



*The Helena Public Schools educate, engage, and empower each student to maximize his or her individual potential with the knowledge, skills and character essential to being a responsible citizen and life-long learner.*

## Board of Trustees Policy Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024

12:00 p.m.

Lincoln Center

1325 Poplar St., Helena, MT 59601

And via

TEAMS

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## MINUTES

### *Attendees*

#### *Committee:*

Janet Armstrong, Committee Chair  
Jennifer Walsh, Committee Member

#### *Others:*

Rex Weltz, Superintendent  
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff  
Bea Kaleva, District Legal Counsel  
Jane Shawn, HEA President  
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent  
Candice Delvaux, Executive Assistant  
Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director  
Karen Ogden, Communications Officer  
Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment & Federal Programs  
Sean Maharg, Student Services Director  
Tim McMahon, Activities Director  
Joslyn Davison, Curriculum Director  
Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager  
Lona Carter, Student Health  
Melissa Romano, Instructional Coach  
Several Guests of the Public  
Several Guests of HEF's Trading Places Program

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 12:02 p.m. by the Committee Chair, Janet Armstrong.

**II. REVIEW OF AGENDA**

No changes were requested to the agenda.

**III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no general public comment.

**IV. REVIEW OF THE 02.06.2024 POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The committee reviewed and approved the 02.06.2024 Policy Committee meeting minutes.

**V. PRESENTATION OF POLICIES FOR SECOND READING**

A. Policy 3050: Student Discipline

The committee reviewed and discussed Policy 3050: Student Discipline. 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. "Marijuana products" are defined as those products which include but are not limited to edible products, ointments, tinctures, marijuana derivatives, marijuana concentrates, and marijuana intended for use by smoking or vaping. It also reflects the self-defense/defense of others exception to the use of physical force by a student adopted under House Bill 450. The legal references were also updated to reflect House Bill 361. This policy went before the full Board of Trustees for information with no recommended changes. The Policy Committee determined that Policy 3050: Student Discipline would go before the full Board of Trustees for action.

B. Policy 3080: Maintenance of Student Records

The committee reviewed and discussed Policy 3080: Maintenance of Student Records. This is an existing policy and legal references were updated to reflect a parent's right to access and review student records under House Bill 676 as well as a reference to MCA 52-2-211 (which was revised by Senate Bill 213) that allows for a county interdisciplinary team/school safety team to access student records. This policy went before the full Board of Trustees for information with no recommended changes. The Policy Committee determined that Policy 3080: Maintenance of Student Records would go before the full Board of Trustees for action.

C. Policy 8225: Tobacco and Marijuana Free Schools

The committee reviewed and discussed Policy 8225: Tobacco and Marijuana Free Schools. 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. This policy has been before the full Board of Trustees for information with no recommended changes. Chief of Staff Barb Ridgway noted that the title of the policy states *Tobacco Free Schools* and needs to be changed to *Tobacco and Marijuana Free Schools*. The Policy Committee determined that Policy 8225: Tobacco and Marijuana Free Schools would go before the full Board of Trustees for action.

**VI. PRESENTATION OF POLICIES FOR FOURTH READING**

A. Policy 4040: School, Student, Parent, Family and Community Engagement in Education

The committee reviewed and discussed Policy 4040: School, Student, Parent, Family and Community Engagement in Education. This policy was updated to reflect changes in law from SB 518. The policy provides for public notification of a district plan to engage families and involve them in a student's education while providing information about educational opportunities within the district. This is the fourth time this policy has been before the Policy Committee, and several changes have been made at the past meetings which are reflected in the policy now. This policy has also been before the full Board of Trustees for information. The Policy Committee determined that Policy 4040: School, Student, Parent, Family and Community Engagement in Education would go before the full Board of Trustees for action.

**VII. PRESENTATION OF POLICIES FOR FIRST REVIEW**

A. Policy 2040: Special Education and Accommodations

The committee reviewed and discussed Policy 2040: Special Education and Accommodations. This policy was adopted on 8.13.2013. The policy states, *"The District shall provide a free, appropriate public education and necessary related services to all children with disabilities residing within the District, as required under the federal Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (hereinafter "IDEA") and under the provisions in Montana law, and in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act. For students eligible for services under IDEA, the District shall follow procedures for identification, evaluation, placement, and delivery of service to children with disabilities provided in the current Montana State Plan Under Part B of IDEA and the Montana State Plan Under Part C of IDEA. The District may maintain a membership in one or more cooperative associations, which shall assist the District in fulfilling its obligations to the District's disabled students."* No changes needed to be made to this policy other than updating the legal references, therefore, this policy does not need to be presented to the full board for further review.

B. Policy 2050: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504")

The committee reviewed and discussed Policy 2050: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504"). This policy was adopted on 8.13.2013. The policy states, *"It is the intent of the District to ensure that students who are disabled within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are identified, evaluated, and provided with appropriate educational services. For those students who need or are believed to need special instruction and/or related services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the District shall establish and implement a system of procedural safeguards. The safeguards shall cover students' identification, evaluation, and educational placement. This system shall include notice, an opportunity for the student's parent or legal guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with opportunity for participation by the student's parent or legal guardian, and a review process."* No changes needed to be made to this policy other than updating the legal references, therefore, this policy does not need to be presented to the full board for further review.

C. Policy 2055: Limited English Proficient Students

The committee reviewed and discussed Policy 2055: Limited English Proficient Students. This policy was adopted on 2.28.12. The policy states, *"The Superintendent shall develop and maintain a program for students having limited English language proficiency that will:*

- *Appropriately identify students with limited English proficiency.*
- *Comply with any applicable federal law and/or any requirements for the receipt of federal grant money for limited English proficient students.*
- *Determine the appropriate instructional environment for limited English proficient students.*
- *Annually assess the English proficiency of limited English proficient students and monitor their progress in order to determine their readiness for a mainstream classroom environment.*
- *Notify parents/guardians of, and provide information about:*
  1. *the instructional program,*
  2. *reasons for their child's identification,*
  3. *their child's level of English proficiency,*
  4. *the method of instruction to be used,*
  5. *how the program will meet their child's needs,*
  6. *specific exit requirements of the program,*
  7. *how the program will meet their child's IEP, if applicable, and*
  8. *information on parent/guardian rights.*

*Parental involvement will be encouraged and parents/guardians will be regularly apprised of their child's progress.*

*Parents/guardians of limited English proficient students will be:*

1. *given an opportunity to provide input to the program, and*
2. *provided notification regarding their child's placement in, and information about, the District's limited English proficiency program."*

There were no recommended changes to this policy, therefore this policy does not need to go before the full board for further review.

D. Policy 2075: Field Trips

The committee reviewed and discussed Policy 2075: Field Trips. This policy was adopted on 5.8.2012. The policy states, *“Helena School District No. 1 recognizes that instructional field trips and activity-related travel when used as a device for teaching and learning and educational incentive are an educationally sound and important ingredient in the overall program of the schools. Such trips can supplement and enrich educational opportunities. Field trips that take students out-of-state, or out of the country must be approved in advance by the Superintendent. Building principals may approve all other field trips. Building principals will develop procedures with respect to field trips, excursions, and outdoor education including appropriate parent approval procedures. Staff members may not solicit students during instructional time for any privately arranged field trip or excursion. The presence of a person with a currently valid American Red Cross standard first aid card or current certification from an equivalent first aid course is required during school-sponsored activities, including field trips, athletic and other off-campus events.”* No changes need to be made to this policy other than updating the legal references, therefore, this policy does not need to be presented to the full board for further review.

E. Policy 2080: Grading, Progress Reports and Promotion

The committee reviewed and discussed Policy 2080: Grading, Progress Reports and Promotion. This policy was adopted on 2.28.2012. The policy states, *“The administration and professional staff shall establish a system of grading and develop procedures for reporting academic achievement to students and their parents. The system shall also determine when promotion and graduation requirements are met. The decision to promote a student to the next grade level shall be made by the building administration with consideration given to a variety of educational factors including but not limited to, successful completion of the curriculum, attendance, and District assessments.”* There were no recommended changes to this policy, therefore this policy does not need to go before the full board for further review.

F. Policy 2090: Credit Transfer Assessment for Placement

The committee reviewed and discussed Policy 2090: Credit Transfer Assessment for Placement. This policy was adopted on 2.28.2012. The policy states, *“High School: Requests for transfer of credit or grade placement from any non-accredited, nonpublic school will be subject to examination and approval before being accepted by the District. The credit review will be conducted by the Principal or designee. The reviewer may seek assistance from content/subject area instructors.*

*The reviewer will:*

1. *Document that a student has spent approximately the same number of classroom hours in home school as would have been spent in a regular class in the District;*

2. Document that a student followed a curriculum essentially similar to that of a course for which credit is requested;
3. Document that in the event of a credit request in a lab, industrial arts, or music course, equipment and facilities were sufficient to meet required learning activities of the course;
4. Require that a student has satisfactorily passed, in all courses in which a final exam normally is given, a final exam prepared and administered by a staff member in the District.

*The District will give credit only for home schools, which have met all requirements as specified in Montana law. The school transcripts will record courses taken in home schools or non- accredited schools by indicating title of the course, location where the course was taken, and grade. For the purpose of calculation of class rank, only those courses taken in an accredited school will be used.*

*Grades 1-8:Requests from parents of students in non-accredited, nonpublic schools for placement in the District school system will be evaluated by the Principal or designee. The Principal or designee will take into account the following when recommending grade placement:*

1. Documentation that the non-accredited, nonpublic school has provided a comparable number of hours as the child would have attended in a public or private school;
2. Documentation that the child followed a similar curriculum as would have been provided in an accredited public or private school;
3. Demonstrated proficiency on school and district assessments.

*If a parent is not in agreement with the placement of the child, he/she may request a hearing before the Superintendent.” There were no recommended changes to this policy, therefore this policy does not need to go before the full board for further review.*

G. Policy 2105: Freedom to Teach, to Learn, and to Express Ideas

*The committee reviewed and discussed Policy 2105: Freedom to Teach, to Learn, and Express Ideas. This policy was adopted on 2.28.2012. The policy states, “The freedom to teach, to learn and to express ideas is essential to the fulfillment of the educational goals of the Helena schools. The Board of Trustees believes that exposure to a broad range of ideas and experiences are necessary to prepare students for a life of responsible citizenship. The District will offer courses of study that will afford learning experiences appropriate to levels of student understanding. The instructional program respects the right of students to face issues, to have free access to information, to study under teachers in situations free from prejudice, and to form, hold, and express their own opinions without personal prejudice or discrimination. Teachers will guide discussions and procedures with thoroughness and objectivity to acquaint students with the need to recognize various points of view, importance of fact, value of good judgment, and the virtue of respect for conflicting opinions. This policy further assures that teachers and students have the right to participate fully in the affairs of the community. Teachers must be actively involved in decisions regarding the organization, presentation and evaluation of instruction to insure a balanced curriculum*

*providing for a free exchange of ideas. The Board encourages and supports the concept of academic freedom, recognizing it as a necessary condition to aid in maintaining an environment conducive to learning and to the free exchange of ideas and information. In a study or discussion of controversial issues or materials, however, the Board directs teaching staff to take into account the following criteria:*

- 1. The issue should be appropriate for the maturity level of the students;*
- 2. The issue should be related to the adopted course content and course objectives;*
- 3. Teachers shall have the right to express their personal opinions provided they state them as such without indoctrinating students;*
- 4. The issue should balance various and/or conflicting points of view in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice;*
- 5. Students should have an opportunity to study controversial issues about which they will begin to have an opinion;*
- 6. Opportunity should be provided for the development of critical thinking skills; and*
- 7. Emphasis should be placed on the right and necessity of forming independent judgments based on reasoning and the full use of all available information.*

*It is essential that democratic values be transmitted in an atmosphere which supports free inquiry and learning, and in which the freedom to teach, to learn and to express ideas for teachers and students is encouraged.” No changes need to be made to this policy other than updating the legal references, therefore, this policy does not need to be presented to the full board for further review.*

H. Policy 2110: Copyright Policy

The committee reviewed and discussed Policy 2110: Copyright Policy. This policy was adopted on 2.28.2012. This policy states, *“The District recognizes that federal law makes it illegal to duplicate copyrighted materials without authorization of the holder of the copyright, except for certain exempt purposes. Severe penalties may be imposed for unauthorized copying or use of audio, visual, digital, or printed materials and computer software, unless the copying or use conforms to the “fair use” doctrine. Under the “fair use” doctrine, unauthorized reproduction of copyrighted materials is permissible for such purposes as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research. While the District encourages its staff to enrich learning programs by making proper use of supplementary materials, it is the responsibility of staff to abide by District copying procedures and obey requirements of law. Under no circumstances will it be necessary for staff to violate copyright requirements in order to properly perform their duties. Any staff member who is uncertain as to whether reproducing or using copyrighted material complies with District procedures or is permissible under the law should consult their school librarian. School librarians will assist staff in obtaining proper authorization to copy or use protected materials, when such authorization is required or will direct staff to the proper resource for obtaining more information or authorization.”* There were no recommended changes to this policy, therefore this policy does not need to go before the full board for further review.

I. Policy 2115: Community and Adult Education

The committee reviewed and discussed Policy 2115: Community and Adult Education. This policy

was adopted on 05.08.2012. The policy states, *“The District makes its resources available to adults and other non-students within the limits of budget, staff and facilities, provided there is no*

*interference with or impairment of the regular school program. Community school, adult education and other offerings may be developed, subject to approval and authorization by the Board.”* There were no recommended changes to this policy, therefore this policy does not need to go before the full board for further review.

J. Policy 2130: Response to Instruction (RTI)

The committee reviewed and discussed Policy 2130: Response to Instruction (RTI). This policy was adopted on 2.28.2012. The policy states, *“It is the District’s policy to ensure that all students receive high quality, scientific, research-based general education core instruction and, as appropriate, strategic and intensive instructional supports matched to student needs. The District will strive to utilize the core principles of the Response to Instruction (RTI) process, which combines systematic assessment; decision-making and multi-tiered services delivery models to improve educational and behavioral outcomes for all students. Implementation: When using the RTI model, the District will utilize a process that identifies students’ learning needs early and provides appropriate instruction to support students’ successful learning in the general education classroom. In implementing the RTI process, the District shall apply:*

1. *Scientific, research-based instructional strategies in the general education setting;*
2. *Measure the student’s response to instruction;*
3. *3. Use data to inform instruction; and*
4. *4. Employ highly-qualified teaching staff.*

*The Superintendent shall develop procedures to implement research-based instructional strategies that meet students’ learning needs. The Superintendent shall use teacher observations and classroom, school, or district assessments to identify students who are at risk of academic or behavioral problems and thereby in need of scientific, research-based instructional strategies. The District shall inform parents regarding the use of scientific, research-based instructional strategies in accordance with state and federal law.”* The Policy Committee was in agreement that the title of the policy *Response to Instruction (RTI)* should be changed to *Response to Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)* because that is the updated term we use now in the district. The language *RTI* throughout the policy would be changed to state *MTSS*. There were no other recommended changes to this policy, therefore this policy does not need to go before the full board for further review.

**VIII. SUPERINTENDENT OR BOARD COMMENTS**

There were no further comments.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Committee Chair, Janet Armstrong, adjourned the meeting at 12:47 p.m.