



*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  
Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024  
12:00pm  
Lincoln Center & TEAMS

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## MINUTES

### ATTENDANCE

<i>Trustees:</i>	<i>Others:</i>
Jennifer McKee, Vice Chair	Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Linda Cleatus, Trustee	Jane Shawn, HEA President
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
	Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
	Melissa Romano-Lehman, Instructional Coach
	Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Director
	Abby Kuhl, Instructional Coach
	Candice Delvaux, Executive Assistant
	Karen Ogden, Communications Officer
	Jonna Schwartz, Instructional Coach
	Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment and Federal Programs
	Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology

#### I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 12:02 p.m. by Vice Chair, Jennifer McKee.

#### II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment.

### III. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested to the agenda.

### IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the 4.3.24 Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting.

### V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

#### A. Comprehensive District Literacy Plan

The Teaching and Learning Committee viewed a presentation about the draft Comprehensive District Literacy Plan. In Helena School District's Comprehensive Literacy Plan, a robust Instructional Framework guides teachers in delivering effective instruction to students, ensuring comprehensive literacy development. Curriculum and instruction are carefully designed to align with educational standards and cater to students' diverse learning needs. An Intervention Plan is implemented to provide targeted support for students requiring additional assistance, utilizing strategies such as tiered interventions and collaborative decision-making. Benchmark data is collected to assess student progress and inform instructional decisions, while progress monitoring ensures that interventions are effective, and that students are making academic gains. An action plan is developed based on data analysis to adjust instruction and support strategies as needed. Regular walk-throughs are conducted to observe teaching practices, provide feedback, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. Professional development opportunities are offered to educators to enhance their literacy instruction skills and stay updated on best practices. Family engagement initiatives are encouraged to involve families in their child's literacy journey, creating a collaborative partnership between home and school to support student learning and success.

The Comprehensive District Literacy Plan details instructional framework. In Helena School District (HSD), the instructional framework LEARN is designed to provide a comprehensive approach to classroom instruction, encompassing various key elements to enhance student learning. This acronym encapsulates the core components of effective teaching and learning, emphasizing the importance of student understanding, teacher engagement strategies, interdisciplinary skill application, reflection on learning, and recognition of the need for next steps.

The Comprehensive District Literacy Plan details curriculum and instruction and goes into detail about Scarborough's Reading Rope, quality instruction, standards, and evidence-based curriculum. The Comprehensive District Literacy Plan also details assessment and data. In HSD, data and assessments play a crucial role in understanding student progress, identifying areas of

improvement, and guiding instructional decisions. Educators utilize various types of assessments to gather information about student learning and growth including benchmark assessments, screeners, diagnostic assessments, and progress monitoring. The plan details using data to drive instruction, strategies for using data effectively, and the benefits of using data in instruction.

The Comprehensive District Literacy Plan also details an intervention plan. The Helena School District utilizes Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). MTSS serves as a structure for educators to collaborate and provide interventions that ensure all students have fair access and opportunities to meet academic standards. An intervention plan within MTSS consists of several crucial components to address the diverse needs of students and promote their academic success including gathering data, tiered interventions, team-based decision making, and progress monitoring. Information in the plan includes gathering data for (K-5), the K-5 HSD Literacy Assessment Decision Tree, WIN Groups, and the WIN process, data informed decisions for grades 6-12, and Professional Learning Communities (PLC). There are building level PLC meetings, specialist collaboration and grade band PLCs, grade level and content teams, and optional professional development opportunities.

The Comprehensive District Literacy Plan includes information about an action plan. The action plans outline specific objectives, goals, and strategies to support instructional effectiveness in a continuous improvement cycle. The action plan is developed at the start of each school year and monitored or adjusted as needed throughout the year. The district action plan, informed by district-wide data and incentives, is shared with all stakeholders, including the school board, teachers, administrators, and the community annually. Essential for ensuring consistency and alignment in literacy instruction across all Helena District schools, this plan promotes best practices, addresses systemic challenges, and fosters collaboration to enhance literacy skills district-wide. An updated district action plan can be found on the district curriculum and instruction website. With the goals of the district wide action plan in mind, individual schools create their own action plan. This plan is developed using school specific data and goals identified by the School Leadership Team (SLT). The school action plan drives school wide PLCs in a process of continuous improvement. By having a school action plan in place, educators can identify areas for improvement and implement evidence-based strategies to enhance reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. In addition to school and district action plans, some PLC teams may create an action plan specific to their grade level goals and objectives for continuous improvement.

At every Helena school, a School Leadership Team (SLT) is formed, and may include teacher representatives from all areas, counselor, coach, and principal. The main objective of the SLT is to enhance the effectiveness of a school by providing strategic guidance, promoting collaboration, and fostering a shared vision for improvement. The team meets monthly to oversee the school's advancement towards the goals on the action plan and determine necessary action steps to achieve these goals, to review school wide data from benchmark assessments and the walkthrough tool, and to organize monthly Professional Learning Community (PLC) Professional Development sessions based on needs identified from the data. By leveraging the expertise, collaboration, and strategic leadership of a School Leadership Team, schools can enhance the implementation of their action plan, drive continuous improvement, and create a positive impact on student learning outcomes and overall school success.

The Comprehensive District Literacy Plan also details walkthroughs. The purpose of the walk-through tool is to provide a brief, structured, and non-evaluative method for observing classroom instruction to provide a clear view of the current reality of the school's instructional practices. This tool allows administrators, instructional leaders, and educators to conduct focused observations, identifying successful instructional practices and areas for improvement within the school environment.

The Comprehensive District Literacy Plan also details professional development and family engagement. Professional development (PD) is essential in fostering the ongoing growth and development of educators within Helena's schools. It equips teachers with the essential knowledge and skills needed to elevate their teaching methods, leading to positive impacts on the students they educate. Effective professional development is centered on improving educational practices that align with the growth goals of the district, school, and individual educators. By focusing on enhancing teaching practices through quality professional development, educators can continuously strive to improve their instruction, benefiting both their professional growth and the academic success of their students. HSD is committed to fostering a culture of collaboration between families, schools, and the community to support student success and well-being. Family engagement plays a crucial role in a child's educational journey, fostering a strong partnership between home and school to support student success. In HSD, the comprehensive family engagement plan is designed to actively involve parents and guardians in their child's learning process.

#### **VI. BOARD COMMENTS**

There were no further board comments.

#### **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:02 p.m. by Vice Chair Jennifer McKee.