



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 14th, 2023
5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted.

Siobhan Hathhorn, Chair
Jennifer McKee, Vice Chair
Janet Armstrong, Trustee
Linda Cleatus, Trustee
Jeff Hindoien, Trustee
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee
Terry Beaver, Trustee

Luna Hernandez, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees
Willa 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
Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Director
Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment and Federal Programs
Tim McMahon, Activities Director
Dr. Rob Watson, SAM Executive Director
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 5:32 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. REVIEW AGENDA

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

III. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Superintendent Weltz stated that we lost a teacher, colleague, and friend with the unexpected death of Helena High School Teacher Dave McKim. Superintendent Weltz thanked everyone that came together to support the staff and students at Helena High School during this difficult time including:

Helena High School Staff and Administration
Helena School District Principals, Counselors, Teachers, Psychologists, Shodair, PureView, Helena Indian Alliance, Kathy Shay, Jane Shawn, HEF, Secretaries, Lincoln Center, Maintenance and Facilities, Neal Murray, Former HHS Teachers

Superintendent Rex Weltz presented his Superintendent Report to the Board of Trustees.

Recognition

- National School Psychology Week, November 6th – 10th
- Veterans Day, Saturday, November 11th, 2023
- Jim Darcy Ceremony
- A huge thank you to our maintenance and custodial teams for their work plowing parking lots and de-icing sidewalks. Thank you as well to the volunteers that helped them clear Vigilante Stadium for the HHS playoff football game.
- Congratulations to Mrs. Shay Coil, Educator from Four Georgians Elementary, who was named 105.3 KMTX September Teacher of the Month!!
- Thank you to Principal Cal Boyle, and the HMS staff and students for a great Board of Trustees Work Session at Helena Middle School in October.
- Thanks to Kids Nutrition Coalition, St. Peter’s Health, Sodexo, Helena Food Share, and HPS Staff for their partnership with the Let’s Talk About Food in Schools Community Discussion that occurred in October.
- Thank you to Lisa Cordingley and Becca Leaphart and the Helena Education Foundation for showing their appreciation of our Principals at our All-Administrator’s Meeting on October 16th and for distributing grant awards across the district to our outstanding educators. Thank you as well for surprising the 2023 “Let’s Talk About Great Teachers” honorees across the district.

- Thank you to The National Foundation for Governors’ Fitness Councils in partnership with Governor Greg Gianforte and “Body by Jake” Foundation Chairman Jake Steinfeld for the generous donation of a \$100,000 fitness center at C.R. Anderson Middle School. Special thanks to C.R. Anderson, teachers Rebecca Cleveland and Christine Maharg who submitted the application to apply for this grant. Thank you to Principal Kathleen Prody, and all the students and staff who came together to make this exciting day possible!!
- Thank you to our Helena Public Schools staff who were Workshop Speakers at the 2023 High School Forum including Lona Carter, Kathy Kidder, and Hollee Goody. Thank you as well to the high school students that attended.

New Business

- 2024-2025 Budget Forecast Study
- Assessment Planning Committee
- Safety and Security Levy/Technology Levy Update Across District
 - Visited – 10
 - Scheduled – 6
- RBLC Lease Update
- May Butler Center RFP
- Charter Schools Update
- MASDA 2023
- Montana Conference of Education Leadership 2023
 - October 18th – October 20th
- Montana Association of School District Attorneys Conference
- CTE Group Meetings With SMA-Facilities Discussion
 - October 16th, 2023
 - November 27th, 2023
- School District/SMA Monthly Progress Meetings-Master Facility Planning
- Budget Recommendation Consensus Committee
 - November 1st, 2023, 4:00 p.m.
 - November 27th, 2023, 4:00 p.m.
- HB 332 Health Trust Update
- HEF’s Great Conversations November 15th at the Great Northern Conference Center 5:30 p.m.
- Future Revenue Strategic Planning Focus Meetings
- Handle With Care Update
- Homelessness/Unsheltered Students Update
- Review of 2023 Legislation Impacting Education Meetings
- Initiating additional Kinder Sprouts across the District 2nd Semester
- Mediation HSD – HEA November 30th
- Student Board Rep Informational Video

Outreach/Meetings

- Cabinet & Leadership
- Trustee Office Hour Communication
- Revenue Discussions
- Board Leadership
- Board Updates
- AA Superintendents
- HB 332 Health Trust Committee
- Handle With Care KTVH Interview
- HEA President/Superintendent Meeting
- Parent Principal Meetings @ Central Elementary
- HEF
- HEF Executive Committee
- Student Leaders Meeting
- TV, Print, Radio Media
- Teacher Advisory Committee
- Parent Advisory Committee
- St. Peter's Health – Lease/Health Care Partnership Opportunities
- SMA – Facility Planning
- PAC/MOFE
- School Safety Discussion-Sherrif Leo Dutton
- Mental Health Opportunities – Ms. Carter

Other

- No School November 22nd – November 24th

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

IV. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Tricia Rummel gave general public comment. Ms. Rummel is a teacher at Capital High School. Ms. Rummel commented, "I'm coming before you today to talk about how much I love Montana public schools and how deeply invested I am in Montana public schools. My brother is a Montana public school educator, my grandmother taught at Central School, and both my parents went to Helena High School. My grandfather and my father both went to Bryant. This is home for me in a deep, deep way.

This is four years now that I've been working here and I was hired the year COVID came so we had this kind of triage teaching that I had never experienced before, despite having worked overseas for ten years in China and Dubai and traveling in Africa and Eastern Europe. The COVID teaching was really something; it was this cascade of skills that we had to learn including trying to manage classrooms online and in person. It was devastating on students that we had. Students who had lost parents and grandparents and they had spikes in emotional abuses. There were all kinds of triage teaching that we experienced and really those effects are not over, and we still have those in our public schools today. I think it's been a challenging teaching time for me, and I guess there are questions I have as a new person to this district. I don't understand a contract that isn't fair for teachers given what they've just undergone, particularly, I know that there's been mismanagement of six million dollars in funds. I know some of the administration gave themselves a thirty percent raise after mismanaging six million dollars' worth of funds. And then to come and put teachers on the front line and to say that you have to take the bullets for that, you don't get to have a fair contract and you will pay the price for that. After what we've just experienced teaching it's astonishing to me. It's not a value system that I understand from my experience in Montana public schools. As somebody who worked in Bozeman public schools, who has travelled with administrators overseas, who is a product of this, I don't understand it. I was nominated as Educator of the Year by my colleagues last year as well as a Helena Education Foundation excellence educator. I have done my contract. I'm confident there's enough information to show you that I have held my contract. I hope you do yours and give us teachers a fair contract. Thank you."

Ms. Angela DeWolf King gave general public comment. Ms. DeWolf King is a resident of Helena and a mother to a student at Hawthorne Elementary School. Ms. DeWolf King commented, "I first want to thank the school board members who joined a group of parents at Hawthorne last week. Your time being with us was very helpful and we really appreciate your dedication coming to us and the information that you were able to provide at that meeting. Part of the information last week signaled that the future of some of our schools within the district was in question. Additionally, it was provided that this group and with others is working to put forward a master plan for Helena schools. As this body works to get a greater understanding of financial challenges and options and then uses that information to assist in developing a long-term master plan, I would encourage you to broaden the scope of that work to topics such as housing and population projections for our city and county, and most importantly, being sure that work is inclusive of student success. During the meeting it was shared that Helena's children have a history of strong academic support and performance, and alongside that success, I encourage you to investigate how proximity to schools, neighborhood environments, and community involvement positively impact our children's academic performance, but also positively support them in their personal development. The support of our young people in this town is all something that we can be really proud of and I hope that becomes a real cornerstone for the master plan going forward. Thank you."

Mr. Jim Malazia gave general public comment. Mr. Malazia is a Helena resident and a Hawthorne Elementary School parent. Mr. Malazia commented, "At the recent Hawthorne Parent Council meeting it was made clear by board members that the potential for a neighborhood elementary school closure is real and seriously being considered as part of the master facilities plan. During that meeting, we were told that the major headwind to Hawthorne School is operating costs, not facilities costs. However, information published by the Office of Public Instruction indicates that Hawthorne's per student expenditures are lower than the district wide averages, while the Hawthorne students have higher test scores. In fact, the same data shows that Hawthorne costs per student are \$3,500 less per year than Central Elementary. Given the performance of Hawthorne students, we need to understand how the closure of Hawthorne is in the best interest of the students. Are the costs of busing, the impacts of not

being able to walk, or the detriments of increased class sizes being considered? On a basic level, we need an analysis of how the board will reach its conclusions and why the sighted numbers do not mesh with what we're being told. Accordingly, I request public discussion on how and why closing Hawthorne or other schools solves our problem. Generally, I think Helena voters, me included, are strong supporters of public education. However, given the tax increases that we all just experienced, I do not think that piecemeal requests for taxpayer dollars that may have passed in recent years are going to see the same support without a broader vision. If multiple schools are potentially on the chopping block, this means that other schools face a significant increase in class sizes or there's going to be some big-ticket request coming from the Board of Education in the future. We, as voters need to have a clear picture of what the plans are, the metrics driving those plans, and the big picture cost of those plans, not just short-term needs. I know you all care about the public schools and the students, and I realize that you're in the unenviable position to even consider having to close schools. However, the upmost transparency is needed. A request on behalf of a growing coalition of the community that Helena school closures, the potential timing of those closures and the associated costs of potential plans beyond next year be added to the next board meeting agenda or one at the start of next year. Thank you.”

Ms. Susan Baranek gave general public comment. Ms. Baranek is an English teacher at Capital High School. Ms. Baranek commented, “I am here to reiterate how disheartening it is to be working without a contract. This year because of other budgetary cuts I have 33 more students than I've had in the past seven years, and I'm being asked to do more. I've been a teacher for 19 years and I've never experienced such a high volume of kids who are just dealing with so many things, so it's asking more of me as a person on a daily basis, in and out of the classroom. Our electricity is going up, our property taxes are going up and we're working without a contract and you're asking more of me, but not compensating me for my work. Thank you.”

Mr. Kim Barry gave general public comment. Mr. Barry is a special education para educator at Bryant Elementary. Mr. Barry commented, “I was previously a para educator at Ray Bjork Learning Center. That is where I got hired. When I started working for the district I started as a sub. I was a sub for several months before I took a full-time job with a program that I really fell in love with which was the special education program at Ray Bjork. Ray Bjork became a place that was a family to me. I think if you talked to anybody that worked at Ray Bjork they would talk about how close-knit and supportive everybody was. I am now at Bryant. I moved with a different program to the Trailhead Program at Bryant, and I think a lot of people may know what a boiling point Bryant is at right now. Every day I see multiple teachers crying during their lunch breaks. I know people personally that go to their cars to have a little breakdown. I had one myself today. It is hard to walk into a school where we all feel like we have been squished together. I have been in forums with other teachers from Bryant and it seems like a lot of the problems they have come from a lot of our programs that moved in from Ray Bjork which they feel were not adequately incorporated. Not enough thought was given to the school that was being moved and the schools that were being merged. We have got a huge problem with behaviors from students that get multiplied when you add in kids with different sorts of special and emotional needs. We have been short staffed on paras this entire year. Our classroom is supposed to operate with three paras, with the number of students that we have, and we have only had two this entire year. It makes things extremely difficult when, for example, our head teacher and another para is out. This happened last week to me, when I was the only full-time employee in our classroom all day. I had one sub to help me out with nine kids who need a lot of different emotional needs and physical needs. On top of that, my pay has been causing extra stress as we keep talking about how the cost of everything has increased. I used to be able to save a little bit of money each month, but every month my paycheck runs out, and I am waiting for my next paycheck before I am able to pay for things and do things that I need to do. I could take a second job, but I already feel burned out. When I get done

with work, I maybe have energy to make dinner and do dishes. I can barely get my house cleaned. I barely have the energy needed to support my partner at the end of the day. If I take a second job that's going to drain me more. I am not going to be an effective employee to help my students. I'm not going to be an effective employee to help my other coworkers in our environment and this is across our school, and it is causing a major problem. I know several teachers who are going to be leaving in the next couple of months and I think that number is only going to increase. Thank you.”

Ms. Maryssa Schwartz gave general public comment. Ms. Schwartz stated that her connection to the schools is through her partner who just gave general public comment, and she has coworkers who have children in Helena Public Schools. Ms. Schwartz commented, “My coworkers have children and seeing their stress makes me not want to have children. I'm 33 and I don't have children right now. It's something I've always wanted, but I don't want to raise children in Helena because I don't think the school district is good enough. It hasn't been good enough for a while, and when my partner comes home, and he can barely talk to me and ask me how I was, and I asked him how he was and he just can't even talk, that's not okay. And you keep talking about the teachers' contract. You better get that figured out because you still have para contracts to figure out. They are still part of the union, and they are still fighting. You need to figure something out because living here is not okay. Montana is not okay, and Helena is the worst. I don't want to live here and raise children here. Thank you.”

Ms. Moffie Funk gave general public comment. Ms. Funk is a Helena resident. Ms. Funk commented, “Listening to the other comments breaks my heart as I know it breaks all of your hearts because everything they say is true and with the decisions you all are going to have to make; this is the most thankless job in the world. I do want to give a shout out to Dr. Watson and the community discussions that he is facilitating. There is a representative from the Hawthorne School on that and I think it is bringing a level of understanding and some camaraderie. I am so proud of this community that they are feeling this passionate that yes, we need to do something, but we can't do it. It's up to the legislators because they have to change the funding formula. They had this convoluted, complex funding formula that worked for a while, but it's not working anymore. Every AA district across the state is struggling, as are the smaller schools, and they're going to review it after the 25th session-one year from now. That is when we really have to stand up and shout and make our voices heard about how you have to change this funding formula because it is not working anymore. I look forward to joining the voices that spoke tonight with such passion to get this done, because there should be no reason that we are not appropriately funded. Thank you for your work and thank you for your voices.”

Ms. Destry Arntson gave general public comment. Ms. Arntson is a second-grade teacher at Bryant Elementary. Ms. Arntson commented, “I am going to completely back a coworker of mine, Kim, who spoke recently on many of the struggles that we are dealing with at Bryant Elementary. With the amount of square footage that we have in our building, does it not determine the programs and the number of students that were put at that school? It is no fault to students or the specialty students and programs that we have there. I work across from one of those classrooms and my students are scared to go into the halls. They hear screaming all day long. We are constantly shutting our door, and we are constantly watching kids be put in holds. Our general population of Bryant is detrimental enough and has enough trauma and now what they are seeing there is no fault to their own, nor those students in that classroom because they do not have the bodies, they do not have the support there. I'm just going to back Kim as well on this-you are losing staff members and you are going to continue to lose them and unfortunately, I am one of them. I am not paid enough. I don't have a contract that shows the future of promising pay in this district and a promise to my fellow staff members. I am having to choose another career that is unknown because I'm choosing my mental health and the thing that kills me the most is I am having to give more abandonment to the highest population in this district and that's the most disheartening thing about this. So, I am on the agenda today because I am leaving and I am

unknown about my future. But I hope that you guys consider a fair contract for the future teachers that join this district and the teachers that are still in this district because it is only what is right and what needs to be done. Thank you.”

That concluded general public comment and the Board of Trustees moved on to review the Consent Action Items.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. 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. 10.10.23 Full Board Meeting Minutes
6. Resolution to Dispose of Personal Property-English (9-12) Resources

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 as presented. Trustee Janet Armstrong 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 Information.

B. Items for Information

1. Fall Enrollment 2023/2024 Update
2. Budget Consensus Committee Update-Dr. Rob Watson
3. Safety, Security, and Tech Levies Presentation
4. Policy 1650 Public Charter Schools
5. Policy 2423 Personalized Learning
6. Policy 3005 Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment & Hazing Prevention & Reporting Policy
7. Policy 3120 Compulsory Attendance
8. Policy 3155 Part-time Attendance
9. Policy 4330 Community Use of Facilities

10. Policy 7014 Subscription Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITAs) Capitalization Threshold
11. Policy 7035 Fraud and Fraud Prevention

1. Fall Enrollment 2023/2024 Update

The Board of Trustees moved on to receive a fall enrollment 2023/2024 update from Mr. Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent. Mr. McKay reviewed a chart that showed enrollment counts for each grade level from 2019 through fall of 2023, along with the total enrollment for each year. The chart also displays projected enrollment for each grade level for fall 2024 through fall 2031 and the projected total enrollment for each year. Mr. McKay stated that there was a total decrease of 144 students from 2022 to 2023. There was a decrease of 43 students in K-5 from 2022 to 2023, a decrease of 63 students in 6-8 from 2022 to 2023, and a decrease of 38 students in 9-12 from 2022 to 2023.

Mrs. Mickelson reviewed preliminary general fund budget projections based on fall enrollment counts with the Board of Trustees. Mrs. Mickelson also reviewed what the ANB amounts would be for the elementary, the middle schools, and the high schools for the following categories: FY2025 based on fall count, FY2024, FY 2023, and 3-year average. Mrs. Mickelson went into greater details about what the FY 2024 numbers and projected 2025 numbers would be for the BASE (Minimum) budget, the maximum budget, the highest budget with a vote, the highest voted amount, and the adopted budget. Mrs. Mickelson also reviewed these numbers for the high school district. Lastly, Mrs. Mickelson reviewed what the numbers would be in the elementary for the following categories: increase/(decrease)-no note, increase/(decrease)-vote, estimated increase/(decrease) in mills, the estimated impact on a \$100,000 home, and the estimated impact on a \$200,000 home. Mrs. Mickelson also reviewed these numbers for the high school district. Mr. McKay and Mrs. Mickelson proceeded to answer any questions the Board of Trustees had regarding the fall enrollment 2023/2024 update.

2. Budget Consensus Committee Update-Dr. Rob Watson

The Board of Trustees received a Budget Consensus Committee Update from Dr. Rob Watson, Executive Director of School Administrators of Montana. Dr. Watson is the facilitator for the Helena Public Schools Budget Consensus Committee. Dr. Watson stated that the complex problems our district is experiencing are very similar to what is happening in other districts. Those problems include things such as budget issues and declining enrollments. Dr. Watson shared that the purpose of the Budget Consensus Committee is to help the administration draft proposals for the board to consider and he anticipates that those proposals will contain several options for the board to consider. The committee has met several times and has 30 to 35 committee members. The goal is to wrap up their work no later than January so they can present the draft proposals to the Board of Trustees for consideration. Dr. Watson stated that they have not made any major decisions yet, but they have been building trust and educating the committee around school finance, which is not an easy task because school finance is one of the most

complicated things in our state. The committee began with a state level presentation by a gentleman that works with the legislature who described how school funding works in the state. Then Janelle Mickelson, Helena Public Schools Business Manager, did a great job of breaking that down to how it works in Helena and describing the different funds that we have. At the last meeting the committee took a deep dive into the general fund budget, not only how it's currently being spent, but also based on the preliminary numbers, what the budget might be for next year. Through the committee's consensus process, they developed budget value statements. It was their hope to have some value statements that could be used to make these difficult decisions or to make decisions around the budget. The committee started with the strategic plan for the Helena School District and looked at other budget value statements samples from other districts, and then came up with five statements. Dr. Watson stated at the last meeting in October they tried to get some consensus around these statements, and they are not quite there yet, and he knows the committee would appreciate the Board of Trustees' help and feedback on these statements. Dr. Watson stated if the Board has any specific written comments on the value statements, they can write them out and then those comments can be weaved into the next revision of the budget value statements. Dr. Watson stated when the budget proposals come before the Board, he hopes that they will use these value statements as a way to make decisions around the budget. Dr. Watson concluded by answering any questions the Board of Trustees had about the Budget Consensus Recommendation Committee.

3. Safety, Security, and Tech Levies Presentation

The Board of Trustees moved on to discuss the safety and security levy. Facilities Director Todd Verrill discussed the need for a 2024 safety and security levy and stated there is no "line-item" for safety and security funding. It is currently funded out of Facilities Maintenance (General Fund), or Facilities Building Reserve, and a voted levy will provide funding to sustain best practices. Mr. Verrill reviewed planning considerations which include two cost categories of materials and supplies and salaries and labor. Mr. Verrill reviewed the materials and supplies needs:

1. Materials and Supplies
 - a. Environmental Health, Safety, & Compliance
 - Air Conditioning and Filtration
 - b. SEC Report Recommendations
 - Classroom Window Coverings
 - c. Fire Safety
 - Updated Detection, Alarms, & Controls
 - d. Playground Safety (Elementary Only)
 - Equipment Repair/Replacement
 - e. Physical Security
 - Classroom Door Locks
 - f. Information Technology (IT)
 - Access Controls (key fobs, etc.)

Mr. Verrill moved on to review the salaries and labor needs under the proposed 2024 Safety and Security Levy.

2. Salaries and Labor
 - a. Mental and Physical Health
 - Mental Health Response Teams
 - Nurses and Counselors
 - b. Law Enforcement Support
 - SROs in Schools
 - Support to School Activities
 - c. IT Support (%)
 - Software Support
 - Access Hardware Support
 - d. Facilities Maintenance and Custodial (%)
 - Custodians
 - Grounds
 - Trades

Mr. Verrill reviewed the estimated total amounts for the elementary levy and the high school levy and what the annual and monthly tax impact on a \$100K home, \$300K home, and \$600K home would be. Mr. Verrill concluded his presentation by answering any questions the trustees had regarding the safety and security levy discussion.

The Board of Trustees moved on to discuss the technology Levy. Mr. Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology, discussed the need for a 2024 technology levy. Mr. Myers began his presentation by reviewing with the committee what technology in the district looked like back in 2005 compared to what technology in the district looks like now in 2023. In 2005 there was about one desktop computer per teacher, in an elementary school there was one cart of laptops for 450 students, and four to five wireless access points for the whole building. In 2005 in one of the middle schools there was one desktop computer per teacher, two computer labs for 700 students, a few projectors mounted, and the first carts of Chromebooks were added in 2015. In 2005 in one of the high schools there were around two to three computer labs and a few carts for over 1,200 students. There was one desktop computer per teacher, a TV in each room for announcements, and two to three teachers were using Moodle for classes. In 2023 there are over 1,000 teacher devices, over 7,800 student devices, student email, 4,000 average users at any time, 5Gb internet, 600 wireless access points, most of the curricular resources are online, projectors are in most learning spaces, there are powerful online tools, and millions of documents are created by students and teachers each year.

Mr. Myers stated that the technology needs in the district have expanded dramatically and include:

1. Device Replacement
 - Student devices-iPads and Chromebooks (5-7 year cycle)
 - Teacher/staff devices-laptops (5-7 year cycle)
 - Classroom devices-projectors, cameras, labs, phones (7-10 year cycle)
2. Network and Services
 - Internet connectivity
 - Software licensing
 - Curriculum resources
3. Support
 - Applications management
 - Network and administration

Mr. Myers reviewed what the K-8 tech levy amounts and high school tech levy amounts would need to be to meet our new tech needs, and what the annual tax impact on a \$100K home, \$300K home, and \$600K home would be. Mr. Myers concluded his presentation by answering any questions the trustees had regarding the technology levy discussion.

4. Policy 1650 Public Charter Schools

Ms. Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff, presented for information Policy 1650 Public Charter Schools to the Board of Trustees. This is a new policy regarding board obligations relating to the creation of public charter schools under House Bill 549. The 2023 Legislative session resulted in the passage of two Charter School bills – House Bill 549 and House Bill 562. The Governor signed both into law on May 18, 2023, but in June, a lawsuit was filed against House Bill 562 and a decision is likely months away. However, HB 549 is moving forward, and charter school applications are being accepted by the Montana Board of Public Education and are due no later than November 1, 2023. This law permits a school board of trustees to submit an application for the creation of a public charter school. Similarly, the law allows for individuals located within the district to request that the board create a charter school. The local board may decline the request but an independent group can submit an application directly to the Montana Board of Public Education in such event for the creation of the public charter school. Public charter schools may be created to serve a particular population of students and may be limited in the programs offered. The governing board of the public charter school may be the existing board of trustees or may be established through a separate board that is publicly elected after initial creation. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 1650 Public Charter Schools.

5. Policy 2423 Personalized Learning

Ms. Ridgway presented for information Policy 2423 Personalized Learning to the Board of Trustees. This is a new policy regarding personalized learning. This policy is required under the changes to 10.55.701 adopted as part of the changes to Chapter 10.55 of the Montana Administrative Rules regarding accreditation. This policy states, *“The District seeks to create personalized learning opportunities permitted by Montana law, including but not limited to work-based learning, proficiency-based learning, offsite instruction, and transformational learning, to fulfill the people’s goal of developing the full educational potential of each person. Personalized learning opportunities are offered to: Develop individualized pathways for career and postsecondary educational opportunities that honor individual interests, passions, strengths, needs, and culture; Support the student through the development of relationships among teachers, family, peers, the business community, postsecondary education officials, and other community stakeholders; Embed community-based, experiential, online, and work-based learning opportunities; Foster a learning environment that incorporates both face-to-face and virtual connections; and Support transformational learning through the development of individual learning plans for participating students.”* Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 2423 Personalized Learning.

6. Policy 3005 Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment & Hazing Prevention & Reporting Policy

Ms. Ridgway presented for information Policy 3005 Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment & Hazing Prevention & Reporting Policy. Ms. Ridgway stated this is an existing and required policy and the only change in this policy right now is to the citations under the legal references. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 3005 Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment & Hazing Prevention & Reporting Policy.

7. Policy 3120 Compulsory Attendance

Ms. Ridgway presented for information Policy 3120 Compulsory Attendance. This policy has been revised to reflect changes in language regarding compulsory enrollment under House Bill 676 and Senate Bill 518. Senate Bill 518 permits a parent to withdraw a student from instruction or presentations/assemblies/lectures/educational events that “offend the parent’s beliefs or practices,” which is now a basis for excusal from compulsory attendance. Ms. Ridgway did point out that we do have a process for alternative materials that meet the standards and proceeded to answer any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 3120 Compulsory Attendance.

8. Policy 3155 Part-time Attendance

Ms. Ridgway presented for information Policy 3155 Part-time Attendance. This policy was revised to reflect House Bill 396 which at the request of the parent requires the part-time enrollment of a nonpublic or homeschool student who is a resident of the district and meets the age requirements. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 3155 Part-time Attendance.

The Board of Trustees did not have paper copies to review Policy 4330 Community Use of Facilities, Policy 7014 Subscription Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITAs) Capitalization Threshold, and Policy 7035 Fraud and Fraud Prevention. The Board of Trustees determined these final policies would come before the full board at a future meeting when they had paper copies they could review, rather than viewing them electronically.

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

C. REPORTS

1. Wellness Committee Report

Chief of Staff Ms. Barb Ridgway gave the Wellness Committee Report. At the Wellness Committee meeting Mr. Robert Worthy, Sodexo Manager, shared that he received a \$29,000 grant to purchase Montana bison, Montana Flathead cherries, and Montana carrots. Mr. Worthy is planning how he will incorporate those items into the school lunch program. At the meeting Mr. Worthy shared that there is a summer feeding program with 99 entities, including school districts and nonprofits, that participated in the program over this past summer, and Helena Public Schools served the most meals. Out of the AA districts Helena Public Schools served 63,178 meals, Kalispell served 35,000, Belgrade served 31,000, Missoula served 31,000, Billings served 29,000, Great Falls served 16,000, and Bozeman and Butte did not serve any (they were not part of the program). Mr. Worthy is working on a program where you can get Montana ranchers to donate domestic farm animals such as cattle to the school district, and then a producer outside of Bozeman will prepare that for the school district at no cost to the district and the rancher gets the tax deduction for donating the animals to the school district. Ms. Ridgway stated this coming summer the state will participate in the EBT program which is a huge thing for our families that struggle with food insecurity. Every family that is eligible will get \$40 per month per child to purchase food during the summer. At the Wellness meeting the committee discussed the recent food forum was great, but not well attended. They also discussed the importance of the facilities master plan incorporating a new central kitchen. At the meeting the Helena Food Share stated they are now preparing 1,200 kid packs a week for Helena and East Helena. They are preparing for a holiday distribution for all families. There are no requirements, families just need to sign up. The committee is looking at some grants that the district may be eligible for that provide some opportunities for expanding food resources.

2. Student Representatives Reports

Ms. Luna Hernandez, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, gave her Student Representative Report. Ms. Hernandez commented, “CHS recently completed the RBHI Screening process with almost all students. This year, we split up the endeavor by 2nd period teacher last name. The counseling staff and our partners from PureView met with (and supported) a lot of students post screening. In the middle of October was College Application Week and 153 seniors participated, 90 out of state applications were completed and 250 in-state applications were completed. The crosstown play *The Man Who Came to Dinner*- continues this week at 6:00 p.m. in the CHS Auditorium November 16-18. Over 30 drama students from both high schools will perform the 1939 George S. Kaufman classic. This comedy was made famous by the 1942 film with Bette Davis and Montey Woolley, and tells the story of the great radio orator, Sheridan Whiteside, who falls on the stoop of the Stanely’s home. He is forced to stay at their residence while he heals, but that doesn’t mean that he can’t have a little fun during his stay. Tickets are available at the door or online: VIP seating (orchestra chairs, not wooden chairs): \$15, regular seating for adults: \$10, and students/seniors: \$8. Congratulations to Mrs. Kidder and Mrs. Goody as they recently presented at the Montana MTSS Forum held in Helena. They presented on the following: “Integration of MTSS Pyramid, Literacy, and Instructional Framework.” The School Leadership Team focus for November is vocabulary, teacher clarity, and note-taking. All three areas will be examined/reviewed, and they are all found in our instructional framework.”

Ms. Willa Bishop, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, gave her Student Representative Report. “Every fall sport has wrapped up, with some notable endings from the boys’ cross country team placing 3rd at state and the girls’ volleyball team taking 5th. Helena High was proud to host the State Special Olympics over the weekend. One of our own, Ben Swift, who is the most diligent manager of the football team, took home first place alongside his basketball team. Helena High students and staff were notified on Thursday of last week that a beloved teacher, colleague, and friend, David McKim passed away. For many in the school, he was a friendly and energetic presence who was always finding a way to get involved. Speaking personally as one of his former students, he left an impact on everyone who entered his classroom, and even people who didn’t. The school is very grateful for the outpouring of support from across the district, whether it be through substitutes filling in for teachers or counselors making themselves available for any student who needed to talk, these actions have not gone unnoticed throughout Helena High. There will be a service to remember Mr. McKim tomorrow (11/15) at noon inside the Carroll College PE center as well as a student organized hike and vigil at Mt. Helena on Monday the 20th at 6.”

3. Helena Education Association Report

Ms. Jane Shawn, HEA President, gave the Helena Education Association Report. Ms. Shawn thanked the district for their very compassionate and coordinated response to the tragedy at Helena High last week. Assistant Superintendent Josh McKay, Lona Carter, Student Health, and Superintendent Rex Wertz pulled as many resources as possible to immediately support the staff and students at Helena High and continue to make sure that those resources are available to anyone who may be struggling with this trauma. Ms. Shawn also watched some of the kids take care of each other and that was amazing to see the kids really supporting each other. Ms. Shawn stated that while there are struggles

across the district, she is really pleased that Josh is always willing to sit down with her and hear what members are saying and brainstorm with the union for some possible solutions to some of the issues that we're having. Lastly, local, and statewide unions are pushing back against the proposal by the Superintendent of Public Instruction to virtually double their license fees. They are flooding the Board of Education with calls and emails to ask them to resist raising their fees.

4. Facilities and Maintenance Committee Report

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn gave the Facilities and Maintenance Committee Report. The Facilities and Maintenance Committee were given the same Safety, Security, and Tech Levies Presentation that the full board was given tonight by Facilities Director Todd Verrill and Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology. They were then given an update from SMA Architecture on the progress of the Facilities Master Plan.

5. Budget and Finance Committee Report

Trustee Janet Armstrong gave the Budget and Finance Committee Report. The Budget and Finance Committee were given the same Fall Enrollment 2023/2024 Update that the full board was given tonight by Assistant Superintendent Josh McKay and Business Manager Janelle Mickelson. The committee reviewed the budget to actual reports for the elementary general fund and high school general fund and there is a large difference from last month to this month in the budget balance for educator salaries in both the elementary and high school general fund. Mrs. Mickelson stated that we did not hire a large number of people between last month and this month, which leads her to believe this could possibly be a glitch in the system, and she is researching this extensively. Trustee Armstrong stated that in regard to the Budget Consensus Recommendation Committee, Dr. Watson hopes to have some proposals or recommendations to the board in January

6. Policy Committee Report

Trustee Janet Armstrong gave the Policy Committee Report. The Policy Committee reviewed all the policies that were presented to the full board this evening. Trustee Armstrong noted that there are a lot of policies that are going to impact the school district that we are currently reviewing, and she believes that reviewing policies is an important part of being a trustee.

7. Teaching & Learning Committee Report

The Teaching and Learning Committee meeting in November was postponed until December, so there was no report to give tonight.

8. Health Benefits Committee Report

The Health Benefits Committee meets later in the month, so there was no report to give tonight.

9. Montana School Boards Association Report

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn gave the Montana School Boards Association Report. At the meeting they reviewed topics that they may want to bring forward to promote to the legislature that included 6th grade funding and a cost-of-living recommendation. They also discussed that MTSBA would like to use a consensus process when making important decisions, much like the Budget Consensus process the Helena School District is currently using.

10. Parent Council Visit Reports

The Board of Trustees have started to attend various Parent Council meetings at schools across the district.

Trustee Beaver shared his report from his Parent Council visit at Jefferson Elementary School. Trustee Beaver stated at the meeting they reviewed the Safety, Security, and Tech Levies Presentation and the Jefferson Parent Council had some requests that they would like the district to be looking at. They would like us to organize the groundwork for the next Legislative Assembly and get to work on exactly what we want to propose to the legislature. Trustee Beaver stated that is surely something the district is already going to do and is in process at the present time. The Jefferson Parent Council want us to consider a process by which all Parent Council groups from all the schools across the district come together, and maybe even as far as consolidating their funds because they recognize at Jefferson it is easy for them to raise funds, but at other schools it is more difficult. They are willing to share their funds if all the Parent Council groups get together and recognize what needs there are within the district. The third item that the Jefferson Parent Council was adamant about was the fact that we must get into a boundary discussion and reconsider our boundaries as they exist today and modify them in some fashion.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn and Board Vice Chair Jennifer McKee shared their report from their Parent Council visit at Hawthorne Elementary School. Chair Hathhorn shared that it was a hard visit because their Parent Council had gotten some information about the facilities master plan and the potential of closing some schools, but it went very well. Tim Meldrum from SMA Architecture also attended the meeting. At the meeting they discussed the facilities master plan and the structural problems that face every district in Montana because of the school funding formula, the lack of support for children with special needs, and the inability of local districts to ask their local taxpayers to make up the difference in the state. Trustee McKee stated that the district is doing everything they can to maximize every dollar, find new sources of income pool, working with other school districts to change the school funding formula, and prioritizing the things that are actually going to work. Chair Hathhorn added that it was a very respectful meeting even though they had a very hard discussion.

Trustee Janet Armstrong shared her report from her Parent Council visit to Jim Darcy Elementary School. Trustee Armstrong said it was a delight to meet with their Parent Council group, and they were very engaged and informed. Trustee Armstrong shared the story of the district such as how did we get here, how are we funded, and what are doing about it. Their Parent Council group shared that there were some improvements made to the playground equipment there which they thought cost a lot of money.

Trustee Armstrong expressed that she was thrilled with district administration because she emailed Facilities Director Todd Verrill about some of the concerns from the Jim Darcy Parent Council, and he was at Jim Darcy the next day addressing some of their concerns. The Jim Darcy Parent Council loved the idea of running the levies and suggested we get out early to educate the community.

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, November 28th, Board Work Session, 3:30 p.m., Capital High School
- Tuesday, December 5th, Policy Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Wednesday, December 6th, Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Monday, December 11th, Facilities & Maintenance Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, December 12th, Executive Committee Meeting, 11:00 a.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, December 12th, Budget & Finance Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, December 12th, Full Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Lincoln Center

VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

There were no further board comments.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary Date