



Superintendent
Rex Wertz
324-2001

Business Manager
Janelle Mickelson
324-2040

Board of Trustees Meeting

Lincoln Center
1325 Poplar St., Helena, MT 59601
And on TEAMS

Tuesday, December 14th, 2021
5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted.

Luke Muszkiewicz, Board Chair
Siobhan Hathhorn, Vice Chair
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee
Terry Beaver, Trustee
John McEwen, Trustee
Elizabeth “Libby” Goldes, Trustee
Janet Armstrong, Trustee
Jennifer McKee, Trustee
Eliza Lay, Capital High School Representative

Rex Wertz, Superintendent
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Brian Cummings, Assistant Superintendent
Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Gary Myers, Technology Administrator
Stacy Collette, Human Resources Administrator
Karen Ogden, Communications Officer
Jane Shawn, HEA President

Many guests of the public

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz commented. This is our last meeting of 2021. This is the first meeting in our new board room here in the Lincoln Center and I want to thank Superintendent Weltz, Ms. Collette, Mr. Myers, Mr. Brewer, and everyone who worked so hard to put together this space.

II. REVIEW AGENDA

No changes to the agenda were made.

III. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Rex Weltz began his Superintendent Report by thanking the people that worked on Lincoln Center. Helena Public Schools Custodian Josh Morrow was recognized by Superintendent Weltz for his swift action to put out a small fire at C.R. Anderson Middle School Monday morning. The fire, which was out within minutes, was caused by a short in a light ballast. Mr. Weltz proceeded to thank Mr. Boyle and his team for a great work session at Helena Middle School. Mr. Weltz also thanked Dr. Randall and his staff at Rossiter, as well as Mr. Morrison and his staff from Four Georgians. Superintendent Weltz and his Administrative staff visited Rossiter and Four Georgians for site visits and toured the schools and met with the staff. Mr. Weltz thanked Mr. Jim Weber from Capital High for inviting the Administrative Team and the Trustees on a tour of the Boeing manufacturing plant. Superintendent Weltz recognized Shodair Children's Hospital for reaching out to the Helena School District employees and for offering a dinner and gathering centered around responding to community loss, learning about trauma, and learning the tools to help each other during times of loss and tragedy. Mr. Weltz proceeded to recognize Zach Keller, a 17-year-old at Capital High. Zach is working on his Eagle Scout project and came up with a memorial garden to honor those who died at Pearl Harbor 80 years ago. Mr. Weltz recognized the Capital High School Science and Green Clubs for creating trees for the Intermountain Festival of Trees. Superintendent Weltz next recognized Mr. Helseth and the C.R. Anderson Middle School Choir, and Mr. Harris and the Capital High School Orchestra for their outstanding performances at the Lincoln Center. Mr. Harris and the Capital High School Orchestra also did a wonderful job performing for Hometown Helena. Mr. Weltz recognized Ms. Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager, and her team for their work and effort this week with the financial audit. Lastly, Mr. Weltz recognized the wonderful work of the people in the District office. They call themselves the elves. For the last fifteen years, they have been selecting students in the District that come from families in need, and shop for Christmas presents to give them a great Christmas. This year they bought presents for 48 students.

Superintendent Weltz moved on to discuss new business. The second round of vaccination clinics were conducted at Bryant, and many families chose to participate in the vaccination clinic. Mr. Weltz mentioned that Kindergarten registration is coming up in January immediately after winter break. Mr. Weltz also discussed the family and staff survey, and the Special Education Program review.

Superintendent Weltz commented that when the students return from winter break on January 4th, that grades Pre-K through 8 would become mask optional.

To conclude the Superintendent Report, Superintendent Weltz discussed his outreach in the community including HEF, AA Superintendents, HEA, Teacher Advisory, Parent Advisory, Cabinet pre-evaluation meetings, media opportunities, and the Lewis and Clark Board of Health.

Luke Muszkiewicz, Board Chair, commented. I appreciate you mentioning the concert for Hometown Helena, it was indeed impressive. Mr. Harris mentioned that there will be another concert coming up at Capital High and a special concert at the Capital Rotunda. Board Chair Muszkiewicz mentioned that if a family does not receive the survey, they can reach out to their school Principal, and they can give them a link to the survey. Mr. Muszkiewicz thanked Superintendent Weltz for the way that he has communicated his decision-making process the entire year, and especially the last few weeks regarding masking. Mr. Muszkiewicz thanked him for sending out the Friday updates externally and communicating internally in the District. Board Chair Muszkiewicz also thanked Ms. Barb Ridgway and the nurses in the District for their work with rapid testing.

IV. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Loni Blair commented. So first and foremost, I'll be making statements, not questions. So, until I'm finished speaking, there's no need or requirement for anyone else to speak. I'm one of the people and not subject to the rules or regulations of your Board. So, time limits mean nothing to me, or anyone else speaking. I assure you not hearing what I have to say will be extremely detrimental to both your office and you individually. My name is Loni Blair and my children do not attend this school, but I'm here for them for a simple reason. They will know when tyranny and tyrants came to town, their Mom and Grandma stood, smiled, and kicked its butt out of town. Here is a bit of scripture from Luke 17:2, "it would be better for him to have a millstone hung around his neck and to be thrown into the sea than to cause one of these little ones to stumble." The Bible repeats this several times and I urge all of you sitting here tonight to read that and hear what it says. Judgment will be done in this life or the next and I hope you're prepared. Ms. Blair then discussed Title 59 Public Officers in General-Chapter Four Oath of Office 59-401, and Montana Code Annotated 2021 Chapter Two Standards of Conduct Part One Code of Ethics. Montana Constitution Montana Code Annotated 2021 Article Two Declarations of Rights Section Three Inalienable Rights. Ms. Blair went on to discuss surety bonds in detail and commented that a public office bond is a type of surety bond that serves as the step of a statutory obligation requiring faithful performance fidelity and integrity. Ms. Blair commented. I would like to require a vote by all members both bonded and not, on any and all COVID guidelines to continue or revoke, nothing in any of this is bound by law simply words put on a paper by non-governing bodies.

Dennison Rivera is the chairman of the Montana Young Republicans. Mr. Rivera commented. Over 500 Montanans signed a vote of confidence letter supporting our State Superintendent, Elsie Arntzen, and I quote, "we write to refute the unauthorized, no confidence letter recently sent to you by certain school Superintendents gone rogue. These Superintendents spoke no authority from their local school boards, or the parents and students they purport to serve. We remind you and the news media that the Superintendents are nothing more than unelected bureaucrats who do not represent the people of the

state of Montana. The people elected you twice and we are delighted that they did so. We thank you sincerely for the compassion, the professional and steadfast support you offer to local school boards, and most of all parents and students. We are so proud of you and the work you do.” Mr. Rivera went on to discuss that when it comes to governing bodies and elected officials, people feel ignored, and they feel as if they have no say or voice in the decisions that are being made in their community. Mr. Rivera said he would like nothing more than to see healing in our community where the Board can reconnect with parents and do right by them and wants parents in the community to be heard and respected.

Darby Bramble is a parent of three Helena School District children. Ms. Bramble thanked the Board. Ms. Bramble commented that her children just received reflective tape from the District to put on their backpacks and it was wonderful to be able to talk to her boys about safely walking to and from school, and how thankful she was for the tape. She also said it has been a joy to watch her children in sports this year, and that the District and Board has stood solid in supporting kids and how much she appreciates that.

Erik Martini has three children in the school district. Mr. Martini commented that he wanted to discuss masks yet again. Mr. Martini said an event took place at Jim Darcy Elementary School a few weeks ago, and at this event there were hundreds of individuals that were not wearing masks. Mr. Martini said children and staff members are still required to wear masks for seven hours a day at the school. Mr. Martini said he contacted the District, and a school District representative called him back and left a message explaining facility use agreements versus school sponsored events, and there are different rules for after school hours. Mr. Martini said the whole intent of the forced masking policy was to save lives, right? But somehow 30 minutes after the last bell rings, all COVID rules go out the window and that COVID knows when the school day is over. Mr. Martini also mentioned that at that event there would have been hundreds of people talking, coughing, sneezing, touching railings and door handles the evening before his children go to school the next day. Mr. Martini said that parents are not even allowed to watch their children’s Christmas performances in person, masked. Mr. Martini commented. I am here today to demand we rescind the mass policy immediately, and not on January 4th. The district should never have been forcing children to wear a medical device like this. You should have never had that power.

Robyn Mohs commented. We live in a microbiome world, and scientists will tell you that we live around bacteria and viruses all over the place, and we get to individually decide what we do for our own families and ourselves in order to combat how those affect us. What we believe and what you believe are two different things and you cannot force your beliefs on families, and on kids through material and teaching that you're doing in schools. There are policies about what you can teach our kids as far as beliefs go. If you want to follow your policies, you need to look further at what you already have in the books about beliefs and masks being medical devices. Ms. Mohs concluded by stating that she signed the letter stating she has confidence in State Superintendent, Elsie Arntzen.

Tammy Stefanik commented regarding the vaccine clinics on our public property and mentioned (VAERS), which stands for Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System. Ms. Stefanik said this year there have been 19 deaths, ages 6 to 17, from the Phizer Covid vaccine. Ms. Stefanik said it is concerning to her that we continue to encourage and host these vaccination clinics when any individual in our community can get one for their child tomorrow, yet we are using our school resources, and our nurses.

Ms. Stefanik concluded by saying she would urge us to consider what we're doing and our use of public property for promoting vaccination clinics.

Heidi Keaster commented. When you make these decisions, I think you owe us the science and the logic on why you think the cloth masking works. If you're going to consider masking you might want to do the N95 masks. Ms. Keaster commented that she was disappointed that our Superintendent signed the letter to Elsie. Ms. Keaster agreed that we need to heal the community and give answers with scientific logic and reasoning why we are masking or not masking.

Courtney McAdams is a parent of two children in the district. Ms. McAdams commented. I am thankful that we are getting rid of these masks. It's been a very long haul for my elementary student who had an authorized mask waiver but could never do that in school because the peer pressure was so strong from the other kids who did not think it was fair that he was able to not wear these masks when they had to. And so, he took it upon himself to be a good citizen and wear his mask even though he was not required to, and his physician recommended that he not. That gives you an understanding of how much this was disliked by our students, and how unfair they felt that it was. Ms. McAdams said she would like to see the science and the data for any future decisions. Ms. McAdams commented that we need to focus our resources on kids that are behind and bring kids up to grade level and beyond. Ms. McAdams commented. I hope that as a Board, you will allocate as many resources as you possibly can to getting our kids above where they need to be in a productive, positive, academic, and rigorous environment on a daily basis.

Christene Sorem commented. I just found out at parent teacher conferences that my kids are behind in school. I should have found out as soon as they took those tests, not three months after. I'm grateful that the masks are off, and I believe they should be off tomorrow. Why wait? We have waited long enough, and my kids need to be able to breath in school. The last two years I'm bummed I had to miss out on my kids in elementary school-taking them treats and getting to meet their friends in the classroom. I only get six years with them in elementary school, and I missed out on two already. I want to be there. I want to volunteer. I want to meet their friends. I want to be involved in their lives and I can't do that when I can't even go in. I'm not okay with this and I want the restrictions removed tomorrow.

Kate Cirullo commented regarding the event that was held at Jim Darcy on November 22nd. Ms. Cirullo commented that a funeral is always worth celebrating one's life, and it wasn't the type of event itself, but that a public event was held at all. Ms. Cirullo commented that holding this event at Jim Darcy was not appropriate given that kids and staff are required to wear masks during school hours. Ms. Cirullo commented. Please explain to me how it makes sense that you have to wear a mask at 2pm but at 4pm it's okay to remove them. Did any Jim Darcy students attend the funeral? If so, how confusing. I was informed by someone working at this school that it was not properly cleaned, and that the lunch staff had to clean for two hours before they could serve lunch. I was also informed that balloons were stationed throughout the cafeteria, and a few had been sitting on the ceiling on Tuesday while kids were back in school. I didn't realize that balloons weren't allowed in the school for students. I'm curious why anyone thought this was a good idea to do to our Jim Darcy families. Ms. Cirullo commented that families are not able to attend the upcoming Christmas program and the kids must sing with a mask on. Ms. Cirullo commented. It is my understanding that middle schools can have band and choir performances after school hours, yet our elementary age kids and families are not receiving equal treatment. It all screams discrimination to be honest. How do you hold a public event with different rules

while you have Jim Darcy kids in SACC there at the same time with different rules? If 1905 is an issue for the holiday programs, then please allow us the same treatment and hold the performance after school hours.

Kristin Bishop commented. I want to thank you all for your service and dedication to our schools, to our children, and to our families. I'm both a teacher in the District and a parent of two children that attend schools in this District. I've seen a lot of the behind-the-scenes workings that have gone on the last year and a half from the Administrators, the teachers, the janitors, the paras, and from the bus drivers. I realize that things have gotten highly political and very volatile, but if we can have an ounce of perspective to know that our children are doing great, and that as a community we're looking towards the best interest of the children and recognizing that everyone is doing the best that they can. I genuinely see every day how hard you're working and that you're working for the best interest of each child in this District. I just want to thank you all for your hard work and hope you have a more peaceful and smoother 2022.

Scott and Paige Pfahler commented. As parents of four kids in the Helena Public Schools we are asking for the removal of the mask mandate immediately. Your reasoning stated at the beginning of the year regarding the vaccine being available to the high school therefore no need to mandate the masks at that level should now be applied to grades K-8. With the vaccine being available to kids 5-11, (many already receiving their second shot) it seems discriminatory to force these kids to remain in masks. Please don't discriminate against our children.

Luke Muszkiewicz, Board Chair, commented. Thank you everyone, both in person and online for sharing your viewpoints with us, we really do appreciate it. It is important input for all of us to have. You can always send us an email to boardoftrustees@helenaschools.org. We appreciate our community members who choose to reach out to us via email as well. So, thank you very much. We will now move on to our New Business Consent Action Items.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consent Action Items

1. Approval of 11.09.21 Board Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of Personnel Actions
3. Approval of Warrants
4. Approval of Out of District Attendance Agreement
5. Acknowledgment of Out of District Attendance Agreements

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz commented. At this point I would entertain a motion to approve our Consent Action Items.

Motion: Trustee John McEwen moved to approve the consent action items as written. Siobhan Hathhorn, Vice Chair, seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 motion carries.

D. REPORTS

1. Helena Education Association Report

Jane Shawn, President of the Helena Education Association, commented. Good evening. I also wanted to say that it is great to be here in the Lincoln Center. It's nice to have everybody in one place. Huge shout out to the carpenters, painters, electricians, movers, and everyone who made this possible. As I told you before, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is a highly rigorous, highly respected professional certification for teachers. In order to achieve National Board Certification, teachers must provide clear, concise, and convincing evidence through written commentary, student work, videos, and assessment of the five core propositions of the National Board. These core propositions include-teachers are committed to students and their learning, teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students, teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning, teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience, and teachers are members of learning communities. That said, I'm incredibly pleased to announce that both Jodi Delaney, a Montessori teacher at Broadwater, and Hope Morrison, the librarian at Hawthorne and Helena Middle School, successfully completed their Maintenance of Certification for National Board, which means they have certification for an additional five years. I'm also incredibly pleased to announce our newest National Board teachers-Katie Litterski, Four Georgians Instructional Coach, and Kristen Lyndes (Ugetti-Lyndes), Four Georgians 4th grade teacher. They both achieved initial certification this past cycle. These amazing teachers spent hundreds of hours of time to become certified. And Kristen while in the midst of writing a written commentary for one of the four components said to me, "regardless of whether I achieve or not, I'm a better, more reflective teacher now than I was before, simply by going through this process". So, congratulations to Jodi, Hope, Katie, and Kristen.

2. Budget & Finance Committee Report

Trustee John McEwen commented. Mr. Chairman, we did not meet in December. The main reason was the audit was going on, so the staff was otherwise deployed to doing that. So, we'll meet in January with the full agenda.

3. Teaching & Learning Committee Report

Committee Chair Jennifer McKee was unable to attend the December Teaching and Learning meeting, so committee member Siobhan Hathorn commented with the report. We had a very impressive and comprehensive update on the curriculum process and how it's changed over the last 10 to 20 years. I learned a lot during this presentation, and I thought Joslyn Davidson and her staff did an excellent job in informing the Board as to what's going on and I'll try to summarize that as concisely as I can. First of all, curriculum used to be where you looked at a series, such as a Math book and you gave it to some teachers, they tried it out and then decided whether it met our needs and then would purchase it or not. It is completely changed now, and the part that I thought was

really intriguing was there's a lot of data to support that the jobs and the tasks that students need to do are unknown, and that's been happening over the last 10 years. And so instead of having more content, we have gone to a more skills based and general based approach so that students when they graduate, for whatever they want to do, will be well prepared to do a variety of things. That has completely changed the way that we look at curriculum. The curriculum review process has turned into a yearly event where the standards are reviewed and then they're matched to our resources. So instead of just looking at a book to meet that, we see what the kids know, where our holes are, what we need to do to supplement, what resources we must get in the hands of the teachers and then into the hands of the students so that we can fill those holes or meet some of the standards that they need to know. Some of the things that the audience have talked about today is actively being addressed by our curriculum. We were lucky to meet four of the Instructional Coaches that were mentioned just previously. They not only serve as Instructional Coaches at the buildings where they are helping teachers fill those learning gaps, but they also serve on the Curriculum Committee. So, we have an expert from the teaching level in Science, Social Studies, English, Language, Arts, and Math there. They are the liaison between the Administrators and what's really happening in the buildings. In summary it was super meaningful, and I think an exciting direction that our District is going, and I was very thankful for that presentation.

Trustee Beaver commented. Has there been discussion on what percentage of our adoptions result in online texts as opposed to hard text?

Ms. Hathhorn replied. The Reading and Math, at the elementary level, has been augmented and is still in place from say 10 years ago. At that point, it had a lot of online resources and those are continually updating. The other online piece that was presented and is extremely valuable is the standards that they're pinpointing and the holes and the needs that we have in our District are tied to a document the teachers can access that has many resources that they can use to fill specific holes that they see.

Mr. Beaver commented. Are there course offerings in which there is no text, and it is all online resources?

Ms. Hathhorn replied. I'm not sure. This particular presentation was more on the curriculum review process, and I think Joslyn would have to answer that question.

Trustee Janet Armstrong commented. As you're looking at these kinds of intervention strategies, how are we tracking the impact they have?

Ms. Hathhorn replied. They did mention that they're tied to all our assessments, including our iReady that was implemented last year, as well as the SBAC, and ACT.

Trustee Jennifer McKee commented. We have state assessments and District assessments, but there are assessments that happen every week. They are small and built in, and kids are assessed to see if they are hitting a target, and they get bursts of instruction to accompany that every day. It all builds on itself, so we don't wait for one

big, standardized test to say we should have been doing something different back in September.

Ms. Armstrong commented. Do we have a process for sharing that with the other schools?

Ms. Hathhorn replied. It's happening at every school. This district is putting a huge amount of energy into pinpointing and doing those weeklong interventions and testing at the beginning of the week. If the student is identified with a need, they are tested again at the end of the week to make sure that they have accomplished that. If they haven't, there is further remediation, if they have, then you move on to a higher level of skill. We have coaches at every elementary, middle school, and high school building that are helping the teachers go through that process. They are called WIN (What I Need) groups. That is where kids are separated into different groups with different educators to get something specific, and it's very targeted, very intentional, and I think very exciting.

Superintendent Weltz commented. One of our goals was to build in K12 consistent programs throughout our buildings. There are pockets of greatness that's going on and what the coaches and academic coaches have been able to help us with is that we are able to be more solidified and congruent across the District. Best practices in one grade or one school is also shared with our coaches and then disseminated out to the rest of the District.

4. Policy Committee Report

Committee Chair Libby Goldes commented. We met a week ago and had some very in-depth discussions about the first policy, 1085 Uniform Complaint Policy, and then we were able to spend some time on student discipline, but the result was that we decided that they both needed to come back to the committee before they came to the full board. So that is the report.

5. Facilities & Maintenance Committee Report

Committee Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. Our goal is to have a Facilities Master Plan which will be updated yearly in a living document that can help guide us in our facilities decisions, and our plan has not been updated since 2013. Our goal for the year is to get that complete so that we can make more informed facilities decisions. We held a special Board meeting on the second of December, and that was to have an opportunity to hear from all our Board members, because facilities decisions impact every aspect of education. So that was an opportunity for us to get a general idea of where the Board was sitting and how we would move forward. We got some really good information that Ms. Collette compiled for us from that meeting, and then we took that to our committee meeting on the 13th. We are in the midst of having an updated Deferred Maintenance Report which tells us what is working in our buildings and what needs to be improved upon. That will be done for our next meeting on January 10th. We also had an update on the May Butler building and we're so happy that we've had such a successful move from our Administration down here. That does leave a vacant building up there on Rodney

Street, and there were a few options that were presented and will be discussed in our Facilities Plan. We also discussed what needs to happen so that we can decide whether to put the building reserve levy on the May ballot and that is also pending on the Deferred Maintenance Report which we should hear about on January 10th. We are moving forward with doing requests for qualifications. The Facilities Master Plan is a large document that is very complicated and needs specialists such as demographers and architects and expertise that we don't necessarily have in house. So, we will be looking at hiring a firm to update that and so we'll start with a request for qualifications and then move as quickly as possible to the request for proposal and hopefully get that ball rolling so that we'll be in good shape to make informed facilities decisions. I just really want to thank the Board members for taking that time to come together and have an extra meeting. As you know, it's a busy time of year and I'm just appreciative and want to thank you for coming and sharing your views and giving us the information that we need.

6. Health Benefits Committee Report

Trustee John McEwen commented. The Health Benefits Committee met this afternoon and we spent most of the meeting reviewing a year-end report from Allegiance. A couple of brief takeaways- costs are going up somewhere in the five to eight percent range, and our group is a bit below some benchmarks, meaning our costs aren't as high as some. I need to take more time to digest everything they've presented, and next time I can give more information about the health of our plan.

7. Wellness Committee Report

Trustee Jennifer Walsh commented. This was a wellness committee meeting that was combined with both the nutrition subcommittee and our physical activity subcommittee. Our concentration was on trying to see if we could have a newsletter created with some specific content and goals in mind. We are trying to focus on awareness for the committee, especially out in the community, and the resources and information that we can provide. We were wanting to really focus on who we are, what our goals are, who makes up the membership, our passion, our purpose, etc. We're going to be looking at how we can put that content together, and we hope to have that done in January. We're hoping to collaborate with the District office to put a brand together and design a logo that's appealing to our community and it's not something that's just tossed aside. We're also looking at a social media campaign that's in the very early stages. We're trying to figure out timelines, what that might look like with content and things, so some ideas were tossed around with that. We are continuing to move forward with the Harvest of the Month program inside of our schools. I believe there are six currently. That is put on by St. Peter's Health and they have a representative who's leading that program. It was neat to hear the focus, the creativity, and the information that's provided to the students. We will be meeting as a full committee February 9th, but we will have our subcommittees, so for January I will hopefully have some information on individual subcommittees.

8. Montana School Boards Association Report

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz commented. There's been some good trainings going on and I hope all of you receive those email invites and I would encourage you, if there's ever a training that you're interested in, to reach out to me or Ms. Mickelson to get signed up. Trustee Goldes, Trustee Armstrong, and I participated in the Title Nine training as did our HR director, Ms. Collette. Our District has already been through Title Nine training, but it was a good refresher. We typically have a January board meeting that we are not having this year, because it seems like two thirds of the time, we end up canceling it due to weather, so our next board meeting will be in March, likely along with our delegate assembly. At that delegate assembly you will remember that we as a statewide organization consider individual resolutions related to our legislative advocacy platform. In the past four and a half years, we have not submitted a specific resolution. If any of you have thoughts in terms of specific legislative agenda items that you'd like to pursue, let's have that conversation and think about putting together a resolution. We would act on it as a Board, and if it passed, it would go to the MTSBA delegate assembly, and they would consider it. So that's always an option for us.

9. Student Representatives Report

Eliza Lay, Capital High School Representative, commented. The Capital High community, with help from the Student Council, funded over fifty, \$50 food gift cards, to support Capital High families over the holiday break. Counselors will determine which families receive this support. The Capitol High National Honor Society hosted a Christmas Toys for Tots drive and filled four big cardboard boxes, which is more than we've ever gotten. Capitol High is currently hosting a talent show this Thursday, and the top candidates will perform next Wednesday. The staff continues to focus on our two academic goals, the literacy goal, and the instructional goal. Likewise, we continue to focus on student social and emotional health. Orchestra students will be performing for staff during lunchtime on Tuesday and culinary students will be providing treats. There are two more orchestra holiday concerts. The Capitol High advanced orchestra will be performing Thursday, December 16th at the Capitol rotunda. All the orchestras combined will be performing Tuesday, December 21st. The winter iReady assessment will occur in the middle of January, and all freshmen through juniors will be taking this assessment. We will now be able to compare student data from the fall benchmark to the winter benchmark. I'd like to do a quick shout out to our swim team. Our first swim meet was in Butte this past Friday. Helena High girls took first, Capital High girls took third, Capital High boys took first, and Helena High boys took fourth. Winter formal is in the planning, and we have booked the Civic Center for some time in February.

Rylie Schoenfeld, Helena High School Representative, was absent, so Ms. Lay gave the report on behalf of Ms. Schoenfeld. Helena High has finished up a very successful fall activity season with lots of statewide recognition for our teams and athletes in cross-country, volleyball, football, and soccer. Transition to winter activities has started with performances by our choir, orchestra, and band, with larger audiences in attendance than last year. There is a band concert happening tonight at Helena Middle School, and there was a band concert last night at Capitol High School. Sam Geary on guitar and Ryan

Burke on alto saxophone were both selected for the All-State jazz band. Helena high will have a winter assembly of sorts on Wednesday prior to the break. No whole school gathering will be held but music groups will be performing, and student council will be hosting events and giving away prizes throughout the day. Spirit Week activities will coincide with this final week. Student Council is also planning winter formal, and information is still to be discussed. The end of the first semester is coming up on January 20th.

VII. BOARD COMMENTS

Trustee John McEwen commented that a significant change which is allowing us to go mask optional is the fact that children have the option to be vaccinated coupled with the decrease in our rate of infection in our area.

Trustee Janet Armstrong commented. I wanted to bring up there was a post on Facebook last week, the post is now down. The school District did reach out to the individual posting it and none of the information in the post is accurate. So, I just wanted to let you know what the post said. I'm not going to talk about the person that posted it. But it said "Parents I'm researching what agendas are being pushed in Helena Schools, especially Jim Darcy. I will be an advocate for your children. I've been told they're banning Harry Potter books and will no longer have a Christmas tree. Also heard they're pushing children to use pronouns. What are you hearing is happening in the schools? This picture is from a classroom at Bryant. This can't be allowed here. Stop being silent to this liberal communist agenda and take our schools back from them. Helena, read these comments. I understand that the communist agenda is here in Helena and unless you stand up to it, they're coming for your children or grandchildren. Now isn't the time to be quiet." So, I want to reiterate my thought. We reached out and none of the information is accurate. I totally support people having concerns and coming before the Board. In fact, every Board member here is a parent, a current or former student, and we're all up here because we care about this community. So, I do really encourage that, and I really value it, because each time we hear different perspectives from different families, that helps me form a complete idea of what's happening. But it's another thing to start seeing some of this stuff, and that does concern me. It concerns me as well that the Superintendent was threatened following the letter that was posted. So, I really appreciate everyone here and the respectful manner in which you engaged with us. The reality is we're all neighbors, and even though we have different methods of approach, we're all going for the same goal, and if you have concerns, please bring them to us.

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz commented. I would like to give a special shout out to our building Administrators, our Principals, and Assistant Principals. I really appreciate the work that's being done, and I know that the teachers, the paras, the librarians, and the nurses are doing the exact same thing. I just want to wish everyone Happy Holidays. This is our last full board meeting of the year. I hope everyone can find some time to rest, relax, and stay safe. It was pointed out to me my first year as a Trustee that this holiday break isn't easy for everyone. We have families in our community who are struggling with homelessness and food scarcity. We have kids who are dealing with that and don't have a warm place to go for a week and a half, and

oftentimes don't have the food they need. I just want to say I appreciate Superintendent Wertz talking about the elves at the District office, and I know there are so many similar efforts in each one of our schools. So many community partners, Helena Food Share and Toys for Tots, just to name two that I think are really going above and beyond to make sure that all our students and their families can have a safe and happy holiday break and celebrate as they see fit.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The board meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary Date