



**Superintendent**

Rex Wertz  
324-2001

**Business Manager**

Janelle Mickelson  
324-2040

## Board of Trustees Meeting

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

**Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 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  
Kay Satre, 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  
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 were requested.

**III. RECOGNITIONS**

The Board of Trustees recognized the students and staff listed below.

American Choral Directors’ Association All-Northwest Honor Choir

Congratulations to the Capital High students listed below who were selected to the American Choral Directors’ Association All-Northwest Honor Choir. These students were selected as superior singers among hundreds of auditions from Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana. During this event they will be singing in rehearsals and performing with the most dedicated and skilled student musicians in the Northwest U.S. and working with nationally and globally recognized choral directors. The event will be held during January 23-27, 2024. Special thanks to Capital High School Choir Educator Thomas Baty for all that he does to encourage and support these talented students.

- Anna Drake
- Hollis Elliott
- Adrianna Helfrich

2023-2024 Montana Assistant Principal of the Year

Congratulations to Kathy Kidder from Capital High who has been selected as the 2023-2024 Montana Assistant Principal of the Year!!

2022-2023 Montana Women’s Track and Field Coach of the Year

Congratulations to Helena High Coach Jesse Zentz as he was recognized by the National Federation of High Schools as the 2022-2023 Montana Women’s Track and Field Coach of the Year!!

The Board of Trustees moved on to hear the Superintendent’s Report from Superintendent Rex Weltz.

#### IV. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Superintendent Wertz began his report by recognizing the loss of a dedicated staff member. Bryant Elementary Para Educator Gretchen Wysocki passed away December 1<sup>st</sup>. Her loss has been deeply felt by Bryant staff and the many, many individuals whose lives she touched across the community. Superintendent Wertz moved on to review recognition, new business, outreach and meetings.

##### Recognition

- Congratulations to Capital High School Assistant Principal Kathy Kidder who has been named the 2023-2024 Montana Assistant Principal of the Year.
- Congratulations to Helena High Coach Jesse Zentz as he was recognized by the National Federation of High Schools as the 2022-2023 Montana Women’s Track and Field Coach of the Year.
- Congratulations to Anna Drake, Hollis Elliott, and Adrianna Helfrich who were selected to the American Choral Directors’ Association All-Northwest Honor Choir.
- Congratulations to Mrs. Jen Jenkins, Educator from Central Elementary, who was named 105.3 KMTX October Teacher of the Month.
- Thank you to all the staff and volunteers who made it possible for the Helena community, including our schools, to host the 2023 Special Olympics Basketball Tournament. Congratulations to our Tornadoes and their fans on some excellent play.
- Thank you to Lisa Cordingley, Executive Director of the Helena Education Foundation and Becca Leaphart for hosting an incredible evening at Great Conversations.
- Thank you to all the volunteers and participants for the 2023 Valley of Gold Speech, Debate, and Drama Tournament that was hosted by the Helena School District, East Helena School District and Carroll College.
- Thank you to our music teachers from kindergarten through high school who are working hard to make magic and memories happen on stage with winter performances across the district.
- PAL Thanksgiving Celebration

##### New Business

- Bryant Elementary Operational Focus Work
- K-12 Vision Project Strategic Planning Meetings
- Safety and Security Levy/Technology Levy Update Across District
- Budget Recommendation Consensus Committee Update
- Mediation HSD – HEA Update
- State Health Trust (HB332) RFP Review Panel Update
- RBLC Lease Discussions Update
- May Butler Center RFP Update
- Charter Schools Board of Public Education Review Update
- CTE Group Meetings With SMA-Facilities Discussion
  - November 27th, 2023

- Helena School District/SMA Monthly Progress Meetings-Master Facility Planning
- Initiating additional Kinder Sprouts across the District 2nd Semester
- Student Board Rep Informational Video
- Kindergarten registration opens January 2nd, 2024, for Fall 2024 School Year
- School Safety Program-STOPit

#### Outreach/Meetings

- Cabinet & Leadership
- Trustee Office Hour Communication
- State Health Trust Meeting
- Board Leadership
- AA Superintendents
- PAL Thanksgiving Celebration
- SPH/HSD Direct Preferred Pharmacy Meeting (340B)
- HB 332 Health Trust Committee
- HEA President/Asst. Superintendent Meeting
- HEF Board Meeting
- HEF Executive Committee
- Student Leaders Meeting
- TV, Print, Radio Media
- Teacher Advisory Committee
- Parent Advisory Committee
- SMA – Facility Planning
- PAC/MOFE

#### Other

- No School December 22nd through January 1st (Winter Break)

That concluded the Superintendent’s Report portion of the agenda. Superintendent Weltz answered any questions the trustees had about his Superintendent Report. The Trustees moved on to hear general public comment.

## **V. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Matt Volz gave general public comment. Mr. Volz is the parent of three children in the Helena Public Schools. Mr. Volz discussed topics including but not limited to the master facility plan being released soon, and how parents want to get involved and help the district find solutions that would prevent the possible closure of neighborhood schools.

Ms. Traci Swingley gave general public comment. Ms. Swingley is here tonight as a parent, a grandparent and supporter of the employees and the students in the district. Ms. Swingley discussed

topics including but not limited to her experience in the health care industry and how believes the district could find solutions to lower health care premiums.

Ms. Meesha Orrison gave general public comment. Ms. Orrison is a grandparent of a student in the Helena Public Schools. Ms. Orrison discussed topics including but not limited to wanting to see an increase in communication such as a phone call and a text from the district when issues arise in a school.

Cheryl (did not divulge last name) gave general public comment. Cheryl is a grandparent to children in the Helena Public Schools. Cheryl discussed topics including not but limited to safety and timely notifications at her grandchildren's school.

Ms. Jasmine Clouse gave general public comment. Ms. Clouse has a child in the Helena Public Schools. Ms. Clouse discussed topics including but not limited safety issues and timely notifications at her child's school.

Ms. Rochel Stickler gave general public comment. Ms. Stickler is the parent of a child in the Helena Public Schools. Ms. Stickler discussed topics including but not limited to a suggestion that students be given more time to eat breakfast in the morning at school and the topic of bullying.

Mr. Thomas Baty gave general public comment. Mr. Baty is an educator in the Helena Public Schools. Mr. Baty discussed topics including but not limited to events that he and his students participate in throughout the year, rising insurance costs, and that there is no negotiated teacher agreement yet.

Mr. Dale Stickler gave general public comment. Mr. Stickler is the parent of a child in the Helena Public Schools. Mr. Stickler discussed topics including but not limited to the state lottery and school funding.

Ms. Moffie Funk gave general public comment. Ms. Funk is a Helena community member and taxpayer. Ms. Funk discussed topics including but not limited to her appreciation of public comment at the board meetings, her appreciation of an employee recognized tonight, and public charter schools.

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

## **VI. 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. 11.14.23 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 Terry Beaver moved to approve the Consent Action Items as presented. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

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

## **B. Items for Action**

1. Approval of HPS-Helena Secretaries Association Collective Bargaining Agreement

The Board of Trustees reviewed the HPS-Helena Secretaries Association Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Background:

Pursuant MCA 39-31-306, an agreement reached by the public employer and the exclusive representative must be reduced to writing and must be executed by both parties. The Helena School District and the Helena Secretaries Association Local #8500 of the Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE) reached a tentative agreement on November 16, 2023. The Secretaries ratified the tentative agreement to the contract and notified us on December 4, 2023. The District negotiation team recommends ratification. The three (3) year agreement was open for wages only for July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.

Considerations:

HPS and the Secretaries have a collaborative relationship and productive negotiations history. This one-year wage agreement supports the directive of the Board to support our staff members and address issues relative to the district budget.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the HPS-Helena Secretaries Association Collective Bargaining Agreement as presented.”

**Motion:** Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve the HPS-Helena Secretaries Association Collective Bargaining Agreement as presented. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

**Public Comment: None.**

**Vote:** 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

2. Approval of HPS-Craft Council (Plumbers and Mechanic) Collective Bargaining Agreement

The Board of Trustees reviewed the HPS-Craft Council (Plumbers and Mechanic) Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Background:

Pursuant MCA 39-31-306, an agreement reached by the public employer and the exclusive representative must be reduced to writing and must be executed by both parties. The Helena School District and the Craft Council (Plumbers and Pipefitters, Local Union #41 and International Association of Machinist and Aerospace Workers Local #88) reached a tentative agreement on November 27, 2023. The Plumbers (2 members) and Mechanic (1 member) ratified the tentative agreement to the contract. The District negotiation team recommends ratification.

Considerations:

HPS and the Craft Council have a collaborative relationship and productive negotiations history. This agreement continues to bring parity to the bargaining units within HSD that work together on facilities projects. This agreement supports the directive of the Board to support our staff members and address issues relative to the district budget.

Trustee Terry Beaver stated that this group is also a representation of the school district as a whole and he does not understand why they should get a greater percentage increase than has been offered to any other group. He understands the market analysis, but we also offer them healthcare above and beyond what they would get in the general market.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. "At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the HPS-Craft Council (Plumbers and Mechanic) Collective Bargaining Agreement as presented."

**Motion:** Trustee Linda Cleatus moved to approve the HPS-Craft Council (Plumbers and Mechanic) Collective Bargaining Agreement as presented. Trustee Jeff Hindoien seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 7-1 (Seven trustees voted in favor and Trustee Terry Beaver voted against) Motion Carries.

3. Policy 1650 Public Charter Schools

Ms. Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff, presented for action Policy 1650 Public Charter Schools to the Board of Trustees. This policy has gone before the full Board of Trustees for information with no recommended changes after their review. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 1650 Public Charter Schools.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 1650 Public Charter Schools.”

**Motion:** Trustee Jennifer McKee moved to approve Policy 1650 Public Charter Schools as presented. Trustee Janet Armstrong seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

4. Policy 2423 Personalized Learning

Ms. Ridgway presented for action Policy 2423 Personalized Learning to the Board of Trustees. This policy has gone before the full Board of Trustees for information with no recommended changes after their review. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 2423 Personalized Learning.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 2423 Personalized Learning.”

**Motion:** Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve Policy 2423 Personalized Learning as presented. Trustee Terry Beaver seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

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

Ms. Ridgway presented for action Policy 3005 Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment & Hazing Prevention & Reporting Policy. Ms. Ridgway stated this is an existing and required policy which has been before the full Board of Trustees for information 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.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 3005 Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment & Hazing Prevention & Reporting Policy.”

**Motion:** Trustee Jennifer McKee moved to approve Policy 3005 Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment & Hazing Prevention & Reporting Policy as presented. Trustee Janet Armstrong seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 8-0 motion carries unanimously.



6. Policy 3120 Compulsory Attendance

Ms. Ridgway presented for action Policy 3120 Compulsory Attendance. This policy has been before the full Board of Trustees with no recommended changes after their review. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 3120 Compulsory Attendance.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 3120 Compulsory Attendance.”

**Motion:** Trustee Linda Cleatus moved to approve Policy 3120 Compulsory Attendance as presented. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

7. Policy 3155 Part-time Attendance

Ms. Ridgway presented for action Policy 3155 Part-time Attendance. This policy has been before the full Board of Trustees with no recommended changes after their review. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 3155 Part-time Attendance.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 3155 Part-time Attendance.”

**Motion:** Trustee Jeff Hindoien moved to approve Policy 3155 Part-time Attendance as presented. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

8. Policy 4330 Community Use of Facilities

Ms. Ridgway presented for action Policy 4330: Community Use of Facilities. This policy has been before the full Board of Trustees with no recommended changes after their review. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 4330: Community Use of Facilities.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 4330 Community Use of Facilities.”

**Motion:** Trustee Jeff Hindoien moved to approve Policy 4330 Community Use of Facilities as presented. Trustee Janet Armstrong seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

9. Policy 7014 Subscription Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITAs) Capitalization Threshold

Ms. Ridgway presented for action Policy 7014: Subscription Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITAs) Capitalization Threshold. This policy has been before the full Board of Trustees for information with no recommended changes after their review. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 7014: Subscription Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITAs) Capitalization Threshold.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 7014 Subscription Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITAs) Capitalization Threshold.”

**Motion:** Trustee Linda Cleatus moved to approve Policy 7014 Subscription Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITAs) Capitalization Threshold as presented. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

10. Policy 7035 Fraud and Fraud Prevention

Ms. Ridgway presented for action Policy 7035: Fraud and Fraud Prevention. This policy has been before the full Board of Trustees for information with no recommended changes after their review. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 7035: Fraud and Fraud Prevention.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 7035 Fraud and Fraud Prevention.”

**Motion:** Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve Policy 7035 Fraud and Fraud Prevention as presented. Trustee Jennifer Walsh seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

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

### C. Items for Information

1. Policy 2100 Recognition of Native American Cultural Heritage  
Ms. Ridgway presented for information to the Board of Trustees Policy 2100 Recognition of Native American Cultural Heritage. This policy has been revised to reflect the requirement under House Bill 338 requiring the use of a certified staff member to provide instruction in American Indian studies if the District receives a Indian Education for All payment. Legal references were also updated to add citation to administrative rules incorporating education related to Native Americans. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 2100 Recognition of Native American Cultural Heritage.
2. Policy 2103 Religion and Religious Activities  
Ms. Ridgway presented for information to the Board of Trustees Policy 2103 Religion and Religious Activities. Revisions were made to this policy to recognize the holding of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in Kennedy v. Bremerton School District, 142 S.Ct. 2407 (2022). That was the case regarding the football coach praying after games. The Court’s decision to permit such prayer was largely based on the school district’s practice of allowing coaches after games to engage in personal activities despite the fact that they were still on duty, such as checking cell phones and talking to family. Revisions were also made to reflect House Bill 745 which clarified that students may choose to read the Bible or other religious materials during free reading time or if a course/classroom permits a student to self-select materials. Legal references were updated to reflect these laws. When the Policy Committee reviewed this policy, it was suggested that lines 60 through 65 be removed from the policy. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 2103 Religion and Religious Activities.
3. Policy 4015 Conduct on School Property  
Ms. Ridgway presented for information to the Board of Trustees Policy 4015 Conduct on School Property. This policy has been revised to reflect House Bill 128 which prohibits the use of marijuana products (as well as tobacco products) on district/school property. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 4015 Conduct on School Property.
4. Policy 4030 Cooperative Programs with Other Districts and Public Agencies  
Ms. Ridgway presented for information to the Board of Trustees Policy 4030 Cooperative Programs with Other Districts and Public Agencies. This policy has been revised to incorporate language from House Bill 214 which permits districts to enter into multidistrict agreements for a district to provide “culturally rooted instruction aligned to a learning environment for English language learners or an Indian language immersion program.” Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 4030 Cooperative Programs with Other Districts and Public Agencies.
5. Policy 4040 School, Student, Parent, Family and Community Engagement in Education  
Ms. Ridgway presented for information to the Board of Trustees Policy 4040 School, Student, Parent, Family and Community Engagement in Education. This policy has been revised to

reflect a new rule adopted in the accreditation standards in Chapter 10.55 of the Montana Administrative Rules that incorporates family engagement goals. The language in the policy is updated to reflect the change made to the language previously in the accreditation rules. When the Policy Committee reviewed this policy, it was recommended that the words *and supports* be added after the word *recognizes* on line four. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 4040 School, Student, Parent, Family and Community Engagement in Education.

6. Policy 5020 Tobacco Products, Marijuana, Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace

Ms. Ridgway presented for information to the Board of Trustees Policy 5020 Tobacco Products, Marijuana, Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace. This policy has been revised to reflect House Bill 128 which prohibits the use of marijuana products (as well as tobacco products) on district/school property. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 5020 Tobacco Products, Marijuana, Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace.

7. Policy 7060 District Safety

Ms. Ridgway presented for information to the Board of Trustees Policy 7060 District Safety. This policy has been revised to reflect Senate Bill 213 and the requirement that safety/emergency plans be reviewed annually as well as incorporate threat assessment practices to include the adoption of protocols to be used for student threats towards others or property and identification of the threat assessment team as well as a requirement that the team meet at least monthly. When the Policy Committee reviewed this policy, it was recommended that lines 38 and 39 be removed from the policy as similar information is stated earlier in the policy. The Policy Committee also recommended that the word *school* on line 24 be changed to *district*. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 7060 District Safety.

That concluded the Items for Information, 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 commented, “CHS recently held a fundraiser with our parents to raise money for families in need during both Thanksgiving and the upcoming holiday break. We raised over \$2,000 for the Bruin Pantry via donations collected via RevTrack with our bookkeeper. Counselors identified families in need and Van’s food vouchers are distributed to CHS families. Club leaders at CHS have also organized a canned food drive for community members that will be in need over Christmas break. The drive is underway as of Monday. The winter choir concert was held last Monday, and the winter band concert is this evening. The Advanced Orchestra concert will be held on the 14th at 6:00 pm in the Capitol Rotunda and the general Orchestra concert will be held on the 19th at 7:00 pm in the CHS auditorium. Bruin Talks is a program in which upper class students talk with freshmen during announcement time. The 2nd quarter Bruin Talk was held in November.

It included a brief video and was focused on different resources we have for students. Capital High recently held the speech portion of the Valley of Gold Speech and Debate Meet- and we would like to say thank you to our community members who volunteered to judge. We had a lot of schools and a lot of students competing. During the first Public Learning Community Monday of the month, teachers were able to select two professional development sessions out of 6 total to attend last Monday afternoon. The same sessions will be offered in January and teachers will get to attend another two of their choice. The focus areas for this month that have been directly derived from the CHS Instructional Frameworks include close reading, scaffolds, paraphrasing, summarizing, and annotating. The annual Holiday Assembly and the Winter Formal will both be held on Thursday the 21st- the last day of school before the holiday break. Winter MHSAs sports have started- games, heats, and matches have all started and another sports season is underway."

Ms. Willa Bishop, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, gave her Student Representative Report. Ms. Bishop commented, "December is normally the slow month for Helena High and this year has been no different. The band had their first concert on the 5th of December, the same night as crosstown wrestling. Helena High School choir is having a concert tonight and will perform at the winter assembly on Thursday the 21st of December. With the fall sports ending in November, all-state and all-conference selections have been announced, with Helena High having countless athletes recognized. Coach Zentz was also named the NFHS Girl's Track and Field Coach of the Year for Montana. National Honor Society just finished up a food drive and our HOSA chapter is running a clothes drive for the winter months."

2. Helena Education Association Report

Ms. Jane Shawn, HEA President, gave the Helena Education Association Report. Ms. Shawn commented, "Saturday was score release day for national boards, which is a day much anticipated by those teachers who submitted components way back in the spring. These teachers have put forth hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars to show evidence of their accomplished teaching, and we have 13 new National Board-Certified teachers in front of our students. Our newly minted National Board-Certified teachers are:

Bryant: Bridget Butler

Capital High: Ellie Fjeseth, Lauren Mitchell, and Laura Ortman

Four Georgians: Chelsey Davis, Rachel Heaton, Jamie Hoovestall and Mikayla Nickol

Helena High: Victor Daniel

Jim Darcy: Lynn Bubb, Ashley Fish, Nicole LaChappelle and Talor LeBrun

Warren: Jena Marshall

We also had National Board-Certified teachers who maintained their certifications:

CHS: Adam Clinch and Jake Warner

Central: Susan Robinson

Smith: Katy Wright

As you can see from the building clusters, teachers provided support to each other during the process, identifying student and professional needs and then finding solutions through the professional learning community process is a huge tenant of the National Board and we now have 49 NBCT's in the Helena School District. I am very proud of the accomplishments of my colleagues. Thank you.”

3. Facilities and Maintenance Committee Report

Trustee Kay Satre gave the Facilities and Maintenance Committee Report. Trustee Satre commented, “We had a good Facilities and Maintenance committee meeting yesterday and began with an update from SMA on the Facilities Master Plan process and they told us that they are finalizing options for elementary, middle, and high school plus other district facilities. They are well into Phase Two of their process and these options will be presented at a facilities master planning progress meeting later this month on December 20th. They are also holding follow up meetings with CTE staff and they're sharing and discussing examples of shared CTE facilities in other districts and really exploring benefits and disadvantages to various ways of doing that. They are planning an upcoming meeting with Todd Verrill to prioritize deferred maintenance projects as the facilities master planning process is wrapping up. I was happy to hear after the presentation from Superintendent Weltz that the district leadership is going to bring the different options that are being presented as part of this planning process to all the schools in the district in order to get feedback from the people who are living in and using those facilities day after day. So, I think that's a great thing. For the second part of our meeting, we had a presentation from a firm called Ameresco and two representatives from that firm explained how an energy savings performance contract could benefit the district. So, the basic idea is, if the district chooses to contract with a firm such as this, there's an audit run, and then there's planning, developing, and implementing a plan to upgrade energy systems so that the investments in the upgrades end up overtime paying for themselves in energy savings. The energy savings plan that these two people talked about would also help us to access federal grants and tax credits, some of which are newly available to nonprofits like schools and hospitals, through the Inflation Reduction Act. They also explained how they include a measurement verification process which really tries to measure whether the projected savings are actually happening over several years after different energy technologies are implemented. Tim Meldrum of SMA indicated that this kind of contract would coordinate really well, time and effect wise, with the facilities master plan work by addressing key aspects of deferred maintenance around energy efficiencies. Then finally, as always in our meetings, we had a great presentation from Todd Verill, Director of Facilities. He gave us a rundown of a lot of the work that's getting done. Work that ranges from water pressure issues, flooring projects, set up and tear down for all those holiday programs that happen in every school, painting classrooms, putting Vigilante Stadium to bed for the winter, and replacing 750 soap dispensers across the district. On safety and security, he specifically reported that there had been some testing of water in valley schools and air quality testing, and it looks like we have safe water and air. At PAL, there's an emergency dial code system that has been completed and tested. Good news on the staffing front, just this last week they were able to hire three new custodians and that's been a challenge over the last month, so the number of vacancies for that department has gone from six to three.”

4. Budget and Finance Committee Report

Trustee Janet Armstrong gave the Budget and Finance Committee Report. The Budget Consensus Recommendation Committee will be meeting on December 20<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Budget and Finance Committee met today and reviewed the Budget to Actual reports. The second part of the meeting was a discussion on state aid revenue sources. The committee discussed that Montana school districts will not receive additional funding as a result of increased property tax collections at the state level. Nor will our schools get a boost from any other tax windfall, such as coal or cannabis revenue. This year the state will see a significant increase in tax revenues from the 95 mills and other sources as a result of the state's rapidly rising property values. But the extra revenue won't be passed on to our schools. That's because Montana public schools are funded through a set formula that is established in state law. This formula is based largely on student counts, along with other multipliers. When the state brings in increased tax revenue, these monies simply offset the state's annual cost for funding school districts. Imagine each of Montana's school districts as a cup. Each cup has a fill line determined by the state's legally established school funding formula. Every year, the state must fill each cup (school district) with water (funding) to the fill line – no more and no less. When the state receives larger-than-expected returns, say from property taxes, School Trust Lands, coal revenues or the 95 mills, it simply means there is more money left in state coffers once the school district cups have been filled to their prescribed fill lines for the year. There is no topping off and our public schools will receive no additional funding as a result of increased property tax collections at the state level this year or any other windfall.

5. 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 and it was a very productive meeting. Trustee Armstrong commented, "I do anticipate by the spring we won't be reacting to all these changes; we will be going back to being proactive and going through all the policies. It is a great way for anyone on the board to learn about how the district runs and what our constraints are."

6. Teaching & Learning Committee Report

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn gave the Teaching and Learning Committee Report. Trustee Hathhorn commented, "We had an amazing presentation on what we call our Mount Ascension Program which is a program for kids that have had significant trouble such as incarceration or are at a high risk of dropping out. It is a personalized learning program where they get to work more at their own pace and it's flexible so that if they have to have a second job, they can do it both at home or online, and then come back in, but they have direct contact with the teacher and it just sounded like there was amazing work that was being done there. I know the trustees that were there would really like to take a tour of the Mount Ascension Programs. Then we had a presentation on standards-based grading. Elementary schools have adopted standards-based grading throughout the district. There's a committee that makes sure that the consistency is correct, and the teachers have been trained. Then we got an update on grade level meetings. In the past if there was a grade level meeting a huge group of substitutes would come in to cover all the second-grade classrooms across the district and the teachers would come together for the grade level meeting. With the substitute shortages we are experiencing, they have created a new formula where you have the option to pop into the meeting, or meet with them individually, they have training and lines of communication, and it is going really well."

7. Health Benefits Committee Report

Trustee Kay Satre gave the Health Benefits Committee Report. Trustee Satre commented, “First of all, we had a little bit of discussion about end financials for the plan year. I need to wait until January to be able to give you more solid figures about where we were at the end of the plan year. Rich Franco, the manager of our Health Benefits Plan, said it was not a bad year and was actually pretty good, so I'll give you that portion and specific information in the January meeting. We also talked about that we are always looking for ways to decrease claims to decrease costs for both the district and for members and to make sure that we provide the best benefits possible that we can afford. So, there are two things that we're exploring and intending to explore in this next year. There is this 340B RX opportunity with St Peter's Health and I believe Superintendent Wertz has mentioned that a couple of times. It's a federal program, and it's offered through St Peter's Health. Savings to our plan will depend upon members getting their prescriptions through St Peter's Health providers and right now, about 50% of our members use St Peter's Health providers. So, in order to make that plan really work we are thinking about how we might incentivize more of our members to switch to St. Peter's Health but we're in exploration about that particular program. The other thing we are going to start discussing is how we might revise our current plan structure by unbundling to create more choice in premium savings for members. We have heard from teachers and staff across the district about their concern about rising premium costs that they are having to absorb so we are looking at how it might work to unbundle. For instance, now have two current plan options, the standard plan, and the premium plan, and maybe we'll look at offering three options, one with a higher, one with medium and one with lower coverages with higher deductibles and max out of pocket, for instance. Just getting some variability along there as well as enabling members to choose or reject dental and vision coverage as opposed to having these two packages that you sort of choose standard or premium-having more alternatives. We need to talk about how any of these initiative plans might timing wise sync with the ongoing work on the Health Trust Fund that Superintendent Wertz talked about earlier. We are conscious of the fact that other big discussion is going on and trying to think about how anything that we're going to do time wise would fit within those other decisions and plans that are being made there.”

8. Wellness Committee Report

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn gave the Wellness Committee Report. Chair Hathhorn commented, “The Wellness Committee consists of an overarching wellness meeting and then there's subcommittee meetings of nutrition and physical education. I've been to several meetings over the last month, and one of the biggest items is that there is a USDA grant that is due on January 12th. It's a very short timeline. It's between \$50,000 and \$100,000, depending on how you approach it. After much discussion and the holidays in a very short time frame it was decided that we are most likely to go for the \$50,000 grant. Robert Worthy is doing a whole bunch of work as are several other committee members and the focus of that grant will be procuring produce from an already established co-op vendor. The problem with really improving the health of the school lunch program is Robert only has a certain amount for breakfast and lunch, around \$3.00 for lunch and \$2.00 for breakfast. So, if we put something organic in there or put something more expensive, it doesn't work very well. So, if we get these grants, it will allow us to have healthier materials for him to work with and not have to increase the cost to either the district or the consumer. The future grant for the \$100,000 would probably have more of a community aspect and one thing that's being looked at next year is



including hydroponics. PAL is very interested in hydroponics and there have been some ideas where you can have a mobile hydroponics lab. So, they are looking at those ideas for the future. On the nutrition side, there was a snack competition. The winner was at Central, and the winner of the snack gets to choose a meal for Robert and his team to come in and cook and have the kids share. They're also working on district wide snack list to hand out at parent teacher conferences just to give parents a little edge on that. The other thing that's coming down the line is looking at vending machines in the middle and high schools and standardizing them with an approved list of healthy items. The Harvest of the Month is one of the programs that is ongoing and is focused on the 4th grade classroom, and there are food lessons that are done collaboratively with Carroll College students who come in, so that is a great way to teach kids about the health of food and having fun. There is also collaborative work with Helena Food Share and their Charlie Cart. The cart is an all-in-one kitchen on wheels with a full curriculum that includes classroom-tested recipes—connecting the dots between food, health, and the environment. It is being used in ten of our elementary schools to get kids interested in food and learning how to cook. For the physical education group, there is a push for a district wide alternative recess for students that may have behavior problems or may not be able to be on the playground in their current emotional state. So, an alternative recess that's safe for them to still go out and play, and to maybe not be with a full group of kids if things are not going well at that time. The final thing is that there is an exploration group for equipment for middle school and high school students. The play equipment at Helena Middle School is very popular and very well used, and there is interest in having age-appropriate play equipment at both middle schools and high schools.”

9. Montana School Boards Association Report

MTSBA has not met, so there was no Montana School Boards Association Report.

10. Parent Council Visit Reports

Trustee Linda Cleatus shared her report from her parent council visit to Helena High School. Trustee Cleatus commented, “It was a short meeting and there were about five parents and it seemed like a 101 for the parents that are new to the district or to the school. Principal Thennis went over the different offerings and really focused on AP classes versus dual credit classes and talked about how they don't really crossover necessarily. Then Principal Thennis was talking about strategizing to give more opportunity for freshmen and sophomores to have more choice in electives and more fun classes. One thing that stood out was the parents had different skill sets and they were taking the initiative to say, hey, we want to help advocate for the levies and they shared their skill sets which were impressive, so Principal Thennis took their information.”

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.

- Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, Budget Consensus Meeting, 4:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, Policy Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Wednesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, Facilities & Maintenance Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, Executive Committee Meeting, 11:00 a.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, Budget & Finance Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, Full Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, Board Work Session, 11:30 a.m., Jefferson Elementary

### **VIII. BOARD COMMENTS**

The trustees had a robust conversation about the 340B insurance program and discussed that this program is very complicated and needs further exploration and discussion. There were no further board comments.

### **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn adjourned the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

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Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary      Date