



**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, November 8th, 2022**

5:30 p.m.

### MINUTES

**ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted.**

Siobhan Hathhorn, Board Chair  
Jennifer McKee, Vice Chair  
Kay Satre, Trustee  
Lois Fitzpatrick, Trustee  
Terry Beaver, Trustee  
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee  
Janet Armstrong, Trustee

Keiran Boyle, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees  
Loreley Drees, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees

Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director  
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent  
Brian Cummings, Assistant Superintendent  
Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager  
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff  
Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology  
Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Director  
Karen Ogden, Communications Officer  
Jane Shawn, HEA President  
Todd Verrill, Facilities Director  
Tim McMahon, Activities Director  
Steve Thennis, Helena High Principal  
Brett Zanto, Capital High Principal  
Many guests of the public as well as Helena School District staff

**I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. REVIEW AGENDA**

The Board of Trustees reviewed the agenda and no changes to the agenda were requested.

**III. RECOGNITIONS**

**A. 2022 All-State Honor Musicians**

The Board of Trustees, Capital High Principal Brett Zanto, Capital High School Band Teacher Duane Zehr, and Assistant Superintendent Josh McKay recognized the following Capital High students who were selected to the 2022 Montana All-State Honor Music Festival:

CHS Choir

Isabel Beasley-Alto II, Leolaga Brown-Bass I, Adrianna Helfrich-Alto II, Zach Heller-Tenor II, Emily Reser-Soprano II

CHS Orchestra

Lindsay Abelin-Viola, Keiran Boyle-Violin 1, Hollis Elliot-Cello, Marren Elliot-Violin 1, Makenzie Grotbo-Violin 1, Luna Hernandez-Violin 2, Charlie Snellman-Cello, Adeline Walters-Viola

CHS Band

Meika Arensmeyer-Trombone, Connor Bushnell- French Horn

The Board of Trustees, Helena High Principal Steve Thennis, and Assistant Superintendent Josh McKay recognized the following Helena High students who were selected to the 2022 Montana All-State Honor Music Festival:

HHS Orchestra

Aine Cleary-Cello, Freya Elias-Cello, Clara Harmon-Cello, Owen McDaniel-Violin 2

HHS Choir

Lyla Ackerman-Soprano II, CJ Flugge-Bass II, Aaron French-Bass II

## **B. College Board National Recognition Program**

The Board of Trustees, Assistant Superintendent Josh McKay, and Helena High Principal Steve Thennis recognized the following Helena High students who have been selected to the College Board National Recognition Program. These students earned this recognition because of their academic achievements in school and outstanding performance on the PSAT/NMSQT®, PSAT™ 10, and/or AP® Exams.

- Cameron Wittrock, Gabby Radley, Jeri Wilkerson, Nate Demmons, Robert Stimpson, and Sofia Hernandez.

## **C. MACTE Teacher of the Year**

The Board of Trustees, Assistant Superintendent Josh McKay, and Capital High Principal Brett Zanto recognized Capital High Industrial Arts Teacher Eric Croft, who was named 2022 Teacher of the Year by the Montana Association for Career and Technical Education.

## **IV. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Superintendent Rex Weltz was not in attendance, therefore, Assistant Superintendent Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent Brian Cummings, and Chief of Staff Barb Ridgway presented Superintendent Weltz's report to the Board of Trustees. The information presented included:

- Veteran's Day November 11<sup>th</sup>
- Fall Report – Mr. McKay
- Central Office Site Visit to Jim Darcy-Thank you Principal Jill Nyman and Staff
- Board of Trustees Work Session At Helena High School-Thank you Principal Steve Thennis and Staff
- Central Office Site Visit to Smith Elementary School-Thank you Principal Sarah Simpson and Staff
- Central Office Site Visit to C.R. Anderson Middle School-Thank you Principal Kathleen Prody and Staff
- National School Psychology Week November 7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>
- Thank you to the Helena Fire Department for educating Helena Public School students about fire prevention and for taking the Capital High School Boy's AA Golf State Champions on a firetruck victory loop through town

- Thank you to our community partners Helena College and Carroll College for helping our seniors complete their FAFSA financial aid applications-a critical step on the road to college
- Thank you, Exchange Club of Helena, for holding the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Coats for Kids Benefit at the Great Northern Hotel on Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup>
- HSD hosted the MFPE 2022 Educator Conference here in Helena
- Thank you to Helena High’s Joanne Didriksen and Randy Hussey for their excellent work hosting the MFPE 2022 Educator’s Conference last Thursday and Friday. Helena hosted more than 900 educators from around the state, with more than 300 in 63 classrooms across the district. Thank you, Joanne, and Randy, for helping bring these opportunities to Montana educators
- Congratulations to Capital High Educator Eric Croft for his selection as MACTE Teacher of the Year
- Thank you to Helena Food Share for providing Food Packs for HPS students in need and thank you to First Interstate Bank for your generous donation to Helena Food Share
- Thank you to Lisa Cordingley, the Helena Education Foundation, and generous donors across the Helena Community. This week HEF presented its “Spark” and “Great Ideas” grants to 14 educators across the district. I was honored to join the HEF team to award the grants, which help educators bring new and innovative ideas, projects, and experiences to their students
- Congratulations to our 2022 Let’s Talk About Great Teacher’s Honorees: Tom Baty, Choir Director at Capital High; Kristin Bishop, English Teacher at Helena Middle School; Ryan Cooney, Government, History and World Cultures teacher at PAL; Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum and Instructional Resources Administrator; Chelsey Davis, Librarian at Four Georgians Elementary; Beth Douglass, math teacher at CR Anderson Middle School; Jill Downing, Title 1 Teacher at Central Elementary, Shannon McNamee, Nurse, Capital High and Buffy Smith, Computer Science Teacher at Helena High. HEF surprised the honorees at their schools with news that they’d been selected for going above and beyond for their students and schools. Congratulations and thank you to the Helena Education Foundation for this great program

That concluded the Superintendent Report portion of the agenda. The Trustees moved on to General Public Comment.

## **V. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no general public comment.

The Board of Trustees moved on to discuss New Business-Items for Information.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Items For Information**

1. Fall Enrollment Numbers
2. Policy 4000 Public Relations

#### 1. Fall Enrollment Numbers

Mr. Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent 6-12, reviewed fall enrollment numbers with the Board of Trustees. The trustees reviewed a fall student count chart which showed fall enrollment numbers for the fall of 2021 and the fall of 2022. The Helena School District student count occurs every year the first week in October and the first week in February. Mr. McKay mentioned that there are more students this year compared to last year. Mr. Brian Cummings, Assistant Superintendent K-5, mentioned that we are up 93 students in the elementary, but kindergarten enrollment numbers are down this year. First grade numbers are high, and the district is utilizing overflow paraprofessionals in many of the first-grade classrooms across the district. Mr. McKay mentioned that this is the first year that we do not have all East Helena High School students in our district unless they choose to attend Helena Public Schools through our out of district process. Mr. McKay concluded by mentioning that we are up eleven cohorts across the district for the first time in years, which is fantastic news. Mr. McKay answered any questions the Trustees had about the fall enrollment numbers.

The Board of Trustees moved on to review Policy 4000 Public Relations.

#### 2. Policy 4000 Public Relations

Ms. Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff, presented Policy 4000 Public Relations to the Board of Trustees. The Policy Committee is in the process of conducting a general review of all policies that haven't been reviewed in the last few years. Some policies require no revision, others must be revised or totally rewritten due to changes in Montana Code or Administrative Rule and some just need minor edits. The Policy Committee is recommending minor changes to Policy 4000 to include eliminating redundancy and acknowledging surveys as a means to gather input from the community.

That concluded Items for Information. The Board of Trustees moved on to review the Consent Action Items.

### **B. Consent Action Items**

1. Personnel Actions
2. Warrants
3. Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Non-Resident Students Attending HPS)
4. Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Helena Students Attending Other Districts)
5. 10.11.22 Full Board Meeting Minutes
6. Resolution to Dispose of Personal Property-Hoist

The Board of Trustees had a robust discussion about Helena Public School students attending other school districts such as the Clancy School District or East Helena School District and mentioned that the number of students attending other districts is quite high. The Trustees concluded the discussion by stating it would be beneficial to find out more information about why those families are choosing to attend other districts, and how we could persuade families to stay in the Helena School District.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve our Consent Action Items.”

**Motion:** Trustee Jennifer McKee moved to approve the Consent Action Items. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

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

That concluded the Consent Action Items. The Board of Trustees moved on to review the Item for Action.

### **C. Item for Action**

#### 1. Policy 3055 Student Due Process Rights

Ms. Barb Ridgway discussed Policy 3055 Student Due Process Rights. Policy 3055 Student Due Process Rights went before the full board last month and there were no changes and is before the full board tonight for approval. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the Trustees had about Policy 3055 Student Due Process Rights.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 3055 Student Due Process Rights.”

**Motion:** Trustee Terry Beaver moved to approve Policy 3055 Student Due Process Rights as presented. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

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

That concluded the Item for Action, and the Board of Trustees moved on to Reports.

### **D. REPORTS**

#### 1. Student Representatives Report

Mr. Keiran Boyle, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, gave his report. Capital High hosted a Capital Conversations event for parents about

current issues affecting students. Capital High recently held a shelter in place drill and a secondary evacuation drill. Capital High School has been named as a Special Olympics National Banner School which is a great honor. The school learning team is working with teachers about focusing on a positive send off and a solid close to the lesson. Mr. Boyle recognized the Capital High Educators that received Great Idea Grants from the Helena Education Foundation. The crosstown musical “Annie” is debuting on Thursday night at 6:30 p.m. at the Capital High School auditorium. Isabel Beasley was just named Helena’s Student of the Month by the Independent Record. The Key Club hosted a food drive for the Montana Food Share at Super 1 Foods and raised \$326 and 1,284 pounds of food. Mr. Boyle said the club leaders are planning on hosting a school-wide food drive. The Capital High Student Council attended the Montana Association of Student Councils Conference in Great Falls. Principal Brett Zanto was nominated as the District 3 MASC Administrator of the Year For High Schools and will be in the running for MASC Administrator of the Year For The State of Montana. Mr. Boyle recognized the Helping Helena Club and all that they do to help the Helena Community. Mr. Eric Croft, Capital High Industrial Arts Teacher, was named the 2022 Teacher of the Year by the Montana Association for Career and Technical Education. Mr. Boyle thanked Capital High Nurse Shannon McNamee for all that she does at Capital High for students.

Loreley Drees, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, gave her report. Ms. Drees congratulated the 2022 All-State honor musicians from both high schools and the Helena High School students who were selected to the College Board National Recognition Program. The Key Club is making a tree for the Festival of Trees and the theme of the tree is keys. The Key Club will be donating sanitation supplies to the YWCA. The NHS club meets once a month, and the students are required to have 20 hours a month of volunteer hours and 6 hours a month in club hours. Many students from Capital High School and Helena High School volunteered at the Teacher’s Convention in October. Ms. Drees gave an update on sports, the speech and debate team, and the Science Club at Helena High School. Ms. Drees recognized Helena High students that were recipients of the AP Scholar Awards and recognized Rotary Exchange Club and MBI winners for this month. Ms. Drees mentioned that the crosstown musical “Annie” is debuting on Thursday night at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Drees concluded by informing the board that some students will be headed to the AA Choir Festival on Monday and Tuesday in Missoula.

2. Helena Education Association Report

Jane Shawn, President of the Helena Education Association, gave the Helena Education Association Report. Helena saw about 1,000 educators from around the state attend the MFPE Educator Conference. Ms. Jessica Reynolds, Speech, and Language Pathologist at Rossiter Elementary, was a Jim McGarvey Scholar, which means that she focused her sectionals on local, state, and national union issues. Ms. Shawn mentioned that the third Climate and Culture meeting occurred yesterday and that it was a great session that focused on shame and being empathic leaders and listeners. Ms. Shawn said that it was great to visit with teachers during site visits to the schools. Ms. Shawn was invited along with fifteen other female union leaders from around the state to tour the Capitol, have

brunch, and visit with Randi Weingarten, President of the American Federation of Teachers, about issues that are important to women union leaders.

3. Facilities and Maintenance Committee Report

Trustee Luke Muszkiewicz was not in attendance; therefore, Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn presented the Facilities and Maintenance Committee Report to the Board of Trustees. At the Facilities and Maintenance Committee meeting Klint Fischer with SMA Architects gave an update on the Facilities Master Plan. Mr. Fischer also mentioned the Facilities Master Plan Key Stakeholder meeting that took place on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Fischer plans on meeting with our Food Service Director, Activities Director, and Facilities Director to review the deferred maintenance plan to get a better understanding of the needs in the district that can be incorporated into the facilities master plan. Board Chair Hathhorn mentioned that the Facilities and Maintenance Committee discussed the 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Gym building. Mr. Todd Verrill, HSD Facilities Director, has been working with DEQ regarding remediation that needs to be done in the building. Board Chair Hathhorn mentioned there was an update on the Jim Darcy and Rossiter wells and a discussion on the building reserve voted levy.

4. Budget and Finance Committee Report

Trustee Janet Armstrong gave the Budget and Finance Committee Report. The committee discussed fall enrollment numbers, the general budget shortfall, and the overall budget shortfall. Trustee Armstrong mentioned that our budget consists of 97% dedicated to salaries and benefits while utilities is 4% which adds up to more than our budget (101%). Hence the need to find ways to lower the budget. The Budget and Finance Committee also discussed a proposed elections timeline.

5. Policy Committee Report

Trustee Luke Muszkiewicz was not in attendance; therefore, Trustee Janet Armstrong presented the Policy Committee Report to the Board of Trustees. The Policy Committee reviewed Policy 3055 Student Due Process Rights, and Policy 1015 Goals, Mission and Vision. The Policy Committee recommended that board goals be removed from Policy 1015 because goals would be better classified under procedure rather than policy. The committee recommended that language be added to Policy 1015 to address a mid-year as well as an annual review of district goals and strategic priorities that are developed each year. The Policy Committee also reviewed and discussed Policy 2016 Human Sexuality Instruction and Policy 4000 Public Relations.

6. Teaching & Learning Committee Report

Board Vice Chair Jennifer McKee gave the Teaching and Learning Committee Report to the Board of Trustees. The committee discussed grade level meetings. The district typically holds grade level meetings twice a year. Grade level meetings are a crucial means of communication and an opportunity for teachers to have a voice in decisions or conversation about things that are going on in the district. It is also an opportunity for the district to provide different types of professional development that we can ensure will be



consistent across the grade levels. The Trustees and committee members were provided with the opportunity to observe the 1st Grade Level Meeting in the Professional Development Center and watch the administrators, coaches, and teachers in action.

7. Health Benefits Committee Report

Trustee Kay Satre presented the Health Benefits Committee Report to the Board of Trustees. Trustee Satre mentioned that there is new leadership for the Health Benefits Committee and John Burke is the Chair and Shannon McNamee is Vice Chair. The committee reviewed the overall financials of the health plan from the past year and the plan had around a 1.2-million-dollar loss for the year. That amount was projected because last year the committee was notified that costs would go up about 18% and they opted for a 7% premium increase. The committee has been discussing ways to keep the plan healthy and offset some of those losses. The committee is expecting some upcoming compliance costs as well.

8. Wellness Committee Report

Assistant Superintendent Brian Cummings and Byrant Principal Trish Klock presented the Wellness Committee Report to the Board of Trustees. The Harvest of the Month Program is going very well in the schools. Mr. Cummings said they are discussing coming up with a nutrition curriculum that would go along with the Harvest of the Month Program and would showcase the program to all educators. The Wellness Committee is brainstorming ideas for the well-being of teachers and staff such as a yoga activity after school. Chloe Lundquist, SNAP-Ed Instructor for Lewis and Clark County attended the last meeting and discussed ways to enhance and educate the community about SNAP benefits. The breakfast count in schools is down so the committee is discussing how to offer breakfast to more students. The Kid Pack Program is being expanded across Montana and they are hoping to add more Montana made food items and more nutritious items into the Kid Packs. There has been conversation about long term facility planning and how a district kitchen with incorporated CTE activities could be beneficial for the district. SMA Architects will be meeting with Sodexo Manager Robert Worthy and will take a tour of the current kitchen facilities.

Principal Klock discussed the physical activity side of the Wellness Committee. The group discussed physical activity standards for kids which talks about recess, physical activity during the day, and making sure we are providing opportunities for our kids to be active. Bryant Elementary will be hosting a Sports Night to see if they can get kids interested in trying different sports and activities.

9. Montana School Boards Association Report

Trustee Luke Muszkiewicz was not in attendance; therefore, there was no Montana School Boards Association Report given.

That concluded the Reports portion of the agenda. The Board of Trustees moved on to discuss Upcoming Meetings.

## **VII. UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn reviewed upcoming meetings with the Board of Trustees.

- November 29<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m.-Board of Trustees Work Session-Smith Elementary
- December 5<sup>th</sup>, Noon-Facilities and Maintenance Committee-Lincoln Center
- December 6<sup>th</sup>, Noon-Policy Committee-Lincoln Center
- December 7<sup>th</sup>, Noon-Teaching and Learning Committee-Lincoln Center
- December 13<sup>th</sup>, Executive Committee-11:00 a.m.-Lincoln Center
- December 13<sup>th</sup>, Budget Committee 12:00 p.m.-Lincoln Center
- December 13<sup>th</sup>, Full Board Meeting 5:30 p.m.-Lincoln Center

## **VIII. BOARD COMMENTS**

Trustee Terry Beaver recognized Loreley Drees, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, for performing a wonderful rendition of the national anthem at the crosstown football game.

Loreley Drees, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, stated that she admires and appreciates the effort that the community of Helena has made in making sure that everyone has food and clothing through various community outreach programs.

Trustee Janet Armstrong said she really appreciates the community of Helena and their strong civic duty and healthy and respectful discussion of ideas.

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

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Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary

Date