



*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 Work Session**

Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

3:30 p.m. Tour of Kessler Elementary followed by  
Business & TEAMS Portion of the Meeting at 4:00 p.m.

### **MINUTES**

#### **ATTENDEES**

<i>Trustees</i>	<i>Others</i>
Jennifer McKee, Vice Chair	Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Jeff Hindoien, Trustee	Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager
Linda Cleatus, Trustee	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Rachel Robison, Trustee	Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Kay Satre, Trustee	Candice Delvaux, Executive Assistant
Siobhan Hathhorn, Board Chair	Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee	Justine Alberts, Curriculum Director
Janet Armstrong, Trustee	Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
	Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment & Federal Programs Director
	Todd Verill, Facilities Director
	Jane Shawn, HEA President
	Karen Ogden, Communications Officer
	Rich Franco, Human Resource Benefits Manager
	Lona Carter, Student Health Services & Special Education Director
	Riley Thatcher, Kessler Elementary Principal
	Several Kessler Elementary Staff Members & Students
	Several Guests of the Public

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER/ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. and the Board participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. REVIEW OF AGENDA**

Board Chair Siobhan Hathorn reviewed the agenda with the Board of Trustees and there were no suggested changes.

The Board of Trustees then proceeded to hear general public comment.

**III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no general public comment.

**IV. PRESENTATION**

Ms. Riley Thatcher, Principal of Kessler Elementary provided a comprehensive overview of the school and reviewed the pamphlet included in the agenda. The pamphlet begins by outlining the mission of Kessler Elementary which states. *“Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be a Learner, ROAR...”*

Principal Thatcher reviewed demographics at Kessler Elementary with the Board of Trustees.

- Kindergarten-37
- First-38
- Second-33
- Third-49
- Fourth-26
- Fourth/Fifth Combo-25
- Fifth-30
- Total Enrollment-238

Principal Thatcher reviewed the services, commitments, and connections offered at Kessler Elementary with the Board of Trustees.

Services

- Free and Reduced Lunch-81
- Kid Packs-48
- New Shoe Program-118
- Students with IEP’s-41
- Students receiving Speech-54
- Students on 504 Plans-8
- Indian Education Tutoring-11
- McKinney Vento-16
- CSCT Services-14
- Afterschool Tutoring-8

### Commitments

Jobs Program-47  
Conflict Managers-21  
Book Pals-12  
Read Dog  
Composting  
PAX Assemblies  
Tootle Ticket Drawings  
Schoolwide Granny Wacky Prizes

### Connection

Open House  
Number Sense Backpacks  
Family Game Night  
One School One Book  
Trunk or Treat  
Winter Extravaganza  
Coffee with the Principal  
CHS Basketball Game  
Parent College 101  
Kessler Carnival  
Family Folk Dance Night  
Storytime with the Principal  
Parent College 201  
Kindergarten Jumpstart  
Mt. Wild Fishing Night  
Career & College Readiness  
Kessler BBQ  
Field Day

Grant Dollars Awarded Since 2022: \$30,810

Next, Principal Thatcher reviewed the Kessler Elementary 24-25 Action Plan with the trustees.

Math Goal: By the end of the year, at least 90 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students will move a tier as measured by iReady math data.

Extension: By the end of the year, tier 3 will decrease from 14% to 9%.

ELA Goal #1: By the end of the year, at least 55 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students will move a tier as measured by iReady reading data.

ELA Goal #2: By the end of the year at least 25 K-1 students will move a tier as measured by Acadience reading data.

Extension: By the end of the year, well below benchmark will decrease by 10%. By the end of the year, below benchmark will decrease by 10%.

Principal Thatcher concluded her presentation by addressing questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

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

## V. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Consent Action Items

1. Personnel Actions
2. 3.25.25 Board Work Session Meeting Minutes
3. Approval of FY 2024-25 Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Non-Resident Students Attending HPS)
4. Acknowledge FY 2024-25 Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Helena Resident Students Attending Other School Districts)

Board Chair Siobhan Hathorn commented. "I would entertain a motion for 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:** 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

The Board of Trustees moved on to review the Item for Information.

### B. Item For Information

1. Update on RFP for Medical/Dental/Vison & Rx-Richard Franco-Human Resource Benefits Manger

Mr. Richard Franco, Human Resource Benefits Manager for Helena Public Schools, presented for information an *Update on RFP for Medical/Dental/Vison & Rx*. Finalists for medical coverage are Allegiance and Blue Cross Blue Shield, selected for their strong networks and competitive pricing. Delta Dental and Ameritas are finalists for dental coverage, with emphasis on improving network

access in Helena. For vision, Ameritas and VSP are being considered, with Ameritas offering broad provider access through multiple networks. Pharmacy RFP proposals are due today and present significant potential savings, including opportunities through the federal 340B program. Top proposals will be reviewed on May 9, with final decisions expected between May 21–23. Final recommendations for medical, dental, and vision are anticipated by next week, in advance of a potential Board vote on June 10. Mr. Franco also shared that an actuarial review of current plans shows close alignment with marketplace top tier gold plans and platinum plans. A silver plan option is being explored to reduce premium costs for the employees and plan costs for the district. Mr. Franco addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

The Board of Trustees moved on to hear any final board comments.

**VI. BOARD COMMENTS**

There were no further board comments.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Board Chair Siobhan Hathorn adjourned the meeting at 4:58 p.m.

---

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary