



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, May 24th, 2022 | Tour at 3:30 / 4:00pm | Warren Elementary and via TEAMS

MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Trustees *Others*

Siobhan Hathhorn, Board Chair	Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Jennifer McKee, Vice Chair	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent 6-12
Luke Muszkiewicz, Trustee	Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Kay Satre, Trustee	Janelle Mickelson, Business Services Administrator
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee	Robert Brewer, Facilities Manager
Janet Armstrong, Trustee	Brian Cummings, Assistant Superintendent K-6
	Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
	Jane Shawn, HEA President
	Tia Wilkins, Principal of Warren Elementary
	Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Administrator
	Tim McMahon, Activities Administrator
	Shane Snyder, Senior Infrastructure & Information Systems Manager
	Many Warren Elementary Staff Members and Students
	Many Helena Public School Employees
	Many Guests of the Helena Community

I. TOUR OF WARREN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

II. CALL TO ORDER/ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn called the meeting to order at 4:17 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. REVIEW OF AGENDA

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn reviewed the agenda with the Board of Trustees and there were no changes to the agenda.

IV. PRESENTATION:

Warren Elementary Principal, Tia Wilkins, began with a Power Point presentation which she presented to the Trustees. Ms. Wilkins discussed that the mission of Helena Public Schools is to 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. At Warren School, the staff is committed to develop students who will be lifelong learners, academically capable, and socially responsible. Our goal is to offer a safe and secure environment for all students in order to foster their individual growth and development. The Warren Words to Live By are: *"We are kind, honest, safe, respectful, and responsible."* Principal Wilkins reviewed the student demographics at Warren. There are 311 students enrolled, 38% are on the free and reduced lunch program, 29 students are enrolled in SACC, and 5 students are enrolled in PEAK. For Warren special education services, 27 students are on IEPs, 25 students are speech only IEPs, and there are 9 students on a 504 plan. There are 66 students enrolled in the Angel Fund program and 70 students that are in the food pack program. Warren is a 3/2 model school, which means there are 3 kindergarten classrooms, 3 first grade classrooms, 3 second grade classrooms, 2 third grade classrooms, 2 fourth grade classrooms, and 2 fifth grade classrooms. The year-to-date attendance rate is 91% and the parent teacher conference attendance average for the last 3 years is 98%.

Principal Wilkins reviewed the staff demographics at Warren Elementary with the Trustees:

- 15 classroom teachers
- 1 Title 1 Teacher
- 2 Special Education teachers
- 1 Speech/Language Pathologist
- 1 Counselor
- 1 CSCT therapist and 1 Behavior Specialist (Shodair)
- 1 Librarian
- 2 P.E. teachers (shared with Central and Bryant)
- 2 Music teachers (shared with Central and Bryant)
- 3 SPED paras
- .5 Title para
- 3.5 General Education paras
- 1 Edgenuity learning coach
- 1 Instructional Coach
- 1 Nurse (shared with Smith)
- 1 Administrative Assistant
- 3 SACC staff

- 1 School Psychologist (shared with Rossiter)
- 2 Custodians
- 2 Kitchen staff
- 1 Administrator

Warren Elementary Secretary, Wendy Hornby, discussed Warren’s commitment to student and family relationships including:

- Ensuring students basic needs are met each day
- Students are greeted by staff each morning
- Teachers and staff are in the halls during transitions
- Their commitment to student breakfast and snack
- Having extra clothing on hand

Principal Wilkins commented. “Family engagement is a primary focus for Warren staff. For most of our families their first introduction to our community is home visits. Our kindergarten teachers and their home visit team members go to students’ homes prior to school starting. They jump on trampolines, meet beloved pets and so much more. What has struck me is in almost every Warren home that I have visited, the kindergarten home visit picture is proudly displayed. I’ve seen it on mantle places, on fridges, and above students’ beds. That home visit picture means so much to our students. I wholeheartedly attribute our strong community to home visits. Please join me in welcoming Mrs. Ralph and the Taylor family.”

Mrs. Chris Ralph, kindergarten teacher at Warren, commented. “I teach kindergarten here and one of the best things for me about this school is our commitment to our strong relationship building with our families. In kindergarten, we do our jump start and our home visits and we get our relationships going at that early age. In 2008 the District brought in the home visit project, which is research based and since then, home visits have been occurring in kindergarten. Our whole community has had such great relationships built.”

Mrs. AiryInn Pierce-Taylor, Warren parent, commented. “I am the mom of a kindergartener and a third grader, and I am honored to be here today to express the impact home visits have on our students, our families, and our teachers. When these students find out their teacher is coming to their home to visit them before school starts, they feel like the luckiest kid in the world. Kindergarten is the gateway to education and a positive experience will go so far. The teachers come over, they get to know the kids, they ask to see their favorite toys, they play a game, they see their bedroom, and then at the end they leave them a book that-by the way-they will be able to read by the end of kindergarten. Both of my kids still have these pictures on our refrigerator and never miss a chance to show people that come over the day their teacher came to visit. Having the interaction allows for building trust and a much deeper and meaningful connection for the students, teachers, and the parents. This initiates effective communication with the teachers in such a positive way. Our families could communicate anything with Mrs. Ralph effectively throughout the entire school year.

Some kindergarteners have never been to daycare or preschool, so having that familiar face the first time the parents dropped them off give the students comfort and understanding that it's going to be okay. I think the teachers also gain insight on where these students come from and what kind of family support systems they have at home. When I was asked to discuss home visits with you all today, I took the opportunity to seek feedback from several parents. Every parent I met with expressed their sincere gratitude for these visits, the bond the teacher has with them, the positive communication, the confidence boost that it gives, and the overall excitement for school that these kids get after these home visits. Every parent mentioned these exact things. Overall, I believe home visits set our students up for success and is a positive experience that these kiddos and their families very much enjoy, and I hope this will continue to go for years to come. Thank you.”

Principal Wilkins discussed the communication at Warren Elementary, including monthly community newsletters, Class Dojo, and the Warren PTO Facebook page. Ms. Wilkins mentioned at Warren, they believe in school-wide consistency and collaboration including daily agendas posted, the Warren Road Map being aligned to HSD Instructional Framework, identified areas of growth, and focus in ELA and Math, grade-level teams, weekly PLCs, pacing guides, and progress monitoring.

Principal Wilkins reviewed the Rtl Academics for ELA and Math and reviewed the different Tier levels.

- Tier 1-80% or above: *Building-wide intervention groups. Monthly progress monitoring: iReady, unit assessments, diagnostics and/or screeners, and classroom observations.*
- Tier 2-15%: *Building-wide intervention groups. Monthly progress monitoring: iReady, unit assessments, diagnostics and/or screeners, and classroom observations. Reteach time, Title I support/pullout/push-in. PAST Assessment and Vocubular/Journey’s Diagnostic, fluency, Dolch sight words, Number Sense Screener. Students receive extra support based off identified reading and/or math deficits areas.*
- Tier 3-5%: *Building-wide intervention groups. Monthly progress monitoring: iReady, unit assessments, diagnostics and/or screeners, and classroom observations. Reteach time, Title I support/pullout/push-in. PAST Assessment and Vocubular/Journey’s Diagnostic, fluency, Dolch sight words, Number Sense Screener. Students receive extra support based off identified reading and/or math deficits areas. A-Team, possible further evaluations.*

Principal Wilkins reviewed the Rtl Behavior and/or Social Emotional Tier levels.

- Tier 1: *Building-wide universals stated school-wide daily. Weekly recess meetings. Second-Step lessons taught by school counselor. Monthly student recognition parade.*
- Tier 2: *Principal/Teacher/Student meeting. Goal setting/Behavior plan. Student paired with a Warren staff member. Check-in-Program, daily check-in, weekly goals monitored and celebrated weekly (forms go home). Zones of regulation group. Peer support group/small group role play. Extra “check-ins” with the school counselor.*

Modified recess/principal/staff “helpers”/meaningful work program. CSCT program consideration. 6-10 absences per quarter.

- Tier 3: *Principal/Parent meeting. Goal setting/Behavior plan. Goals communicated to families weekly. Check-in-Program, daily check-in, weekly goals monitored and celebrated weekly (forms go home). Behavior plan. Peer Support Group. Structured recess/principal/staff “helpers”/meaningful work program. Set “check-ins” with the school counselor. CSCT program consideration. Principal Check-In. Over 10 absences per quarter.*

Principal Wilkins reviewed the iReady Reading and Math data for 21-22 Fall-Winter and for 20-21 Fall-Spring. Ms. Wilkins discussed the ELA 21-22 SY Focus was vocabulary and comprehension instruction, and the Math 21-22 SY Focus was number sense instruction. Next, Ms. Wilkins reviewed the Warren Roadmap Goals for 2021-2022.

Ashley Komac, Instructional Coach at Warren, discussed Instructional Framework including building wide trimester goals based off the District roadmap, working on implementing framework in chunks (deep not wide), weekly meetings focusing on students, data, and trimester goals, focusing on how we can support our students by supporting our teaching staff (staff climate), and mapping out each week/month. She next discussed PLCs including that the weekly focus is on student needs, whole school PLCs with once a month-topics reflecting needs from walkthrough tool and SLT meeting discussions, meeting with paras/teachers, weekly coach’s meetings (coaches PLC), focusing on our school needs and how this looks for Warren, and collaborating on Whole School PLC planning and trimester focus. Ms. Komac moved on to discuss WIN Groups including side by side teaching/coaching, finding materials to match student/group needs, data collection guides, WIN group instruction iReady/Acadience/Phonics Diagnostic, finding a “just right group” for ALL kids to reach a year of growth, and PDSAs. She then moved on to discuss SLT meetings including celebrating areas we as a staff shine and focusing on areas of growth, collaborations, and alignment to meet needs of our kids, and discussing that teachers guide our SLT meetings and drive resources that come out of meeting and working towards building wide consistency.

Principal Wilkins discussed that there are three school leadership teams at Warren including ELA and Writing, Math and Science, and Student and Family Engagement. Deborah McNay, 5th grade teacher at Warren, discussed the ELA and Writing Leadership Team and reviewed the Warren Writing Vertical Alignment, and Warren Writing Goals. Principal Wilkins discussed the Math and Science school leadership team and reviewed building number sense K-5. Molly Moore, kindergarten teacher at Warren, discussed the Student and Family Engagement leadership team at Warren and shared some of the different things their team does including Mighty Manners (Tootles), monthly parade, student council, One Book, Warren Word, reading challenge, PAX-Peaceful and Productive Classes, 5th grade celebration, tutoring, music performances, school jobs, buddy classes, and the check-in program.

Principal Wilkins discussed the supportive community at Warren Elementary including 29 parent volunteers that normally come in during non-COVID years, 35 donations to families

over the holidays, and a PTO that meets bi-monthly and helps with events such as open house, walk-to-school day, Taco John's fundraiser, Reindeer Express, 100th day Sundae, spring fundraiser, Field Day, and the Warren BBQ.

Colette Ozburn, Warren counselor, and Scott Trisinski, CSCT Therapist at Warren, discussed the social/emotional monthly focus at Warren.

- September-Identify Feelings
- October-Making Choices
- November-Friendships and Healthy Relationships
- December and January-Empathy and Compassion
- February-Conflict Resolution
- March-Coping Skills and Resilience
- April-Character Development and Goal Setting
- May-Transitions and Stress Management

Gwen Riddock, paraprofessional at Warren, discussed recess at Warren Elementary. Brice Burton, 4th grade teacher at Warren, discussed the Library program at Warren Elementary, and mentioned that there is an Art Club, Reading Club, and STEM Club. Ross Donaldson, custodian at Warren, commented. "I was really excited when Tia invited me to speak today. I've got a long history here in the school. My kids went to school here. My wife was on the PTO here at Warren when our kids went to school here, and I've worked at the school for five and a half years. We have 27,400 square feet of living space here at Warren School. About 12,700 square feet of that rests on the shoulders of the daytime custodian plus whatever may come up during the school day. 14,700 square feet is taken care of by our evening time custodian. He basically focuses on cleaning classrooms and the bathrooms. In my 5 1/2 years here, I think right now our school building is probably in the best shape it's been in since I've been here. We have had a lot of really good upgrades here, including security upgrades. In the last two years the custodial staff here has gotten brand new equipment. We have a work order system so whenever we need a professional plumber or professional electrician, we submit a work order and those professional school District staff come here and they take care of that stuff. It's nice to feel that support. I believe that the custodians here at the school are the champions for the health and well-being of the environment that the kids are being taught in. I like to say the custodians are the oil that keeps the engine running, and we take a lot of pride in this school. I don't talk about this being a school building. I talk about it as being home. This is our home, and we take care of our home, and we take a lot of pride in our home. All the staff here does, and they are very supportive of the custodial staff. I'm always amazed when we do our lunch setup. We turn this gym in five minutes from a classroom gym to a lunchroom, and we serve hundreds of kids. After lunch it's turned back into a gym again and couldn't do that without all the staff that are here at the school. We all work really well together, we are proud of this place, and it has a warm community feel. The staff and the kids here all feel like one big family. We are all working together to raise good human beings. Personally, I could give you many examples of random acts of kindness I see going on here all the time since I've been here. One of my favorite stories I'll share with you is one time at lunch we had a kid who spilled their milk. He told me he had a milk spill, and I was cleaning up the spill with a smile on my

face. The kid looks at me and asked, *Mr. Ross, why do you like messes so much? I said to him, I don't like messes, but I like you, and that is the reason why I work so hard to take care of the school because I want you to have a clean, and safe place to go to school. It is truly a labor of love. On a personal note, I want to say thank you all for your support.*"

That concluded the presentation, and Principal Wilkins asked if anyone had any questions.

Trustee Janet Armstrong commented. "How has having instructional coaches in the building helped teachers in their classroom?"

Molly Moore, kindergarten teacher at Warren, commented. "This is my second year Warren, but I've been teaching for 25 years and it's always so fun to have new eyes and new ideas. Ashley (Warren instructional coach) has set up weekly meetings with the teachers. They are optional and you can cancel if you need to-but she'll come in and work and help with whatever is needed. This is my first year in kindergarten, so she was able to watch my class while I went and watched the other kindergarten teachers teach. When I came back and said this is what I saw, this is what I want to do-she asked me what I needed help with. She is an extra support system, and it is great to share ideas with her and have her help us with our data."

Mr. Burton commented. "I think having an instructional coach has been very helpful for teachers, especially with the instructional framework. She helps bring that information and helps teachers understand and dive into it. Ashley has been great for being a resource for whatever you need, and it has been a very positive experience."

Trustee Jennifer McKee commented. "This has been so amazing. Public education really is science plus soul, and you feel that in every inch of this building and in every inch of the things that are happening inside, and it's really inspiring. I know that making a place like this doesn't happen by accident. It's all of your work. So, I want to thank you all for it. I love watching the growth charts."

Trustee Luke Muszkiewicz commented. "Thank you, Principal Wilkins, and thank you to your staff for being here and presenting. I love the commitment to greeting kids when they come to the school, and I'll just share that when I walked into the school, I was greeted by two separate kids-one of whom opened the door for me. So, it's rubbing off, and I was impressed. Each one of these work sessions is different in many ways. We all look at iReady data and we look at basic demographic information, but I just want to say I really appreciated two unique things in this presentation. One was the deep dive on home visits. We've talked about home visits before but to just have that deep dive and that insight into how that works and the impression that leaves on the student in particular is really powerful, and I really appreciate that. The last thing is I have to say is Mr. Donaldson, I really appreciate you sharing what you do here and why you do it. It is clear that Warren is lucky to have you and I'm just so thankful that you shared with us your pride and what you do every day for these students."

Siobhan Hathhorn, Board Chair, commented. "It is super apparent that you have a machine going here and we know that when people collaborate and it's organized and things are consistent, then that is the best model and the most productive, and there's lots of different ways to do it. It seems like you have found a way to get every single person engaged."

The Trustees moved on to listen to the Superintendent's Report given by Superintendent Rex Wertz.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Rex Wertz discussed recognition in his Superintendent Report which included:

- Principal Tia Wilkins and the staff at Warren Elementary School
- Congratulations to Terri Norman and the CHS BPA Chapter for being recognized with a "Quality Chapter Distinction" at the recent national conference held in Dallas. Capital High School BPA chapter was also recognized for Quality Chapter Distinction. Congratulations to the Capital High BPA students that competed at Nationals.
- Congratulations to our Capital High and Helena High students who received Superior and Excellent Ratings at the MHS State Music Festival May 6th-7th
- Capital High School welcomed its 2022 National Honor Society inductees on May 3rd.
- Congratulations to Samantha Humphrey and Buffy Smith with the Helena High BPA Chapter. They were awarded the Membership Explosion Award, the Quality Chapter Distinction Award, and the Community Service Award. Congratulations to the Helena High BPA students that competed at Nationals.
- Grad Walk Week-Graduating seniors visited their previous elementary schools and were cheered on by current students and staff.
- Congratulations to Mary Guzynski a fifth grader at Smith Elementary School who is the statewide winner of the National Missing Children's Poster Contest.
- Siobhan Hathhorn and Kay Satre were sworn in as Trustees at the May 17th Board Meeting and Janelle Mickelson was voted District Clerk.

Superintendent Wertz moved on to the New Business portion of his Superintendent Report and discussed:

- HEA - HSD Bargaining
- Reception With Director of Support Services Candidates May 19th
- Admin Matrix Discussion
- Administration Meeting at Lincoln Center May 23rd
- iReady Assessments
- Retirement Celebration May 25th at Central 4:30 p.m.

Superintendent Weltz concluded his Superintendent Report by discussing his meetings and outreach within the community including meeting with the AA Superintendents, HEA, HEF, and Parent Advisory.

That concluded the Superintendent Report portion of the agenda.

VI. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment offered.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consent Action Items

1. Approval of the 04.26.2022 Board of Trustees Work Session Minutes

Siobhan Hathorn, Board Chair, commented. "I would entertain a motion for the Consent Action Items."

Motion: Trustee Luke Muszkiewicz moved to approve the Consent Action Items as presented. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 6-0 motion carries unanimously.

B. Items for Action

1. MOU-Tentative Agreement for Teacher Salaries 2021-2022 and 2022-2023

Superintendent Rex Weltz reviewed the MOU with the Trustees and discussed the impact that this agreement would have on the budget.

Trustee Luke Muszkiewicz discussed that this proposal is in line with legislative inflationary increases, and it recognizes the revenue constraint that we have as a public school district which makes it a very reasonable proposal. Trustee Muszkiewicz also discussed the steps that have been taken in providing for budget sustainability.

Trustee Jennifer McKee thanked everyone who has been involved in this process.

Siobhan Hathorn, Board Chair, commented. "I would entertain a motion regarding this action item."

Motion: Trustee Luke Muszkiewicz moved to approve the MOU-Tentative Agreement for Teacher Salaries 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 as presented. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 6-0 motion carries unanimously.

VIII. UPCOMING MEETINGS

Siobhan Hathorn, Board Chair, discussed when the upcoming June Board meeting, summer Board Retreat, and committee meetings would be taking place.

IX. BOARD COMMENTS

There were no further comments.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary