



*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 Work Session Minutes

Tuesday, September 28th, 2021 | Tour at 3:30 / 4:00pm | Bryant Elementary School and via TEAMS

### MINUTES

#### ATTENDEES

##### *Trustees*

Luke Muszkiewicz, Board Chair  
Siobhan Hathhorn, Vice Chair  
Libby Goldes, Trustee  
John McEwen, Trustee  
Jennifer McKee, Trustee  
Terry Beaver, Trustee  
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee

##### *Others*

Rex Weltz, Superintendent  
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent  
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff  
Janelle Mickelson, Business Services Administrator  
Stacy Collette, Human Resources Director  
Brian Cummings, Assistant Superintendent  
Karen Ogden, Communications Officer  
Shane Snyder, Senior Infrastructure & Information Systems Manager  
Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Administrator  
Trish Klock, Bryant Principal  
Rich Franco, Human Resource Benefits Manager  
Jane Shawn, HEA President  
Many guests of the public

#### **I. TOUR OF BRYANT ELEMENTARY**

#### **II. CALL TO ORDER/ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Luke Muszkiewicz called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **III. REVIEW OF AGENDA**

No changes were requested to the agenda.

#### **IV. PRESENTATION:**

Bryant Principal, Ms. Trish Klock, began her presentation by sharing Bryant Elementary's mission statement as compared to the Helena Public School's mission statement. Ms. Klock then shared the Bryant school demographics. As of 9/16/21 there are 281 total students at

Bryant. 10 students are enrolled in the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Program. 53 students utilize HSD transportation, and 14 students are enrolled in SACC after school. 100 percent of Bryant students qualify for their free lunch and breakfast program, and a healthy snack is also provided each day. 53 students have active IEPs (non-speech), and 6 students have active 504 plans. 74 students receive speech services, not including informal services or kindergarten students not already identified. 210 students/families participate in the weekly food pack program as provided by Bryant's partners at Helena Food Share. Currently 12 students/families are served by CSCT and there is an active waitlist for these services.

Ms. Klock then discussed student/teacher ratios. There are 6 teachers in grades K,1 and 2 with an average class size of 22. There are 6 teachers in grades 3,4 and 5 with an average class size of 24. Ms. Klock then recognized Mary Pat Penley, the Bryant K-2 SPED Teacher, who is the HSD Teacher of the Year.

Ms. Klock then discussed the Bryant School Staff and how many people she has on her team:

- 12 Classroom Teachers
- 1 PBS Teacher
- 1 Title Teacher
- 2 Special Education Teachers
- 1.5 Speech Language Pathologists (one person is split with Central)
- 1 Counselor
- 1 Librarian
- 1 PE Teacher that is split with Warren
- 1 Music Teacher that is split with Warren
- 4 SPED Paras
- 1 CSCT Staff (AWARE)
- 2 Instructional Coaches that are split with Central
- 3 General Education Paras
- 4 Overage Paras
- .8 Nurse (split with Central Elementary)
- 1 Administrative Assistant
- 1 School Psychologist that is split with RBLC
- 3.5 Custodians
- 3 Sodexo Staff
- 1 Administrator

Ms. Klock proceeded to comment on academics. At Bryant we have followed the HSD K-5 Instructional Framework for a couple of years now. We were very fortunate to be a part of the grant work before this went across to all the elementary school classrooms. It's amazing to walk into different classrooms and hear them using the same language, the same expectations, and proven strategies that help students learn every single day. We look at this Instructional Framework and use this to create all our lessons.

Ms. Klock commented. The next thing that we look at and use quite frequently is our growing and learning calendar. This talks about our benchmarking, our SBAC testing, our progress monitoring, and everything we use to monitor how students are performing in our classrooms. We have amazing literacy coaches here at Bryant and here is a list of what they do: weekly coach/admin meetings, coffee with coaches' calendar, PDSA cycles, coaching cycles, data work, work with Instructional Consultant, Coaches' Corner, CNA analysis, and action plan.

Ms. Klock then shared a picture of Bryant's previous years' data. Bryant K and 1: (-15%) Intensive 58% from 73%, Strategic 20% from 18% and Benchmark 22% from 9%. So, there was a decrease from the number of students that were intensive by 15 percent, and there was a huge growth in benchmark. Bryant 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>: At Risk for Tier 3-26% (From 47%), Tier 2-31 % (From 30%), and Tier 1-44% (From 23%).

Ms. Klock commented. A lot of the programs that we do tie together. Our PAX program encourages students to think about their actions and how they affect them, others around them, and our world. PAX Kernels (like PAX quiet) help our school set clear expectations for all students to follow, adding consistency and predictability. Students are a part of making themselves the best that they can be, which in turn makes our classrooms/school/world better (PAX Vision). That also goes well with our MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support).

- Tier 1
  - MBI-Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be a Learner
  - Social Skills/Counseling Lessons
  - PAW Tickets/Book Vending Machine Drawings
  - WIN (What I Need) Time
- Tier 2
  - Assistance Team
  - Social Skills Groups
  - Check In, Check Out
  - Title Services
- Tier 3
  - Community-School Counseling Treatment (CSCT)
  - Individualized Education Program (IEP)
  - Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)
  - System 44 (Intense Reading Intervention)

Ms. Klock commented. Every morning we do morning announcements on TEAMS. Classes take turns with the Pledge and the Bryant Expectation Pledge each morning. We have dance parties and PAW ticket drawings each Friday. The slides each morning note daily intentions, birthdays, breakfast/lunch menus, and reminders.

Ms. Klock then proceeded to comment on library goals. This year students in grades 3-5 are setting a weekly reading goal during their checkout time. Goals are centered around title

and quantity (all, pages, or chapters). The following week they reflect on the keys to their success or stumbling blocks. Then they set a new goal for the next week. Students who met their goal this week wrote their name on a leaf that is now hanging in the hallway.

Ms. Klock shared a list showcasing Bryant's parent and community involvement: Carrol College and Helena College students, Angel Fund, HHS internships, Bryant Alliance (Parent Council), Seven Schools-One Book (Title), Kiwanis BUG Program, Bank of the Rockies-Pumpkin Patch/Treat Bags, 6<sup>th</sup> Ward Partnership, Helena College-5<sup>th</sup> grade "Honorary" students, Shoes for Kids (Helena Police Department), dental and vision screenings-Lions, Helena Food Share-Kid Packs, Exchange Club-coat drives, Hannaford Street Church, Bryant Book Mobile, and Bryant Story Walk. Another great organization is the Helena Education Foundation (HEF). I'm very excited to announce we had 7 grant winners last year. Fabulous Firsts and Let's Talk about Great Teachers were amazing programs as well through HEF.

Ms. Klock commented regarding communication to staff and families. Smores newsletters are sent every week to staff and parents. Communication is shared electronically on three platforms to provide as up-to-date communication as possible to each member of the school community. We also use Class Dojo. This is an amazing app. It is a free application that can be used as a behavior management system, parent communication platform, and student portfolio tool. Every classroom uses this application.

Ms. Klock concluded her presentation by commenting on Camp Ascension. Camp Ascension was the district's summer school that was housed at Bryant, Jim Darcy, and Central. Broadwater, Jefferson, Smith, and Bryant students attended at Bryant school. There were academics in the morning with community experiences in the afternoon. Class sizes ranged from 14-16 students.

After the presentation, the board was welcome to provide feedback, comments, or ask questions.

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz commented. I would like to thank you for the tour and the extraordinary presentation that you have given us. You are a great ambassador to the community you serve, and we really appreciate the work that you are doing here at Bryant. Thank you. On behalf of the board thank you so much to the staff for everything that you do day in and day out. Mrs. Penley, congratulations on being recognized as Teacher of the Year, that is very well deserved. I love the example of the TEAMS morning announcement and it seems like a good example of having to utilize technology to teach fully online and in a hybrid environment.

Mr. Muszkiewicz commented with some questions for Ms. Klock. Are the demographics of your school changing at all? There are a lot of changes in this neighborhood, with a lot of new development. Is any of that impacting the students and families that you serve? Is your free and reduced lunch status staying where it is at or is it changing?

Ms. Klock responded. It is. We are seeing a lot more transient students because we have a lot of families that move into the area and then move out. So, we do have a lot of fluid movement in our school. We are also seeing a large number of people moving in. We are seeing a huge increase in the number of students enrolled at Bryant, and I think that will continue as this neighborhood continues to grow.

Trustee Jennifer McKee commented online. Principal Klock that was the largest concentration of good news I've seen squeezed into under an hour in years. The book vending machine is so fantastic. Thank you so much and congratulations to your whole staff, your students, and your families. This was an outstanding presentation because you do outstanding work.

Trustee John McEwen commented. Principal Klock what is the process when a child or staff member is diagnosed with COVID?

Ms. Klock replied to Trustee McEwen's question. That process is handled by my school nurse and county health. That is completely part of her work regarding our COVID cases. The only thing that we make sure we provide to her is the seating charts for our students. As far as any classroom work they might miss, that is provided by our classroom teachers. That is a part of a wide variety of things we may provide.

Board Vice Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. I have a question about the summer camp. I know that the objective was to target kids in certain areas and I'm sure you have lots of anecdotal evidence to show their growth. Was any data collected to see where they grew in those targeted, foundational areas during the summer?

Ms. Klock responded to Ms. Hathhorn's question. Data was collected at the beginning and the end of summer school. The other two summer schools have already compiled their data, and right now we are still compiling Bryant's information to share out with the other schools.

Trustee Libby Goldes commented. I would like to echo the comments the other trustees have made about the great presentation and the great feel here at Bryant school. We are so glad that we have 5-day instruction occurring in our district. It sounds as if you really focused on meeting the needs of all the students with the various programs that you have implemented. Could you share any thoughts on how technology has helped special education in any way?

Ms. Klock responded to Ms. Goldes question. It has helped in some ways because we must make sure we teach the expectations. Sometimes technology can be frustrating for not only the adults, but sometimes for our students, so we really try to make sure the technology is

enhancing the classroom. A lot of our special education students are using the My Pathway from iREADY which is tailored to what they need, as well as anything we are doing with our small group instruction, it may have technology integrated into it, so they are really using technology to enhance the classroom. It is really helping some of our special education students.

Trustee Libby Goldes commented with another question. Have the families been able to grasp that and been able to support their children when they are not able to be at school? Or has that been an additional frustration?

Ms. Klock responded to Ms. Goldes questions. I think that is something that every parent is feeling right now because I have two children of my own who seem to know how to work everything including my phone better than I do. So, a lot of our families are really relying on their students to help teach them how to work the technology. We have also sat with families and showed them how to do TEAMS here at the school. We have had to a combination of both.

Trustee Libby Goldes asked if there were enough Chromebooks for each student. Ms. Klock commented. We are in the process of making sure that all our students have a device. We do have a few devices that have some issues because of students taking them back and forth, but we do have quite a few devices in this building to make sure that our students have access to technology if we need it.

Trustee Libby Goldes commented. Going forward what is it we can do for you?

Ms. Klock responded. My concern for my staff is that this is a tough year. We thought COVID was done and that we could go back to normal, and now we are back to COVID 2.0. I just want to make sure we are providing as much support as we possibly can and shouting from the rooftops how amazing this staff and our students are.

Trustee Terry Beaver commented. Thank you very much for what your staff does and what you do for this community. With all your programs that you have going it surely appears that you are touching all kids and families and doing it very well. What is impressive is you and your staff are doing more than just teaching, you are providing an atmosphere that is must greater in support than just school. You are changing behavior and you are changing social attitude and it is extremely commendable.

## **V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Superintendent Wertz commented. I appreciate Principal Klock and her presentation, as well as this board and the questions that they had for her. This was my very first work session, and I appreciated the opportunity to listen and to learn.

Superintendent Weltz began his Superintendent report with recognition. Congratulations to Capital High School graduate Wes Bruski. Wes is the first-place winner in the national Masters of CAM Wildest Parts Competition. Wes, who is studying machining at Flathead Valley Community College, will receive \$3,000 for taking first place against some tough competition.

Congratulations to Lucy Lantz and Eric Callery, of Helena High, who were recently named National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists. They represent less than 1% of the top scores in the US on last year's PSAT.

Congratulations to both boys and girls Capital High golf teams- each finished in first place in the AA Western Divisional meet. Good luck as they head to the state golf tournament.

In the music field, I'm proud to report that 24 students representing both high schools have been selected to perform with the All-State Band, Orchestra and Choir Festival in Great Falls October 20-22. The students are selected through a rigorous audition process conducted in the spring and are recognized as the best musicians in the state. Congratulations to those students.

Recently I have had the great opportunity to go out and visit schools. These last two weeks I visited Capital High School and Helena High School. It has been so great to see staff and students in action.

Superintendent Weltz moved on to discuss new business. Superintendent Weltz commented about the focus the past few months being on COVID and transportation. Mr. Weltz also discussed rapid testing within the district, as well as working with the union on an MOU for COVID leave for staff. In conclusion, Mr. Weltz discussed outreach with the community. Mr. Weltz is a new member of the Montana Quality Education Coalition on which he will serve as a director.

Trustee John McEwen commented. Do we need to have the parents' approval/permission to do a rapid test?

Superintendent Weltz responded. Yes, absolutely we do need parents' permission to rapid test a student.

Board Vice Chair Siobhan Hathorn commented. All your work with COVID is appreciated, as well as your entire team. With the elementary age vaccine coming out, can we look ahead and possibly get vaccination clinics at the elementary schools to get as many kids vaccinated as possible?

Superintendent Weltz commented. I agree 100 percent. Again, parental choice but once those become available, we will work with our public health in looking at vaccination clinics. They are a bit compromised in the number of staff they need to perform or put on clinics, but we will work with them to see what we can do to support them.

**VI. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was offered.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Items for Action**

1. Approval of the Health Insurance Stop Loss Carrier for the 2021-2022 School Year.  
Rich Franco, Human Resource Benefits Manager for the Helena School District, commented. Every year we go through a stop loss quote process with our consultants. Stop loss is an insurance for insurance. It helps cover costs for high-cost claims and for our claims going over a certain threshold. That way we don't go belly up and we are able to continue funding our plan for years to come. With that said, the Health Benefits committee reviews the top bids from each third-party administrator: Allegiance and Alliant. After reviewing all these bids, they decided to vote and approve the Unum A option from Allegiance.

**Motion:** Trustee John McEwen moved to approve the health insurance stop loss carrier for the 2021-2022 school year as presented. Board Vice Chair Siobhan Hathorn seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

**B. Consent Action Items**

1. Approval of the 04.27.2021 Board of Trustees Work Session Minutes.
2. Resolution to dispose of personal property-Chromebooks.

**Motion:** Trustee Libby Goldes moved to approve the consent action items. Trustee John McEwen seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

**VIII. BOARD COMMENTS**

Trustee Libby Goldes commented. I would like to thank John for his membership on the Health Benefits Committee and all the other members because this is a very important benefit for our staff and making these decisions are important in order to have a healthy plan so we can continue to offer these benefits. Thank you.

Trustee Jennifer McKee commented. I wanted to mention how excited I am about the testing. Those tests are a lifeline, and a lot of parents don't know where to find them, so I am so thankful that we will be able to provide that. Thanks to everyone who made that happen.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 pm.