



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, May 14th, 2024
5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted.

Siobhan Hathhorn, Chair
Jennifer McKee, Vice Chair
Linda Cleatus, Trustee
Jeff Hindoien, Trustee
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee
Kay Satre, 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
Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Director
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
Todd Verrill, Facilities Director
Karen Ogden, Communications Officer
Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment and Federal Programs
Lona Carter, Student Health
Jane Shawn, HEA President
Brett Zanto, Capital High School Principal
Steve Thennis, Helena High School Principal
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 to the agenda were requested.

III. RECOGNITIONS

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

A. MPTF and NEA Awards for Teaching Excellence

Congratulations to Capital High Educator Adam Clinch who is the recipient of the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation (MPTF) Award for Teaching Excellence and has been nominated to the NEA Foundation for the Awards for Teaching Excellence.

B. Great Northern Cheer & Dance Competition-Capital High School

Congratulations to the Capital High Cadettes for winning 1st Place in the AA Jazz Division for Dance in the Great Northern Cheer & Dance Competition. Special thanks to Head Coach Ms. Ruddell for all that she does to support students.

C. Great Northern Cheer & Dance Competition-Helena High School

Congratulations to the Helena High Cheer Team for winning 1st Place in the AA Division in the Great Northern Cheer & Dance Competition. Special thanks to Head Coach Ms. Navarrete, and Assistant Coaches Ms. Benton and Ms. Corso for all that they do for students.

D. Montana "Outstanding Earth Science Teacher" Award

Congratulations to Capital High School Educator Tom Caffrey who is the recipient of the Montana "Outstanding Earth Science Teacher" Award from the National Association of Geoscience Teachers.

E. State Envirothon Competition-Capital High School

Congratulations to the Capital High Envirothon Team for winning 1st Place in Forestry and Range at the State Envirothon Competition. The team consists of Paige Frumkes, Madelyn Holston, Lilly Rippingale, Sage Moler, and Spencer Frandsen. Special thanks to Coach Bosch and Coach Placko

for all that they do to support these students.

F. **Science Olympiad State Tournament- C.R. Anderson Middle School**

Congratulations to the following C.R. Anderson Middle School students who were First Place winners in the Science Olympiad State Tournament in the category of Agricultural Science - Braeden Burke & Judah Braese and the category of Wheeled Vehicle - Emily Townsend & Chris Lay. Special thanks to Coach Lane and Coach Hagengruber for all that they do to support students.

G. **Science Olympiad State Tournament-Capital High School**

Congratulations to the Capital High School JV Science Olympiad Team for winning 1st Place Overall in the JV Division at the Science Olympiad State Tournament!! Special thanks to Coach Humbert and Coach Urban for all that they do to support students.

H. **Science Olympiad State Tournament- Helena High School**

Congratulations to the following Helena High School students who were First Place winners in the Science Olympiad State Tournament in the category of Wind Powers-Owen McDaniel and Jonathan Abel. Special thanks to Coach Hollow and Coach Driggers for all that they do to support students.

I. **HOSA State Competition-Capital High School**

Congratulations to the following Capital High Students who were 1st Place winners at the HOSA State Competition. Tanner Davis-1st Place in Pathophysiology; Lyric Lanes-1st Place in Biotechnology; Paedyn McArthur, Abby Charlton, Adam Grasmick, and Riparian Moler-1st Place in Public Health, and Charlie Snellman, 1st Place in ATC Biology Test and ATC General Chemistry Test. Special thanks to Capital High School HOSA Advisors Mr. Duncan and Ms. Kurokawa for everything they do to support students.

J. **State SkillsUSA Competition-Capital High School**

Congratulations to Capital High student Allen Christopher who was a 1st Place winner in CNC Machining at the State SkillsUSA Competition. Special thanks to his advisor Mr. Croft for all that he does to support students.

K. **Lifetime Achievement Award from the Montana Council for Exceptional Children**

Congratulations to Capital High School Para Educator Nancy Johnson who has received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Montana Council for Exceptional Children (MCEC).

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

IV. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Weltz gave his Superintendent Report to the Board of Trustees.

- Recognition
 - Vigilante Day Parade
 - School Principal's Day, May 1, 2024
 - Teacher Appreciation Week, May 6-10, 2024
 - School Lunch Hero Day, May 3, 2024
 - School Nurse Day, May 8, 2024
 - School Communicators Day, May 10, 2024
 - Congratulations to our Capital High and Helena High students who were inducted into the National Honor Society!!
 - Thank you to Lisa Cordingley and the Helena Education Foundation for distributing grants across the district to educators as well as hosting the Pen & Ink Launch Party.
 - HEF - Celebration of Excellence
 - Thank you to Capital High Educator Kim Cook, who created a new Montana Cares App video to help create awareness of the resources available for students in this app.
 - Thank you to Janet Riis, Executive Director of the Angel Fund, for hosting various Stuff the Bus events. These events raise money to help schools purchase school supplies through Angel Fund's Stuff the Bus campaign for local Helena-area students.
 - Congratulations to our five Helena Public Schools educators who recently completed their coursework as members of the School Administrators of Montana (SAM) 2023-24 Aspiring Principal Cohort.
 - Roxanne Shockley, Helena Middle School
 - Ryan Schulte, Helena High School
 - Kayla Ryan, Byrant & Central Elementary Schools
 - Kelly Connolly, Smith Elementary School
 - Brittney Booton, Broadwater Elementary School
- New Business
 - Safety and Security/Technology Levy Update
 - Next Steps
 - Special Board Meetings
 - With the failure of the levies, the district will revisit the list of potential budget cuts presented to Trustees earlier this spring by the Budget Consensus Recommendation Committee. As our Board of Trustees begins the process of determining budget reductions for the 2024-25 school year based on recommendations from the Budget Consensus Recommendation Committee, we are

coordinating with the board to finalize dates and times for a series of special board meetings. As always, these meetings will be open to the public and will include opportunities for comment.

- Secure Environment Consultants (SEC)-Jason Russell
 - Jason Russell, founder, and president of Michigan-based Secure Environment Consultants (SEC) will return to Helena next week to perform safety audits at additional schools, consult with district leadership, meet with staff at C.R. Anderson Middle School, and will present a Community Safety Forum.
- Market Analysis
- Charter School and KinderSprouts Update
- Hiring Update
 - HHS Principal: Mr. Brian Kessler
 - Special Education/Student Services Director: Ms. Lona Carter
- City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County Housing Development Update
- May Butler Update

- Outreach/Meetings
 - Cabinet & Leadership
 - MTSBA Think Tank
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Hometown Helena Kiwanis
 - Parent Advisory Committee – Rescheduled
 - Teacher Advisory Committee – Rescheduled
 - Senator Daines Team Meeting – School Supports
 - MASS/OPI State Superintendent Candidate Forum
 - School Administrators of Montana Webinar
 - Board of Health Finance Meeting
 - Board of Health Meeting
 - 4-Rivers Regional Superintendents Meeting
 - Levy Educational Meetings Across the City
 - Board Leadership
 - AA Superintendents
 - City of Helena
 - HEA/HSD Meeting
 - HEF Board Meeting
 - HEF Executive Committee
 - TV, Print, Radio, Media

- Other
 - No School May 27th Memorial Day
 - Recognition of Board of Trustees Student Board Representatives Willa Bishop and Luna Hernandez
 - Recognition of Trustee Terry Beaver

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. Luke Muszkiewicz gave general public comment. Mr. Muszkiewicz is a district parent and a former trustee for Helena Public Schools. Mr. Muszkiewicz commented on topics including but not limited to applauding the Superintendent and Board of Trustees for facing the challenges in the district head on in a fair, transparent, and deliberative manner. Mr. Muszkiewicz also commemorated Trustee Beaver for his many years of service as an educator and trustee for the Helena Public Schools.

Mr. Jim Malizia gave general public comment. Mr. Malizia is a parent of children in the Helena Public Schools, a participant of Friends of Neighborhood Schools, and a supporter of special education programs. Mr. Malizia commented on topics including but not limited to his opposition of closing schools and his support of the PEAK program. Mr. Malizia discussed school funding and urged the trustees when they make budget cuts to avoid actions that directly impacts the students or special education programs. Mr. Malizia stated there is a constitutional obligation for the state to provide a free and high-quality education to our children.

Forest Malizia gave general public comment. Forest is a student in the Helena Public Schools. Forest commented on topics including but not limited to his appreciation of the PEAK program and his PEAK teacher.

Ms. Abby Nyhof gave general public comment. Ms. Nyhof has been a music teacher for fourteen years, is a Helena taxpayer, is president of the Montana General Music Teachers Association, and has two degrees in music education, and four music education related certifications. Ms. Nyhof commented on topics including but not limited to her opposition to restructuring or eliminating music and P.E. in the Helena Public Schools.

Mr. Zach Harris gave general public comment. Mr. Harris has taught in seven different schools in the district. Mr. Harris commented on topics including but not limited to stating that the board should consider the closure of smaller schools when making budget reductions, his opposition to the consideration of asking high school teachers to teach six periods with 25 students per class without extra prep time, and his opposition to the potential cutting of K-5 music and physical education programs.

Mr. Howard DesRosier gave general public comment. Mr. DesRosier has a son in the school district and is a taxpayer. Mr. DesRosier commented on topics including but not limited to the admin pay matrix, recent permissive levies, current state funding, and school closures.

Mr. Jake Warner gave general public comment. Mr. Warner teaches mathematics and robotics at Capital High School, is a National Board-Certified teacher, in 2023 was a finalist for Montana Teacher of the Year, and in 2021 was a finalist for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching. Mr. Warner commented on topics including but not limited to his opposition in asking teachers to teach six out of seven periods.

Mr. Eric Croft gave general public comment. Mr. Croft is an Automotive Teacher at Capital High School, a SkillsUSA Advisor, past State Officer Advisor, and past Montana ACTE President. Mr. Croft commented on topics including but not limited to concerns about nontenure staff members being cut and the impact that would have on their students.

Mr. Tom Kain gave general public comment. Mr. Kain has taught carpentry, welding, and woodworking at Capital High School for the past fourteen years. Mr. Kain commented on topics including but not limited to his opposition of the board eliminating an FTE position in the Industrial Tech Program at Capital High School and the impact that would have on students and their future.

Ms. Molly Schmidt gave general public comment. Ms. Schmidt has been an educator for 23 years, 20 of which have been in Helena, and is a parent of a student in the district. Ms. Schmidt stated that she holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a master's degree in Reading and Literacy and is a National Board-Certified teacher. Ms. Schmidt commented on topics including but not limited to the importance of maintaining manageable class sizes, her support of music and physical education curriculum, her support of emotional support services and special education programs and putting students first when making decisions about the budget.

Ms. Erika McMillin gave general public comment. Ms. McMillin is a school psychologist in the district, a taxpayer, and an aunt of a student in the Helena Public Schools. Ms. McMillin has worked in this district for twenty years, has been in eight schools, had seventeen offices, and fifteen different principals. Ms. McMillin commented on topics including but not limited to urging the board to maintain funding for programs for students with special needs and encouraged the board to look at accreditation standards across all staffing levels, not just class sizes.

Ms. Emma Schmidt gave general public comment. Ms. Schmidt is an elementary teacher and a mother of two children, and her oldest will start kindergarten next year in the Helena Public Schools. Ms. Schmidt commented on topics including but not limited to urging the board to follow the plan outlined by the Budget Consensus Committee. Ms. Schmidt also expressed her support for physical education and music programs and educators.

Ms. Jennifer Skogley gave general public comment. Ms. Skogley is a fifteen-year music educator here in Helena and a taxpayer. Ms. Skogley is a member of the Montana General Music Teachers Association as well as the Montana Bandmasters Association and is in the running for Helena Educator of the Year. Ms. Skogley commented on topics including but not limited to her support for physical education and music programs and educators.

Ms. Brittney Booton gave general public comment. Ms. Booton is a current kindergarten teacher and a mother of a child in the Helena Public Schools. Ms. Booton commented on topics including but not limited to her opposition to nontenure employees not having their contracts renewed this evening.

Ms. Nicole Evans gave general public comment. Ms. Evans is a Helena taxpayer and a Helena Public Schools employee. Ms. Evans commented on topics including but not limited to her opposition to the elimination or restructuring of elementary music and physical education programs.

Ms. Shana Berry gave general public comment. Ms. Berry is an educator, a taxpayer, a community member, and a parent of a student in the Helena Public Schools. Ms. Berry commented on topics including but not limited to the importance of small class sizes, her opposition to the reduction or

consolidation of special education programs, and her opposition to the elimination or restructuring of elementary music and physical education programs.

Ms. Cassandra Riehl gave general public comment. Ms. Riehl is a parent of students in the district and a wife to a high school teacher. Ms. Riehl commented on topics including but not limited to recommending that families of the district fundraise money for the district's general fund and for teachers. Ms. Riehl recommended the board create a committee that explores grassroots fundraising for the general fund.

Ms. Cheri Thornton gave general public comment. Ms. Thornton is the parent to two children in the Helena Public Schools. Ms. Thornton commented on topics including but not limited to state funding, and her support for the PEAK program and the PEAK teachers, and her opposition to any cuts to the PEAK program.

Ms. Angela DeWolf King gave general public comment. Ms. DeWolf King is a resident of Helena and a mother of a child in the district, and a soon to be kindergartener in the district. Ms. DeWolf King commented on topics including but not limited to stating that there is constitutional obligation for the state to provide a free and high-quality education to our children.

Mr. Thomas Baty gave general public comment. Mr. Baty is a parent of a kindergartener in the district, is a teacher in the district, and a taxpayer in the community. Mr. Baty commented on topics including but not limited to his opposition to the potential restructuring of the K-5 music and P.E. programs.

Mr. Matthew Hosking gave general public comment. Mr. Hosking has two students in the Helena Public Schools. Mr. Hosking commented on topics including but not limited to stating that there is a constitutional obligation for the state to provide a free and high-quality education to our children, and if they cannot, consider whether taking legal action to compel the state to fund a high-quality education is our responsibility.

That concluded general public comment and the Board of Trustees discussed that *Items for Information 1, Building Bridges: A Blueprint for Student Recruitment & Retention* would not be presented, as the presenter is not available to present this evening.

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

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consent Action Items

1. Warrants
2. Approval of FY 2023-24 Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Nonresident Students Attending Helena School District)
3. Approval of FY 2024-25 Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Nonresident Students Attending Helena School District)
4. Acknowledge Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Helena Resident Students Attending Other School Districts)
5. 4.9.24 Full Board Meeting Minutes

6. Resolution to Dispose of Facilities Vehicles

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

Motion: Trustee Jennifer McKee moved to approve the Consent Action Items as presented. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

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

B. Item For Information

1. Building Bridges: A Blueprint for Student Recruitment & Retention

2. Policy 3410: Student Health/Physical Screenings/Examinations

Ms. Ridgway presented *Policy 3410: Student Health/Physical Screenings/Examinations* for information to the Board of Trustees. This is a new required policy as a result of the last legislative session. The policy references MCA § 40-6-701, which requires parental consent for “all physical and mental health care decisions for the child” and a parental opt-out for “any personal analysis, evaluation, survey, or data collection by a school district that would capture data for inclusion in the statewide data system except data that is necessary and essential for establishing a student's education record.” Ms. Ridgway pointed out language in the policy that states, “*The District will not conduct physical examinations of a student without parental consent or unless ordered by a court to do so. A physical examination may be conducted without consent if or there is a concern for the health or safety of the student, or others is in question.*” Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding *Policy 3410: Student Health/Physical Screenings/Examinations*.

The Board of Trustees moved on to view the Items for Action.

C. Items for Action

1. Personnel Actions

Superintendent Weltz and Ms. Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director, presented for action the

personnel actions. The Board of Trustees had a robust discussion about the nonrenewal recommendations and Ms. Mizel answered any questions the Board of Trustees had regarding the personnel actions.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the personnel actions as presented.”

Motion: Trustee Jeff Hindoien moved to approve the personnel actions as presented. Trustee Jennifer Walsh seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

2. Approval of Resolution Requesting County to Conduct 2025 Elections

Ms. Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager, presented the action item *Approval of Resolution Requesting County to Conduct 2025 Elections*.

Background:

Pursuant to 20-20-417, MCA, the trustees of a district may request the county election administrator to conduct certain school elections during the ensuing school fiscal year. The request must be made by a resolution of the board of trustees. Whenever the county election administrator agrees to conduct a school election, the administrator shall perform the duties imposed on the trustees and the clerk of the district for school elections and deliver to the trustees, for the purpose of canvassing the vote, the certified tally sheets and other election items needed for canvassing the vote.

Considerations:

- The county election administrator has agreed to run elections scheduled for the regular election day, May 6, 2025.
- If a special election is requested, the county election administrator would want to find an agreeable date for the election and may refuse to run elections on a date that does not work for election office.
- The District must provide copies of all candidate filing forms and any ballot issue language by the candidate filing deadline.
- The county election office will run the election by district, not by precinct. Requests to run the election by precinct will not be accommodated.

Superintendent recommendation:

Approve the resolution requesting the county to conduct the 2025 elections for Helena School District No. 1.

Ms. Mickelson answered any questions the trustees had regarding the *Approval of Resolution Requesting County to Conduct 2025 Elections*.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the action item *Approval of Resolution Requesting County to Conduct 2025 Elections.*”

Motion: Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve the action item *Approval of Resolution Requesting County to Conduct 2025 Elections* as presented. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

3. Policy 1070 (1420) School Board Meeting Procedure

Chief of Staff Barb Ridgway presented for action *Policy 1070 (1420) School Board Meeting Procedure* to the Board of Trustees. This policy is previously numbered as 1070 but the number will be changed to 1420 so it aligns with the model policy. This policy revision is required only for first- and second-class districts. Under MCA § 2-3-214, the Board must make a video and audio recording for a public meeting over which the Board “has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power” at a public meeting that is publicly noticed as required by law. This recording must be provided through a link on the district website or social media page (if there is no district website) within 5 business days of the board meeting and must be maintained online for 1 year. It is not the official record of the meeting unless designated by the Board as the official record (which is not recommended). If there was a technological issue that prevented the recording of the meeting or ability to provide a link, there must be a notice of this failure placed in the same place that public notices for meetings are located as well as where the meeting recording links are located with the reasons for the failure and efforts to avoid the failure in the future. Recordings will be retained for one year. Chief of Staff Barb Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding *Policy 1070 (1420) School Board Meeting Procedure*.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve *Policy 1070 (1420) School Board Meeting Procedure* as presented.”

Motion: Trustee Jennifer McKee moved to approve *Policy 1070 (1420) School Board Meeting Procedure* as presented. Trustee Jennifer Walsh seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

4. Policy 1240: Duties of Individual Trustees

Chief of Staff Barb Ridgway presented for action *Policy 1240 Duties of Individual Trustees* to the Board of Trustees. This policy establishes the authority of individual trustees is limited to participating in actions taken by the Board as a whole when legally in session. Trustees do not assume responsibilities of administrators or staff. Ms. Ridgway noted that lines 18 and 19 have been removed because of the advice of legal counsel at our last Policy Committee Meeting. Ms.

Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding *Policy 1240 Duties of Individual Trustees*.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve *Policy 1240 Duties of Individual Trustees*.”

Motion: Trustee Linda Cleatus moved to approve *Policy 1240 Duties of Individual Trustees* as presented. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

5. Policy 2165: Early Literacy Targeted Intervention Programs

Ms. Ridgway presented for action *Policy 2165 Early Literacy Targeted Intervention Programs* to the Board of Trustees. Under HB 352 (now MCA § 20-7-1801 – 20-7-1804), a district can but is not required to offer an early literacy intervention program. There were no changes since this policy last went before the full Board of Trustees for information. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding *Policy 2165 Early Literacy Targeted Intervention Programs*.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve *Policy 2165 Early Literacy Targeted Intervention Programs*.”

Motion: Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve *Policy 2165 Early Literacy Targeted Intervention Programs* as presented. Trustee Linda Cleatus seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

6. Policy 8110: Bus Routes and Schedules

Ms. Ridgway presented for action *Policy 8110: Bus Routes and Schedules* to the Board of Trustees. This policy is updated to reflect the language regarding safety distances for oncoming motorists and the need for the board to approve stops where students will cross a roadway. Updates were also made to the legal references. Ms. Ridgway pointed out on line 83 the word *caution* was changed to the word *educate*. Chief of Staff Barb Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding *Policy 8110 Bus Routes and Schedules*.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve *Policy 8110: Bus Routes and Schedules*.”

Motion: Trustee Jennifer McKee moved to approve *Policy 8110: Bus Routes and Schedules* as presented. Trustee Jennifer Walsh seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

7. Policy 3035: Student Appearance-Repeal

Ms. Ridgway presented for action *Policy 3035: Student Appearance*. This policy was adopted on 3.20.2012. When the Policy Committee reviewed this policy, they discussed we have this information in our handbooks, therefore it does not need to be a policy, since it is a building level issue. The Policy Committee determined that *Policy 3035: Student Appearance* would go before the full board of trustees with the recommendation to repeal the policy. Chief of Staff Barb Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding *Policy 3035: Student Appearance*.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to repeal *Policy 3035: Student Appearance*.”

Motion: Trustee Linda Cleatus moved to repeal *Policy 3035: Student Appearance*. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

8. Policy 3065: Participation in Inter-Scholastic Athletics-Repeal

Ms. Ridgway presented for action *Policy 3065: Participation in Inter-Scholastic Athletics*. This policy was revised on 9.10.2002. When the Policy Committee reviewed this policy, they determined we do not need this policy because we have athletic handbooks that cover this information. The Policy Committee determined that *Policy 3065: Participation in Inter-Scholastic Athletics* would go before the full board of trustees with the recommendation to repeal the policy. Chief of Staff Barb Ridgway and Tim McMahon, Activities Director, answered any questions the trustees had regarding *Policy 3065: Participation in Inter-Scholastic Athletics*.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to repeal *Policy 3065: Participation in Inter-Scholastic Athletics*.”

Motion: Trustee Jennifer McKee moved to repeal *Policy 3065: Participation in Inter-Scholastic Athletics*. Trustee Jennifer Walsh seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

9. Policy 3066: Obligation of Students Participating in School Sponsored Activities-Repeal

Ms. Ridgway presented for action *Policy 3066: Obligation of Students Participating in School Sponsored Activities*. This policy was adopted on 2.12.1995 and revised on 9.10.2002 and again on 1.9.2007. When the Policy Committee reviewed this policy, they determined we do not need this policy because we have athletic handbooks that cover this information. The Policy Committee determined that *Policy 3066: Obligation of Students Participating in School Sponsored Activities* would go before the full board of trustees with the recommendation to repeal the policy. Chief of Staff Barb Ridgway and Tim McMahon, Activities Director, answered any questions the trustees had regarding *Policy 3066: Obligation of Students Participating in School Sponsored Activities*.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to repeal *Policy 3066: Obligation of Students Participating in School Sponsored Activities.*”

Motion: Trustee Kay Satre moved to repeal *Policy 3066: Obligation of Students Participating in School Sponsored Activities.* Trustee Linda Cleatus seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

That concluded the Items for Action and the Board of Trustees moved on to hear 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, “Another Vigilante Parade is over. As always, the parade is a great community event! A shout out to all our students who participated on a float, played in the band, carried a flag on horseback, as well as to the Cadettes. The CHS Counseling staff has been busy administering AP exams- both in the building and at various locations in the community. We’ve ordered a total of 656 AP tests this spring. During recent “Student Voice” meetings organized by Mrs. Kidder and the MTSS team, the idea of an intervention time was discussed. On the Vigilante Parade workday, various Capital High teachers visited Hellgate High School in Missoula to observe their built-in intervention time and to discuss this time with Hellgate staff members. We then had a staff meeting last week after school where teachers who visited Hellgate High School were able to discuss their experience during the visit. The annual senior grad walk will occur next Wednesday morning (May 22nd) at the westside elementary schools. Next Monday is the Choir Dessert Show. The Capital Choirs will close out the year with the final concert and dessert show in our CHS gym on the evening of Monday, May 20. The theme this year is “Musicals of the Stage and Film.” You can expect to hear tunes from “Hamilton,” “Greatest Showman,” and “Pitch Perfect,” to name a few. Please contact Mr. Thomas Baty if you are interested in purchasing a ticket for the show.”

Ms. Willa Bishop, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, gave her Student Representative Report. Last night HEF honored 50 students from the Helena area in their annual Celebration of Excellence. Students were recognized as distinguished scholars or achievers and then selected an educator that significantly impacted their educational career. We are in the middle of AP testing, with it wrapping up at the end of the week. From Helena High, 404 tests were taken with 244 students taking those tests. Spring sports are finishing with divisional and state meets/tournaments for teams starting this week, with the girls track team looking for a 3-peat of the state title. Graduation is approaching quickly for the roughly 200 students that will be leaving Helena High. This year, the school has recognized 19 valedictorians each of whom have earned a 4.0 GPA while in high school. There are also 3 salutatorians graduating with honors. Schedules and hiring are at a standstill because due to the budget everything from class sizes to teacher workload is up in the air. Just hearing from

teachers, many of them are feeling overwhelmed by the possibility of more students and classes with less time to prepare for the classes they already have. Mr. Kessler has been selected as the new principal of Helena High School to replace Steve Thennis. As an HHS alumni, he then worked as a teacher and assistant principal here and will now take the lead as principal. Eric Peterson will be replacing Willie Schlepp as assistant principal as well. The beginning of next year has already been planned, with sporting events, school pictures and activities already on the calendar. Finally, while ACT scores have not officially been released, the preliminary data from the fully online test shows that HHS improved in all areas of the test, but we are not sure how it compares to the rest of the state.”

2. Helena Education Association Report

Ms. Jane Shawn, HEA President, gave the Helena Education Association report. Ms. Shawn commented, “I totally enjoyed the Celebration of Excellence dinner last night. It was amazing and truly heartwarming to see and hear all of the distinguished educators being recognized with kind words and moving memories by their distinguished students. Thirty-four teachers were nominated for Helena Educator of the Year, and eighteen paras were nominated for Para Educator of the Year. Elections will be held later this month and we're looking forward to celebrating with our new 2024 Educator and Para Educator of the Year. Obviously, tensions are running high among our teacher ranks with the long list of non-renewals and the many unknowns that we face as educators in this district. As the boots on the ground working directly with our students, teachers like to prepare and be ready to face each challenge, but when these challenges are not known, it can feel incredibly frustrating and overwhelming, as I'm sure you heard and understood during public comment. Our para educators are also facing challenges not knowing what budget cuts may mean for them. We're waiting for the outside market analysis to be completed before we begin to bargain for an equitable living wage for our para educators. We do have high hopes that we'll be able to bargain a wage that allows the district to hire quality para educators. Mr. Beaver, it's been a pleasure and thank you for your service.”

3. Facilities and Technology Committee Report

Trustee Kay Satre gave the Facilities and Technology Committee Report. Trustee Satre commented, “So our committee has been renamed, we are now the Facilities and Technology Committee, so we have equal presentations from our Facilities Director and our Technology Director. Todd Verrill went through the work that they've been doing over the last month, including all kinds of work for the Vigilante Day Parade and Mr. Verrill gave a shout out to Rob Brewer, who did a lot of work for that. They've also been doing work on things like preparing grounds, getting irrigation started up, and Vigilante Field readying. They are lining up summer projects such as summer flooring and having to postpone a few other ones. He talked about custodians and looking at how they might be able to cut around ten percent out of their budget, and Todd did say a reduction in staffing will result in different cleaning standards next year. They were able to hire a couple of new employees. That's been an ongoing challenge for facilities, and now the current vacancies in that department are at five. He also gave a safety and security update which included training for earthquake preparedness, and summer safety project preparations. The Warren water chlorination system is near its end and so they're getting ready to replace that. Then Gary talked with us about the kinds of things that his crew have been working on such as attending a cybersecurity tabletop exercise in Missoula

and then updating their cybersecurity incident response plan. We've had one, but now after that work in Missoula, they came back and they have updated, expanded, and refined it. We talked a little bit about the real importance of cybersecurity and significant threats that are sort of pressing all the time and some of the ways in which they have been working on cybersecurity. They participated in a phishing campaign with the HSD staff and around five percent of users were compromised and there was about six percent of the users who actually reported the suspicious email, so that was good. The users who were compromised completed the assigned training. 534 work tickets were created, and I think it's amazing. The average ticket first response time was in about 3 1/2 hours, so people who send in a ticket get a pretty speedy response. They filled two empty positions, Tina Johnson, the Department Secretary, and they have a new Help Desk Technician who will come on May 6th. That group is also looking at how they can cut ten percent out of their budget. The one thing that we talked a little bit about is that we may have to look at our schedule for device replacements because that costs a lot yearly to keep up with the kind of replacement schedule that we've had."

4. Budget and Finance Committee Report

Trustee Janet Armstrong was not in attendance; therefore, Trustee Jeff Hindoien gave the Budget and Finance Committee Report this evening. The Budget and Finance Committee met this afternoon and reviewed the Budget to Actual Reports and in the elementary general fund we are sitting close to where we were last year, and the high school is a little tighter. During the second portion of the Budget Committee meeting, they discussed they would like to hold additional work session meetings to discuss and plan for the budget decisions that must be made due to the levy failures.

5. Policy Committee Report

Trustee Janet Armstrong was not in attendance; therefore, Trustee Jeff Hindoien gave the Policy Committee Report. Trustee Hindoien shared that the Policy Committee reviewed all the policies that were presented to the full board this evening.

6. Teaching & Learning Committee Report

Trustee Jennifer McKee gave the Teaching & Learning Committee Report. The Teaching & Learning Committee reviewed the Comprehensive District Literacy Draft Plan. Trustee McKee commented, "This report (plan) writes down all of the ways that the district has used the grant (literacy grant) and the way that it is now a sustainable thing that is just simply the way we teach, and it's so incredible, and I encourage everyone to go read it."

7. Health Benefits Committee Report

Trustee Kay Satre gave the Health Benefits Committee Report. Trustee Satre commented, "The Health Benefits Committee met in mid-April and again April 25th. So potential premium increases on the plan for this coming year look pretty steep and if we assume no changes to our plan, we might be looking at a 26% increase, give or take a couple of percent. It's a big increase and there's a few factors that are going into that and I'm just going to briefly name them. First of all, there's a trend increase in raising costs and medical, dental and vision. So

that's contributing to that premium rise for our plan. Another factor is we're down in premium revenue from last year and that's because I believe our premiums increase and we were talking about whether or not the members were going to have to shoulder some of that. People switched plans; so, they moved from a premium plan to a standard plan. So, we had 130 individuals go from a single premium plan to the single standard plan and of course that means less premium income for the plan. We had 85 people switch from single plus children to single children from the premium plan to the standard plan. We had 45 people switch from a single-family premium to the standard plan and so with all of that, there was a loss of about \$1.3 million to the plan in premiums. So, we have rising costs and income premium revenue going down, then we also had our expenses rising last year from claims. We had some high-cost claims and some of those are ongoing, so they'll probably continue into next year. Our unreserves were sitting at about 1.6 million at the end of March and that's our halfway point in the plan year. If we didn't have such a decrease in premium income, we'd be in a better place with the unreserves, and they would probably be at about 2.3 million instead. We also typically lose about another \$500,000 to a million dollars over the next six months because that was the first half of our plan. The second half of our plan is usually more costly to the plan because members will have already met their deductibles and max out of pocket so then it draws more. That puts us in a pretty low spot in terms of our unreserves. We are exploring ways to make our plan less expensive and we're exploring unbundling as one way of doing that by separating out the medical and then you can choose dental and vision. We're also exploring some changes in our two options, changes in deductibles and in covered percentages. We are looking at ways that we might have to change some of those elements of our plan in order to hold down premium costs while at the same time providing some flexibility and choice for members that will impact benefits to some extent. Our plan has been so very generous and so very robust, so we're trying to keep the plan financially solvent and trying to figure out ways of making it affordable and a very strong plan. We will be meeting again to vote on the changes that we want to propose, and that meeting is going to happen this week, and then we will bring that before the board for review.”

8. Wellness Committee Report

Chief of Staff Barb Ridgway gave the Wellness Committee Report. Ms. Ridgway commented, “The Wellness Committee feels like they've made a lot of progress in considering applying for what's called America's Healthiest School award, and we worked through what the criteria is for that and there will be more to come on that as we continue to work through it. One of the things I want to share is the Helena Public Schools Free Summer Meals program. Robert has done a really nice job of expanding the sites. There will be nine sites this year and it's the first time he's had a site in the valley. There'll be a site at Rossiter, so there will be breakfast and lunch sacks at Memorial Park and the Public Library. There will be weekend meal sacks at Memorial Park and the Helena Public Library. There will be multi-day breakfast and lunch sacks Monday through Thursday at Warren, Rossiter, 4G's and Sharon Park next to Stuart Homes. There will be a fresh lunch option at Broadwater and Helena Middle School, and then there will be a fresh breakfast and lunch option at the YMCA camp at Camp Child. The only thing people have to do this year is register, so we're promoting it everywhere we can. This program in Helena fed more children last summer than any program in the state, including Billings and Bozeman. Robert is committed to making sure kids and families have the meals they need. He did note today that USDA will be out this summer and will do an audit on his summer program.”

9. Montana School Boards Association Report

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn gave the Montana Schools Boards Association report. As part of the statewide health trust, they canvassed all the districts in the state and collected salary data and benefits data and that information has been dispersed.

10. Parent Council Visit Reports

Trustee Linda Cleatus gave a Parent Council Visit report based upon her visit to Helena Middle School. Trustee Cleatus commented, “There is a sinkhole in the parking lot at HMS. Principal Boyle thinks that it is from the 2022 flooding. Mr. Roberts had a 5-foot pole which he put into the hole, and you couldn't get to the bottom so it's about 8 feet deep. They're working on it, and they will fence off the area and do remediation work in the summer. They are going to do some work on the inside, replacing carpets and whatever is underneath those carpets, so the building will be closed for two to six weeks, so that means there'll be no Bob Camp. They talked about plans for the last couple weeks of school including a volleyball game with students and staff. The basketball game last year was very exciting. They do service projects every year, so 6th graders have smaller projects with teachers involved where they make tie blankets for the hospital or work with the Humane Society. The 7th graders are working on weed pulling and also working with the United Way and going to senior houses and cleaning up lawns. The 8th graders are going to the airport campus for a career day, and they'll check out thirteen stations, and they'll also do a session about what a two-year vocational program looks like. This summer they are going to resurface the outdoor basketball court and the PTSO has been asked to fundraise for the backboards. They talked about the staffing cuts and the potential impacts and Cal was talking about how his schedule is a collaborative teaching model which has worked well for him and his school, but that's definitely going to be impacted. Most likely those intervention classes for those students that need extra support in reading and math are going to get hit. The parent teacher council talked about the fact that it's hard to get parents involved. They've noticed a trend since the pandemic with a decrease in numbers, but they're small and mighty, and because they have limited funding, they've been innovative. They work with Sodexo on getting food for events at lower costs and neighborhood outreach. They are really focused on getting incentives for kids because Cal likes to give incentives for those who do academically well. They did have some questions; one is about the master plan because one of the pieces was the resurfacing of the basketball court, which they were putting on hold because of the master plan conversations, but now they are moving forward on that. They are a great group, and I was glad to sit in on their meeting.”

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, May 21st, Board Work Session, 3:30 p.m., PAL

- Tuesday, June 4th, Policy Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Wednesday, June 5th, Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Monday, June 10th, Facilities & Technology Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, June 11th, Full Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Lincoln Center

VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

The trustees thanked Student Representatives, Ms. Luna Hernandez, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, and Ms. Willa Bishop, Helena High School Student Representative for their time they served on the board.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn adjourned the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary Date