



*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 Budget and Finance Committee

Lincoln Campus

And via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

12:00pm

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### MINUTES

#### ATTENDEES

##### Trustees:

Janet Armstrong, Committee Chair  
Linda Cleatus, Committee Member  
Rachel Robison, Committee Member

##### Others:

Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff  
Jane Shawn, HEA President  
Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director  
Rex Weltz, Superintendent  
Candice Delvaux, Executive Assistant  
Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology  
Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager  
Lona Carter, Student Health  
Karen Ogden, Communications Officer  
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent  
Hanna Warhank, Guest of the Public

#### I. **CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair Janet Armstrong called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

#### II. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no general public comment.

III. **REVIEW OF AGENDA**

No changes were made to the agenda.

IV. **REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The committee reviewed and accepted the 5.14.24 Budget and Finance Committee Meeting Minutes.

V. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION**

**A. Budget to Actual Reports**

Mrs. Mickelson, Business Manager, reviewed the budget to actual reports for the elementary general fund and high school general fund with the Budget and Finance Committee. Mrs. Mickelson stated there was a lot of staff movement and right now there is a negative balance in professional salaries and a lot of that had to do with hiring a new nurse, a counselor change, and a lot of movement in the SPED department. We are beginning the year in a better financial position than we were in last year. Last year in the elementary general fund we started with about 12.7% of the budget remaining in August, and this year we are at 15%. Last year in the high school general fund we had around 14.7% of the budget remaining in August, and this year we are at 18.8%. The Budget and Finance Committee had a robust discussion about enrollment numbers. Right now, we are projecting that we are down in enrollment in both the elementary and the high school, and the official fall enrollment count will take place the first Monday in October. Ms. Mickelson discussed the interlocal fund. The interlocal fund is being used to supplement the general fund and there is approximately 4.8 million dollars in the interlocal fund and that is after spending around 3 million dollars on property and liability, \$300,000 on curriculum, \$200,000 on technology, and then various expenditures for items such as activities and special education. We want to keep the interlocal account at around 2 million dollars. The committee discussed that property and liability went up 16% this year. Ms. Mickelson stated that we transferred about \$90,000 from the interlocal account to the elementary building budgets because their budgets were so small, and they needed funds to support students in the classrooms.

**B. ESSER Spend Down Report**

The Budget and Finance Committee moved on to review the 2024 ESSER Spend Down Report. In 2024 we had around \$280,000 of ESSER funds remaining which had to be spent down to zero. The report shows that ESSER funds were spent on Title I chrome carts for instruction, iReady, recoding of two HS employees, SPED program (CRA)

curriculum support, Tier 2 Curriculum, Side By Side Consulting, summer curriculum, YAM, Handwriting Without Tears, tools for instruction/math lessons/printing, middle school (SIMS) writing material, a charger, summer school salaries benefits, ESY transportation costs, and indirect costs. The Teaching and Learning Committee had a robust discussion about the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) allocating \$1.5 million in federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to Montana teachers for math and reading projects and the fact that OPI partnered with DonorsChoose, a 501 ( c ) ( 3 ) charitable non-profit, to offer \$500 direct grants to all K-12 public school teachers in Montana, and out of every grant given DonorsChoose receives fifteen percent. Trustee Janet Armstrong stated that fifteen percent out of every grant that goes to DonorsChoose is taxpayer money and should not be used to support a private enterprise. The committee discussed that if OPI does not spend all their ESSER money, that money goes back to the federal government. Superintendent Weltz stated he would like to see the extra ESSER funds the state has right now be used on things for students and staff such as safety and security, mental health, or school lunches for students in schools. The Board of Trustees will approve the ESSER spend down report at the full board meeting this evening. The Budget and Finance Committee moved on to discuss the MQEC/CAMPS school funding formula direction document.

### **C. MQEC/CAMPS School Funding Formula Direction**

The Budget and Finance Committee discussed information regarding the MQEC/CAMPS school funding formula direction. The committee reviewed a document published by the Coalition of Advocates For Montana's Public Schools. The document states key issues and solutions districts face for funding, the role of voted levies and quality, documentation of funding shortfalls, and an updated analysis on inflation during and following the pandemic. The document also reviews considerations of bigger reforms needed on the horizon, and states that enrollment fluctuations require harmful and disproportion reductions in funding. The document states the formula is out of balance and displays the current K-12 BASE aid elements. The document calculates the annual inflation shortfall and reviews the CAMPS Coalition Proposal which would redistribute and increase K-12 BASE aid elements to improve balance in allocation, and lastly describes a suggested formula better aligned to the definition of quality. Superintendent Weltz answered any questions the Budget and Finance Committee had regarding the MQEC/CAMPS school funding discussion.

**VI. BOARD COMMENTS**

There were no further board comments.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Janet Armstrong adjourned the meeting at 12:44 p.m.