



*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, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024

12:00pm

Lincoln Center & TEAMS

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### MINUTES

#### ATTENDANCE

<i>Trustees:</i>	<i>Others:</i>
Kay Satre, Committee Chair	Rex Wertz, Superintendent
Rachel Robison, Trustee	Jane Shawn, HEA President
	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
	Justine Alberts, Curriculum Director
	Ashlie Buresh, TOSA
	Candice Delvaux, Executive Assistant
	Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment and Federal Programs Director
	Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
	Lona Carter, Student Services Director
	Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
	Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
	Melissa Romano, TOSA
	Kayla Lunnon, TOSA
	Tim McMahon, Activities Director
	Todd Verrill, Facilities Director
	Karen Ogden, Communications Officer
	Two Guests of the Public

#### I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Committee Chair Kay Satre. Following the call to order, members of the Teaching and Learning Committee and other attendees introduced themselves.

## 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 accepted the minutes from the 10.02.24 Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting.

## V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

### A. Data Report & Accompanying Curriculum Report

Ms. Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment and Federal Programs Director, and Ms. Justine Alberts, Curriculum Director, reviewed a data and curriculum report with the Teaching and Learning Committee. The report begins with stating the vision, mission and guiding principles of Helena Public Schools. Ms. Hess and Ms. Alberts reviewed the HPS Comprehensive Assessment System. The Helena Public Schools Comprehensive Assessment System is designed to ensure that all students receive a high-quality education that meets rigorous academic standards. Our mission is to provide accurate, meaningful assessments that support student learning, inform instructional practices, and guide decision making at every level of our school district. Next, Ms. Hess and Ms. Alberts reviewed district benchmarks and state assessments in the district. Ms. Hess and Ms. Alberts moved on to review the Acadience Fall Benchmark trends and pathways to progress with the Teaching and Learning Committee. The district K-8 literacy TOSA has been working with teams to set goals tied to progress monitoring with Acadience and Pathways of Progress. This tool charts student growth more clearly and gives teachers tangible progress metrics.

Next, Ms. Hess, Ms. Alberts, Ms. Ashlie Buresh (TOSA), and Ms. Melissa Romano (TOSA) reviewed the fall benchmark data for grades 1-5. All elementary schools are using a newly adopted curriculum, Eureka Math2. This curriculum has a high level of rigor and addresses procedural and conceptual understandings. They believe this will help move many of the students in the yellow band to the green. Anecdotally, teachers mention the pace is intense but are overall appreciating the curriculum and are saying students enjoy the change in instruction. They are working on trainings that address each component of our ELA curriculum paired with the Science of Reading and research on reading instruction. They also see a need to continue to develop phonics instruction and train their educators in the practice of explicit teaching. The assessment addresses the students on the larger understandings and may not catch all the students with gaps in foundational skills. We have processes in place to identify the foundational gaps and are measuring those within WIN groups and diagnostic assessments. Fall benchmarks serve as a foundational assessment tool to gauge students' initial understanding at the beginning of the academic year. These criterion-referenced assessments evaluate students' comprehension of grade-level standards prior to their exposure to the associated content and curriculum for the

year. Next, Ms. Hess and Ms. Alberts reviewed national norms data for grades 1-5 for iReady math and reading. In math, overall grades 1-5 are coming in stronger at the start of the school year than the national norm and in reading grades 3-5 are coming in stronger at the start of the school year than the national norm. Next, Ms. Hess and Ms. Alberts reviewed fall benchmarks data for iReady in grades 6-8 and reviewed national norms in iReady math and reading for grades 6-8. In math, grades 6, 7, and 8 were above the national norm last year and this year for incoming fall grade level readiness. In reading, grades 6, 7, and 8 were above the national norm last year and this year for incoming fall grade level readiness.

Ms. Hess and Ms. Alberts moved on to have a robust discussion regarding stretch growth and reviewed that data with the Teaching and Learning Committee. Each group has a report group with students who need to meet their stretch growth on iReady and teachers are using this data in WIN groups and intervention. Next, Ms. Hess and Ms. Alberts discussed pandemic growth and ACT-college and career readiness. This year, HPS 10<sup>th</sup> graders will take the PreACT in the spring. All 11<sup>th</sup> graders have access to a paid subscription for ACT Online Prep, which allows them multiple practice tests, study tools, and instructional lessons. Ms. Hess and Ms. Alberts discussed increasing ACT performance, and their report mentions that by focusing on students who are just 1-2 points below the benchmark, we can elevate our benchmark scores, enhancing our competitiveness with AA high schools throughout the state. Everyone will benefit from a targeted approach to instruction. Also, HPS is beginning to align the state standards with the college and career readiness standards to align instruction. To conclude the presentation Ms. Hess and Ms. Alberts discussed how we prepare students for post-secondary education. Ms. Hess and Ms. Alberts answered all the questions the committee members had regarding the presentation.

Ms. Hess and Ms. Alberts moved on to review the updated action plan.

**B. Updated Action Plan**

The Teaching and Learning Committee was provided with an updated action plan for their review. The action plan serves as a progress report, highlighting completed tasks, items that have been successfully crossed off the list, and ongoing initiatives that are still in progress. The committee had no questions or feedback regarding the action plan.

**C. TOSA Reports**

The Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs), Ms. Romano, Ms. Buresh, and Ms. Lunnon, shared their methods for tracking their work and supporting teachers across the district. One TOSA explained that they use a Microsoft form to log visits to classrooms, tracking the number of classrooms visited, the schools, and grade levels involved. This system allows them to monitor progress, identify areas needing more attention, and ensure accountability. For example, they have visited 46 classrooms so far, but the number would be significantly higher if it included phone calls or email support. They also track the nature of each visit, including activities like troubleshooting, number sense screening, and providing classroom management support. The data is organized into a spreadsheet where follow-up actions are color-coded (green for

completed, blue for ongoing, and white for pending). This visual system helps ensure no tasks are overlooked and allows the TOSA to reflect on where additional support may be needed. Additionally, one TOSA mentioned incorporating district student achievement goals into their tracking to assess how their visits align with district priorities. Another TOSA highlighted their role in supporting administrative teams, such as at Capital High, by assisting with data interpretation and strategy development. The TOSAs also discussed their involvement in launching new assessments and supporting teachers in using data effectively. They emphasized the importance of not just collecting data but presenting it in a meaningful way that supports teacher decision-making. This approach ensures that the data is useful for teachers and can drive actionable improvements in the classroom. In summary, the TOSAs have created comprehensive systems to track their work, monitor progress, and provide targeted support to teachers and administrators, all aligned with the district's broader goals for student achievement.

**D. SOR Showcase Hosted by Renaissance and HPS**

Ms. Alberts provided an update on her work with Dr. Rob Watson, Executive Director of the School Administrators of Montana (SAM). Dr. Watson is organizing a "Science of Reading" showcase, which will be held in Helena on November 13th. The event will bring together around 34 educational leaders from across the state, including curriculum and instructional leaders. The day will include a networking lunch and a series of visits to schools across our district. These visits will provide an opportunity for participants to observe and engage in the instructional practices happening in the district. In the evening, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Renaissance, an educational vendor, will sponsor a session featuring a national speaker on the Science of Reading, followed by a panel discussion. Legislators, including those from the education committee, will also attend to learn more about current trends in education and gain insights for future policymaking. Ms. Alberts emphasized the importance of collaboration, noting that this event is an opportunity to showcase Helena Public Schools' efforts while also learning from other districts across Montana. The event promises to be an exciting and informative opportunity for all involved.

Ms. Hess and Ms. Alberts answered any questions the Teaching and Learning Committee had about any of the information presented today.

**VI. BOARD COMMENTS**

Trustee Kay Satre thanked everyone for their hard work and expressed enthusiasm about how the data we are required to produce is being effectively utilized. Superintendent Wertz also conveyed his appreciation to the team for their ongoing efforts

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:06 p.m. by Committee Chair Kay Satre.