



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, September 12th, 2023
5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted.

Siobhan Hathhorn, Chair
Jennifer McKee, Vice Chair
Kay Satre, Trustee
Janet Armstrong, Trustee
Linda Cleatus, Trustee
Jeff Hindoien, Trustee
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee

Luna Hernandez, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees
Willia Bishop, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees

Rex Wertz, Superintendent
Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
Jane Shawn, HEA President
Todd Verrill, Facilities Director
Karen Ogden, Communications Officer
Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment and Federal Programs
Brett Zanto, Capital High Principal
Steve Thennis, Helena High Principal
Janet Riis, Executive Director of the Angel Fund
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 5:31 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. REVIEW AGENDA

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

III. PRESENTATION

The Board of Trustees viewed a presentation given by Ms. Janet Riis, Executive Director of the Angel Fund. Ms. Riis shared some of the highlights from 2022-2023. \$54,379 was granted to Helena-area schools to purchase backpacks and much needed school supplies in bulk. 901 students had new school clothes to start school and feel confident. 15 students were awarded post-secondary scholarships totaling \$45,750 to attend Montana colleges. 185 students received new running shoes for PE class and for playing outside. \$6,262 was raised from the Greater Helena Gives Campaign and \$13,668 was fundraised at the On Broadway dinner and silent auction surpassing all previous years. The Angel Fund’s 26 Angel Coordinators in the Helena School District helped students buy brand new clothes October through November through local community partners (Walmart, Old Navy, Target, and TJ Maxx). Ms. Riis concluded her presentation by sharing that the Angel Fund had another epic “Stuff the Bus” campaign this summer with on-line giving. This new approach provides much needed grants so schools can purchase exactly what they need. The Board of Trustees moved on to recognitions.

IV. RECOGNITIONS

The Board of Trustees recognized Capital High School Educator Reg Hageman who was selected as the 2023 SHAPE Montana High School Teacher of the Year. The trustees also recognized Helena High Track and Field Coach Jesse Zentz who has been named the 2023 Girls’ High School Track and Field Coach of the Year for Montana.

V. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Superintendent Rex Weltz gave his report to the Board of Trustees. The information presented included:

- Recognition
 - o Link and WEB
 - o Kindergarten Staff
 - o National Substitute Appreciation Week September 4th-8th
 - o National IT Professional Day September 19th
 - o Thank you, teachers, staff, students, and families, for a fantastic start to the 2023-2024 school year.

- o Thank you to the Justice and Municipal courts for hosting a food drive event in partnership with the Montana Food Share to collect items for Kids Packs that are contributed to students in need in Helena Public Schools.
 - o Thank you to the Helena Education Foundation for providing back-to-school treats for HPS staff across the district.
 - o Thank you to the Angel Fund for granting over \$48,000 to schools to purchase school supplies in bulk.
 - o Thank you to the Helena Education Foundation and Valley Bank for sponsoring our New Educator Welcoming Event.
 - o Thank you to our generous community sponsors that contributed to our District events including Secretaries Training, Substitute Training, and our New Educator Welcoming Event.
 - o Thank you to the Helena Education Foundation for sponsoring Fabulous First across the Elementary District.
 - o Congratulations to students from CHS and HHS that were selected to the 2023 Montana All-State Music Festival in Missoula.
- New Business
 - o Configuring District Enrollment for the 2023-24 SY
 - o AA Superintendent Rep on HB 332 Health Trust Committee to study and discuss Opportunities/Possibilities for HPS and AA
 - o HEA / HSD Mediation Update
 - o Budget Recommendation Consensus Committee
 - o September 14th, 2023
 - o September 25th, 2023
 - o Pad McCracken Presentation on School Finance
 - o FMP Key Stakeholders Meeting
 - o September 27th, 2023
 - o Strategic Planning for Increased School Revenue Possibilities
 - o Implementation: 2023-2024 SY
 - o Transition Centers – 4 Sites
 - o Mental Health Support Centers
 - o Handle with Care
 - o Math TOSA and Supports (Elementary)
 - o Literacy TOSA’s – Completion of 6-year OPI Literacy Grant
 - o Homelessness Supports – Mrs. Hess & Mrs. Zentz
 - o English Learners – Multilingual Supports – Mrs. Tucker
 - o Policy Updates – 2022-23 Session
 - o Workload to process and adopt
 - o Career and Technical Educational
 - o Report
 - o Pathways
 - o 6-8
 - o 9-12

- Outreach/Meetings
 - o Leadership Tour – 1st Day
 - o Cabinet & Leadership
 - o Revenue Discussions
 - o Helena Symphony Collaboration
 - o Board Leadership
 - o AA Superintendents
 - o HB 332 Health Trust Committee
 - o Hometown Helena
 - o Lewis and Clark Board of Health
 - o HEA President/Superintendent Meeting
 - o Rotary Club
 - o Radio
 - o TV
 - o Print
 - o SMA

That concluded the Superintendent’s Report portion of the agenda. The Trustees moved on to hear general public comment.

VI. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Moffie Funk gave general public comment. Ms. Funk thanked Superintendent Rex Wertz for his leadership with HB 332 (health insurance trust) and the Handle With Care initiative. Ms. Funk concluded her public comment by discussing the complexity of the school funding program and how it is not sufficient, and how more funding is needed. That concluded general public comment and the Board of Trustees moved on to review the Items For Information.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Items For Information

1. Policy 1025 Board Member Term of Office
2. Policy 1020 School Board Elections
3. Policy 1065 Board Meetings
4. Policy 1085 Uniform Grievance Procedure
5. Policy 2015 Curriculum Development Content and Assessment
6. Policy 2020 Student and Family Privacy Rights
7. Policy 2025 K-12 School Counseling
8. Policy 3097 Video Surveillance

Ms. Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff, presented eight items for information regarding policy to the Board of Trustees. Ms. Ridgway began by reviewing Policy 1025 Board Member Term of Office. This policy has been revised to incorporate requirements under House Bill 811 for a district clerk to cooperate with OPI in providing trustee contact information and that language is stated on lines 16 through 18.

Ms. Ridgway reviewed Policy 1029 School Board Elections. This policy has revised legal references to reflect House Bill 453, which requires that any levy or bond election form state that “an increase in property taxes may lead to an increase in rental costs” and must provide the impact on the taxes for homes valued at \$100,000, \$300,000, and \$600,000 at a minimum.

Ms. Ridgway reviewed Policy 1065 Board Meetings. This policy has been revised to incorporate language from House Bill 724 requiring electronic posting of board and committee agendas on newspaper websites if free of charge or on a district website or social media page. A copy of the agenda will also be posted at the entrance of the Lincoln Center.

Ms. Ridgway reviewed Policy 1085 Uniform Grievance Procedure. This policy has been revised to reflect the requirements of House Bill 504. This bill requires school districts to have a uniform grievance procedure providing for both informal and formal resolution of complaints as well as providing a printed version of the grievance policy upon request. The law also requires that a formal grievance process have a timeline that starts 30 days from the completion of the informal process. Clarification language was also added to state that the grievance process does not apply to those complaints covered by state or federal law that supersedes the uniform process. These would include issues related to special education under IDEA as well as disability discrimination and sexual harassment.

Ms. Ridgway reviewed Policy 2015 Curriculum Development Content and Assessment. This policy has been revised to reflect changes in the law related to remote and offsite instruction from House Bill 214. Revisions were also made to reflect changes made to the accreditation rules in Chapter 10.55 of the Montana Administrative Rules and legal references were also updated.

Ms. Ridgway reviewed Policy 2020 Student and Family Privacy Rights. This policy has been completely revised to reflect the language adopted in House Bill 676 regarding parental rights as well as participation surveys.

Ms. Ridgway reviewed Policy 2025 K-12 School Counseling. This policy has been revised to reflect House Bill 458 which permits (but does not require) high schools to hire career coaches. The language of the bill allows the use of a career coach to assist with K-12 career and vocational/technical training, but most of the language is applicable to only high schools. The revised language is stated on lines 29 through 32. The Policy Committee suggested that the language *handicapping* on line 26 be changed to state *disability*. Trustee Linda Cleatus suggested that the language *handicapping* on line 26 be changed to state *disability and mobility*.

Ms. Ridgway concluded by reviewing Policy 3097 Video Surveillance. Language was added to this policy on line 22 to clarify that staff members cannot video a student in a classroom without permission from the parents, which is required by House Bill 676. That bill does not require parental permission for recording a student for purposes of security or surveillance.

That concluded the Items for Information, and the 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. Early Entrance to Kindergarten
6. 08.15.23 Full Board Meeting Minutes

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

Motion: Trustee Jeff Hindoién moved to approve the Consent Action Items as presented. 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 Items for Action.

C. Items for Action

1. Policy 5075 Termination of Employment and Policy 5256 Reduction in Force

Ms. Barb Ridgway presented Policy 5075 Termination of Employment to the Board of Trustees. This policy has gone before the full board for review and no changes were recommended. Ms. Ridgway presented Policy 5256 Reduction in Force. The language in this policy is being incorporated into Policy 5075 Termination of Employment. The recommendation is to terminate Policy 5256 Reduction in Force.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 5075 Termination of Employment as presented and to terminate Policy 5256 Reduction in Force.”

Motion: Trustee Linda Cleatus moved to approve Policy 5075 Termination of Employment as presented and to terminate Policy 5256 Reduction in Force. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the combined motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

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

D. REPORTS

1. Student Representatives Reports

Ms. Luna Hernandez, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, gave her Student Representative Report. Ms. Hernandez stated that the school year is off to a positive and busy start. It is homecoming week at CHS- complete with various home athletic activities as well as an assembly, early release/BBQ, and a homecoming dance. iReady testing for all 9th-11th graders was last week and the seniors attended a “senior year 101” presentation followed the next day by a review of expectations by admin, and a senior class photo. Bruin Beginnings was a success- they had approximately 60 link leaders come in a day early (and attend a training as well) to help ensure that the freshman’s first day of school was a success. CHS will host their annual open house next Wednesday, September 20th, from 5:30-6:30. Capital High’s current enrollment is 1,404 students- that number rose from approximately 1,370 just days before school.

Ms. Willa Bishop, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, gave her Student Representative Report. Ms. Bishop stated that Bengal Beginnings went well as they welcomed almost 300 freshmen to Helena High. Around 50 Link leaders welcomed the freshmen as they participated in various activities to get acquainted with the school. During the past week, underclassmen participated in the fall iReady testing sessions. During this time, the senior class ordered the necessities for graduation from Jostens. The following day, motivational speaker Kevin Atlas visited the seniors and then met with leaders of the school including Link Crew, NHS, and captains of their teams. In this session, they talked about the problems their school faces (like communication and participation) and then figured out solutions that they can implement. Ms. Bishop mentioned that each fall sport has started conference competitions. Ms. Bishop stated that there is a septic issue at Helena High in the science wing that is being repaired. Leadership meetings will occur once a month and these meetings will focus on how to improve the atmosphere and function of the school.

2. Helena Education Association Report

Ms. Jane Shawn, HEA President, gave the Helena Education Association Report. Ms. Shawn mentioned that this July three members of the Helena Education Association attended the NEA Representative Assembly in Orlando. Ms. Shawn stated that one of their key business items that she wanted to bring up that was approved was to direct NEA to lobby Congress and work with their partners in the Education Department to

update the funding for IDEA. Ms. Shawn stated that HEA attended all four new teacher orientation sessions as well as the two new employee orientations that were held over the summer and that it is a great way for them to introduce potential members to the benefits of union membership. HEA and MFPE hosted a back-to-school event before school started to celebrate public education. Ms. Shawn concluded her report by stating that they elected two new Board of Director members and many new building reps this year.

3. Facilities and Maintenance Committee Report

Trustee Kay Satre gave the Facilities and Maintenance Committee Report. The Facilities and Maintenance Committee was given an update from SMA Architecture about the progress being made on the facilities master planning process. There will be a Facilities Master Plan Key Stakeholder meeting at the end of this month. Facilities Director Todd Verrill gave an update on summer work that had been done across the district by the facilities team.

4. Budget and Finance Committee Report

Trustee Janet Armstrong gave the Budget and Finance Committee Report. Trustee Armstrong mentioned that the Budget and Finance Committee met today and during the meeting the committee discussed that there are no significant unanticipated expenses. The committee also discussed that there were funds left over from the transportation fund that we were able to transfer into the interlocal fund, however, we will be spending money from the interlocal fund this year to support the budget while we figure out a better, long-term budget for the future. Trustee Jeff Hindoi discussed the funding mechanism in Montana and how it affects Helena Public Schools and other schools across the state. Trustee Janet Armstrong concluded the Budget and Finance Committee Report by mentioning that the Budget Consensus Recommendation Committee will be meeting twice in September.

5. Policy Committee Report

Trustee Janet Armstrong gave the Policy Committee Report. At the Policy Committee Meeting the Policy Committee reviewed the policies that were presented before the board tonight including: Policy 5075: Termination of Employment, Policy 5256: Reduction in Force, Policy 1025: Board Member Term of Office, Policy 1020: School Board Elections, Policy 1065: Board Meetings, Policy 1085: Uniform Grievance Procedure, Policy 2015: Curriculum Development Content and Assessment, Policy 2020: Student and Family Privacy Rights, Policy 2025: K-12 School Counseling, and Policy 3097: Video Surveillance.

6. Teaching & Learning Committee Report

Trustee Jennifer McKee gave the Teaching & Learning Committee report. At the Teaching and Learning Committee meeting Ms. Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Director, reviewed the professional development that took place over the summer and the committee had a robust conversation about testing and math curriculum, including Eureka Math which is a free online resource. Ms. Davidson reviewed the various training that took place over the summer and discussed the role of TOSAS in the district.

7. Health Benefits Committee Report

Trustee Kay Satre gave the Health Benefits Committee report. Trustee Satre stated that at the Health Benefits Committee meeting they discussed the district's stop loss insurer. Trustee Satre stated that we had eight high-cost claims that hit our stop loss last year, so they are looking at increasing premiums for our plans stop loss insurance. The committee looked at several options and voted to increase the stop loss amount from \$165,000 to \$175,000. What that means is that when any individual on the plan incurs claims over \$175,000, our stop insurance kicks in to cover the rest of the amount. This adjustment will cost the plan about \$525,000 in a premium increase compared to last year, and we will save about \$125,000 up front that will allow next year's plan increase to be moderate.

8. Wellness Committee Report

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn stated that the Wellness Committee did not meet yet, so there so no Wellness Committee Report to give this evening.

9. Montana School Boards Association Report

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn stated that there was no Montana Schools Board Association Report to give.

That concluded the Reports portion of the agenda. The Board of Trustees moved on to review upcoming meetings.

VII. UPCOMING MEETINGS

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

- Tuesday, September 26th, Board Work Session, Time & Location To Be Determined
- Tuesday, October 3rd, Policy Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Wednesday, October 4th, Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Monday, October 9th, Facilities & Maintenance Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, October 10th, Executive Committee Meeting, 11:00 a.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, October 10th, Budget & Finance Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, October 10th, Full Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, October 24th, Board Work Session, Time & Location To Be Determined

VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

Trustee Kay Satre shared that there will be a Celebration of Life for former Trustee Lois Fitzpatrick on Friday, September 29th from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in the Lewis and Clark Library Community Room. Trustee Janet Armstrong shared that there are two Budget Consensus Recommendation Committee meetings coming up in September. Trustee Linda Cleatus shared that there will be a Community Food Forum with two sessions in October. There were no further board comments.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary Date