisions for this in our Classified Bargaining Agreement and to consider if we want to expand it after reviewing costs. The committee decided they need to know what it would cost for independents and if there is language in the CBAs about this. It was then decided that Policy 5056: Vacation would not be presented to the full board at the next meeting, and that it would be reviewed again at the next policy committee meeting.

VI. PRESENTATION OF POLICIES FOR FIRST READING

A. **Policy 2016: Human Sexuality Instruction**

The committee discussed that this policy is a result of our most recent legislative session, which was put into statute. The District recognizes the right of a parent or guardian to withdraw a child from instruction or an organized school function regarding human sexuality instruction. Such withdrawals

will be classified as an excused absence. The reality is, we were always providing this option to parents if they didn't want their child in that class but now it is actually in statute. The policy also defines human sexuality instruction. Parents and guardians will be notified within 48 hours prior to holding an event or assembly or introducing material for instructional use and they have the right to withdraw their child if they want. The District will make curriculum materials used in human sexuality instruction available for public inspection before use. This will occur on an annual basis. In compliance with Montana law, the District will not allow personnel to offer, sponsor, or furnish any course materials or instruction relating to human sexuality or sexually transmitted diseases if the person or entity provides abortion services. The committee discussed how families are notified in the schools when this communication gets sent out to them with the option to opt out. The committee discussed that it would be helpful to have the Senate Bill and the statute information before the full board meeting to understand the policy. The committee determined that Policy 2016: Human Sexuality Instruction was ready to be presented to the full board.

B. Policy 3000: Equal Educational Opportunities

Policy 3000: Equal Educational Opportunities was amended to reflect the following statement on lines 19-21: Students in private or homeschool have the right to participate in extracurricular activities in public schools. The District will not restrict extracurricular participation of students in private school or home school based on their enrollment at the public school.

Families still have to fill out all required forms for the extracurricular activities, pay any fees, have a physical done if required, agree to any terms and conditions, and their academic records can be reviewed by our District.

Lines 35-36 were amended to say: The District will not deny or allow educational opportunity based on vaccine status, except those vaccines required by law. The committee determined that Policy 3000: Equal Educational Opportunities was ready to be presented to the full board.

C. Policy 3022: Children of Military Families

Policy 3022: Children of Military Families was amended on lines 24-27 to reflect: The trustees shall assign and admit a child whose parent or guardian is being relocated to Montana under military orders to a school in the district and allow the child to preliminarily enroll in classes and apply for programs offered by the district prior to arrival and establishing residency. The committee determined that Policy 3022: Children of Military Families was ready to be presented to the full board.

D. Policy 5000: Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

Policy 5000: Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination was amended to add line 25-26 to say: Covid-19 vaccine status will not be used as a basis to deny or allow equal opportunity to employment. The committee determined that Policy 5000: Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination was ready to be presented to the full board.

E. Policy 5100: Breastfeeding in the Workplace

Policy 5100: Breastfeeding in the Workplace was amended to remove the language on lines 19 and 20, 'lactation time beyond the regular break time is unpaid'. It was amended to add the language on lines 24-34, 'The school will provide reasonable accommodation for students and staff on the school campus to express breast milk, breastfeed an infant child, or address other needs related to

breastfeeding. Employees and students shall be provided the use of a clean, comfortable space or “Lactation Area.” A restroom shall not serve as the lactation area. The lactation area will:

- provide the basic necessities of privacy, lighting, and electricity for the pump apparatus.
- be shielded from view and free from intrusion from the public, students, and other staff.
- have access to a place to store expressed breast milk safely.
- Be in close proximity to the employee’s work area, if possible and contain comfortable seating.’

The committee determined that they wanted to remove the word mother on line 10 and change that to staff or student. On Line 12 they removed the word employee and changed it to staff member or student. On line 16 the word employee was changed to employees, and on line 16 the word her was removed and replaced with their. The committee determined that Policy 5100: Breastfeeding in the Workplace was ready to be presented to the full board.

F. Policy 7062: Outdoor Air Quality

Policy 7062: Outdoor Air Quality is a new policy that is required by the DPHHS. The District will use the Recommendations for Outdoor Activities Based on Air Quality for Schools guidelines, developed by the DEQ, and will use the DEQ’s Air Data Map, as the determining factor when making a decision to allow or not allow students to participate in outdoor activities and contests. The Superintendent will develop procedures to be used when deciding whether students will be allowed to participate in outdoor activities when Air Quality Restrictions have reached the Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups or higher categories as indicated on the DEQ guidelines. The committee determined that Policy 7062: Outdoor Air Quality was ready to be presented to the full board.

VII. SUPERINTENDENT OR BOARD COMMENTS

No further board comments were offered.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Chair, Ms. Goldes, adjourned the meeting at 12:58 pm.