



Board of Trustees Meeting

Lincoln Center | 1325 Poplar St. | Helena, MT 59601

Tuesday, April 8th, 2025 - 5:30 p.m.

Lincoln PD Center and via TEAMS

[Join the meeting now](#)

AGENDA

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

II. **REVIEW OF AGENDA**

III. **RECOGNITIONS**

A. **Harrison Writing Awards**

The Board of Trustees is proud to recognize the exceptional talent of the 2025 recipients of the Harrison Writing Awards. The Harrison Writing Awards include up to four \$350 awards given annually in the categories of either expository or creative writing to HPS high school students by the Helena Education Foundation. Dr. Lee Harrison endowed these awards in memory of her mother Ethel Harrison. Professional writers in the community review submissions and select the winning pieces. The prose and poetry of Harrison award winners are featured in the annual Pen & Ink magazine. The Foundation organizes a community launch party for the magazine at which students have the opportunity to share their works.

The 2025 recipients of the Harrison Writing Award are:

- Zaraj Carrucini (CHS) for "Library Guardian" and "Tiger in a Birch Tree Forest"
- Fiona Kuntz (CHS) for "Ms. Shallot" and "The Woods"
- Dane Moser (HHS) for "A Winter's Thought"

B. **Going to the Sun Awards**

The Board of Trustees is proud to recognize the first-ever recipients of the Going to the Sun Award, a prestigious new initiative by the Helena Education Foundation. The Helena Education

Foundation is thrilled to announce the inaugural year of the Going to the Sun Award, providing up to four \$350 awards to be given annually to HPS high school student visual artists by the Helena Education Foundation beginning in 2025. The Going to the Sun Award was established by a local family of longtime advocates/supporters of Helena Public Schools and the Helena Education Foundation. Professional artists in the community reviewed submissions and selected the winning pieces. The artwork of the Going to the Sun Award recipients will be featured in the annual Pen & Ink magazine, as well as at the community launch party for the magazine, hosted by HEF to honor the student editors, writers, and artists.

The first ever recipients of the Going to the Sun Award are:

- Faith Howard (HHS) for a series of pen and ink drawings
- Lauren Bechdol (CHS) "Portrait"
- Meika Arensmeyer (CHS) for "The View in a Box"
- Mason Karlin (HHS) for "Through the Looking Glass"

C. **Science Olympiad Winners-Capital High School**

The Board of Trustees is proud to recognize the outstanding achievements of Capital High School students who recently earned 1st place finishes at the State Science Olympiad competition.

Codebusters: Rowan Humbert, Sydney Harman, and Fiona Kuntz

Optics: Isaac Urban and Kate Drynan

Their dedication, hard work, and teamwork were instrumental in securing these impressive results. Please join us in congratulating these exceptional students for their remarkable accomplishments in the Science Olympiad competition. We would also like to extend a special thanks to their teacher advisors, Ms. Humbert and Ms. Urban for their unwavering support and guidance, which helped these students excel in the competition.

D. **Science Olympiad Winners-C.R. Anderson Middle School**

The Board of Trustees is proud to recognize the outstanding achievements of C.R. Anderson Middle School students who recently earned 1st place finishes at the State Science Olympiad competition.

Meteorology (Gold) – Eileen McLane & Ellery Hughey

Their dedication, hard work, and teamwork were instrumental in securing these impressive results. Please join us in congratulating these exceptional students for their remarkable

accomplishments in the Science Olympiad competition. We would also like to extend a special thanks to their teacher advisors, Ms. Lane and Ms. Hagengruber for their unwavering support and guidance, which helped these students excel in the competition.

E. **Business Professionals of America (BPA) National Qualifiers-Capital High School**

The Board of Trustees is proud to recognize the students listed below, who competed at the Montana State Business Professionals of America Conference and earned the honor of advancing to the national competition. We extend a special thank you to Ms. Toivonen for her unwavering support and guidance, which played a crucial role in helping these students excel in the competition.

- Kathleen Cook – 1st Advanced Interview Skills, 4th Java Programming
- Kayle Andriolo – 1st Computer Programming Concepts, 1st Digital Marketing Concepts, 1st Financial Math and Analysis, 1st Information Technology Concepts, 1st Java Programming, 2nd Python Programming
- Ryan Fuller – 2nd Server Administration Using Microsoft, 5th Device Configuration & Troubleshooting
- Sam Flynn – 2nd Java Programming, 3rd Python Programming, 4th IT Concepts
- Emiley Ereth – 1st Economic Research Project
- McKenzy Heppner – 1st Health Research Presentation
- Nolan Holzer – 5th Python Programming
- Brooklynn Haab, Joey Casey, Kathleen Cook, McKenzy Heppner – 1st Presentation Team
- Brooklynn Haab, Emiley Ereth, Hollis Elliott – 3rd Visual Design Team

F. **Business Professionals of America (BPA) National Qualifier-Helena High School**

The Board of Trustees is proud to recognize Lorenzo Phoenix, who competed at the Montana State Business Professionals of America Conference and earned the honor of advancing to the national competition. We also extend a special thank you to Mrs. Humphrey for her unwavering support and guidance, which were instrumental in helping Lorenzo and other students excel in the competition.

- Lorenzo Phoenix-3rd Java Programming

G. **Mock Trial State Champions-Helena High School**

The Board of Trustees would like to congratulate the Helena High School Copper Team for winning the Mock Trial State Championship! A special congratulations to team members Mia Taylor, Kenzie Criswell, Addie Murray, Maverick Franklin, Gabbi LaVoie, Grey Gildroy, and Layla

Riggs (Courtroom Artist). The Board would also like to extend special thanks to advisor Mr. Askin, and Attorney Coaches Morrison, Dal Nogare, and Zupanic for their unwavering support and guidance, which played a pivotal role in the team's success.

IV. **PRESENTATION**

- A. 2024 District Audit: Anthony Gerharz, Manager, Wipfli LLP

<https://helenaschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2024-District-Audit.pdf>

V. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

VI. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

This is the time for comment on public matters that are not on the agenda. Public matters do not include any pending legal matters, private personnel issues or private student issues. Please do not attempt to address such issues at this time or you will be ruled out of order. The Board cannot enter into a discussion during General Public Comment.

VII. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Consent Action Items**

1. Personnel Actions
2. Warrants
3. Approval of FY 2024-25 Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Non-Resident Students Attending HPS)
4. 3.11.25 Board of Trustees Full Board Meeting Minutes
5. 3.12.25 Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting Open Session Meeting Minutes
6. 3.12.25 Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting Closed Session Meeting Minutes
7. 3.18.25 Pre-Bond Planning Key Stakeholders Meeting Minutes
8. 3.19.25 Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting Open Session Meeting Minutes
9. 3.19.25 Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting Closed Session Meeting Minutes

B. Reports

1. Student Representatives Report
2. Helena Education Association Report
3. Facilities & Technology Committee Report
4. Budget & Finance Committee Report
5. Teaching & Learning Committee Report
6. Policy Committee Report
7. Health Benefits Committee Report
8. Wellness Committee Report
9. Montana School Boards Association Report
10. Parent Council Visit Report

VIII. UPCOMING MEETINGS

IX. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

X. ADJOURNMENT

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting Date: 4/8/2025

Item I.

- ☒
- Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance
- ☐
- Review of Agenda
- ☐
- Recognitions
- ☐
- Presentation
- ☐
- Superintendent's Report
- ☐
- General Public Comment
- ☐
- Consent Action Items
- ☐
- Reports
- ☐
- Upcoming Meetings
- ☐
- Board/Superintendent Comments
- ☐
- Adjournment

Item Title: Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting Date: 4/8/2025

Item II.

☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

☒ Review of Agenda

☐ Recognitions

☐ Presentation

☐ Superintendent's Report

☐ General Public Comment

☐ Consent Action Items

☐ Reports

☐ Upcoming Meetings

☐ Board/Superintendent Comments

☐ Adjournment

Item Title: Review of Agenda

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting Date: 4/8/2025

Item III.

☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

☐ Review of Agenda

☒ Recognitions

☐ Presentation

☐ Superintendent's Report

☐ General Public Comment

☐ Consent Action Items

☐ Reports

☐ Upcoming Meetings

☐ Board/Superintendent Comments

☐ Adjournment

- Item Title:** **Recognitions**
- A. Harrison Writing Awards
 - B. Going to the Sun Awards
 - C. Science Olympiad Winners-Capital High School
 - D. Science Olympiad Winners-C.R. Anderson Middle School
 - E. Business Professionals of America (BPA) National Qualifiers-Capital High School
 - F. Business Professionals of America (BPA) National Qualifier-Helena High School
 - G. Mock Trial State Champions-Helena High School

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Item IV.

Meeting Date: 4/8/2025

☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

☐ Review of Agenda

☐ Recognitions

☒ Presentation

☐ Superintendent's Report

☐ General Public Comment

☐ Consent Action Items

☐ Reports

☐ Upcoming Meetings

☐ Board/Superintendent Comments

☐ Adjournment

Item Title: **Presentation**
A. 2024 District Audit: Anthony Gerharz, Manager, Wipfli LLP
<https://helenaschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2024-District-Audit.pdf>

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting Date: 4/8/2025

Item V.

☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

☐ Review of Agenda

☐ Recognitions

☐ Presentation

☒ Superintendent's Report

☐ General Public Comment

☐ Consent Action Items

☐ Reports

☐ Upcoming Meetings

☐ Board/Superintendent Comments

☐ Adjournment

Item Title: Superintendent's Report

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT #1
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

To: Board Chair Ms. Siobhan Hathhorn and Board of Trustees
FROM: Mr. Wetz, Superintendent
RE: Superintendent Report
DATE: April 8th, 2025

- Recognition
 - Board of Trustees Work Session At Helena High School- March 25th, Thank You Principal Brian Kessler & HHS Staff
 - April 2 National Paraprofessional Appreciation Day
 - April 4 National School Librarian Appreciation Day
 - April 7-11 National Assistant Principal Week
 - April 21-25 Public School Volunteer Week / National Volunteer Recognition Week
 - April 22 School Bus Driver Appreciation Day
 - April 23 Administrative Professionals Day
 - Other
- New Business
 - Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting-Public Hearing on Potential Closure of Hawthorne Elementary School-Wednesday April 9th, 2025, 5:30 p.m. PD Center 1325 Poplar Street Helena, MT
 - Boundary Recommendation – Ongoing work and communications
 - HEA & HPS Consensus Bargaining - Week of April 7th
 - Pre-Bond Planning Key Stakeholders Meeting At HHS-SMA
 - CHS Community Meeting-SMA
 - Master Facilities Planning
 - Pre Bond Work - SMA
 - Helena High School
 - Capital High School
 - Kessler Elementary
 - Activity Facilities Pre-Planning
 - 2025 Legislative Session
 - Continuing Work with CMS To Develop a Compensation Manual and Classification Tool – HR
 - 2025 – 2026 Projected Budgets for High School and Elementary
 - Financial Outlooks
 - Federal Funding Uncertainties
 - HB 15 – 3% Inflationary Increase
 - Impacts of Technology Levies
 - 3 Year Budget Reduction Efforts Overview

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT #1
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

- Deficits for 2025-26 SY – Projected
 - Elementary
 - High School
 - Other
- Outreach/Meetings
 - AA Superintendents
 - Parent Advisory Committee
 - Teacher Advisory Committee
 - Board Leadership
 - HSD/HEA Meeting
 - HEF
 - HEF Executive Committee
 - HEF – Interviews for new Executive Director
 - Hawthorne Community Meeting
 - Coffee With The Principal
 - Principal Thatcher-Kessler
 - Cabinet & Leadership
 - TV, Print, Radio Media
 - CMS Meetings
 - SAM 2025 Legislative Advocacy Meetings
 - Bond Committee Meeting – Working Team
 - Kiwanis Presentation
 - Business Partner Meetings
 - Pre-Bond Planning Key Stakeholders Meeting At HHS
 - Other
- Other

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Item VI.

Meeting Date: 4/8/2025

☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

☐ Review of Agenda

☐ Recognitions

☐ Presentation

☐ Superintendent's Report

☒ General Public Comment

☐ Consent Action Items

☐ Reports

☐ Upcoming Meetings

☐ Board/Superintendent Comments

☐ Adjournment

Item Title: General Public Comment

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting Date: 4/8/2025

Item VI.A.1 - A.9

- ☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance
- ☐ Review of Agenda
- ☐ Recognitions
- ☐ Presentation
- ☐ Superintendent's Report
- ☐ General Public Comment
- ☒ Consent Action Items
- ☐ Reports
- ☐ Upcoming Meetings
- ☐ Board/Superintendent Comments
- ☐ Adjournment

Item Title: **Consent Action Items**

1. Personnel Actions

2. Warrants

3. Approval of FY 2024-25 Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Non-Resident Students Attending HPS)

4. 3.11.25 Board of Trustees Full Board Meeting Minutes

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9. 3.19.25 Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting Closed Session Meeting Minutes

Board Action	1st Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Other
Hathhorn					
McKee					
Robison					
Satre					
Hindoien					
Cleatus					
Walsh					
Armstrong					

PERSONNEL ACTIONS

March 25, 2025 – April 8, 2025

CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL\$

Appointments

<u>Location/Assignment</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Offered Salary</u>	<u>Accepted Salary</u>	<u>Start Date</u>
CRA/Para Educator	Barton, Heather	\$18.63/hr.	\$18.63/hr.	03/24/2025
HHS/ISS-Credit Recovery Para Educator	Lamping, Terra	\$17.98/hr.	\$17.98/hr.	04/07/2025
Kessler/Para Educator	Schwagerl, Andrea	\$15.75/hr.	\$15.75/hr.	04/07/2025

Terminations/Retirements

<u>Location/Assignment</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Effective</u>
HHS/General Secretary	Neary, Jodi	Resignation	06/13/2025
Central/Evening Custodian	Paxson, Wade	Retirement	07/15/2025

SUPPLEMENTARY CONTRACT ASSIGNMENT

Helena School District #1

Warrants March 1 to 31`, 2025

Direct Deposits: \$3,367,964.96

Payroll Warrants: 70132155-70132198

Payroll Deduction: 69303823-69303846

Non-Check Payroll Deductions: \$ 5,341,415.39

Non-Check Accts Payable Deductions: \$ 444,616.68 **Allegiance Not Included

Non-Check Accts Payable Deductions- HHS Extracurricular: \$0

Claim Warrants: 69303657-69304035

CRA Middle School Student Activity Checks: 17456-17457

HMS Middle School Student Activity Checks: 8793-8796

Capital High Student Activity Checks: 24931-24964

Helena High Student Activity Checks: 36898-36939

Cancelled Warrants: \$1,976.22

We certify that all warrants herein listed were prepared and previously paid for, are just and correct to the best of our knowledge, and that the board of trustees has authorized the issuance of the same.

Chairperson _____

Business Manager _____

APPROVAL OF **FY 2024-25** OUT-OF-DISTRICT ATTENDANCE AGREEMENTS
(NONRESIDENT STUDENTS ATTENDING HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT)

Fiscal Year 2024-25

Discretionary Attendance:

Grade	District of Residence	Address	School of Attendance
10	Jefferson High School	Clancy, MT 59634	Helena High School
12	Jefferson High School	Clancy, MT 59634	Helena High School

**APPROVAL OF FY 2024-25 OUT-OF-DISTRICT ATTENDANCE AGREEMENTS
(NONRESIDENT STUDENTS ATTENDING HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT)**

Running Total of FY 2024-25 Out-of-District Attendance Agreements

Grade	Address																					Total
	East Helena	Clancy	Montana City	Jefferson City	Basin	Wolf Creek	Boulder	Elliston	Trinity	Chinook	Butte	Billings	Deer Lodge	Missoula	Townsend	Radersberg	Browning	Winston	Ronan	Superior	Whitehall	
Ksprouts	3								1													4
K	5	1				1			5												1	13
1	9	4							5													18
2	6	1				1	1	1	5												1	16
3	3	1							6	1									1			12
4	6	2							4													12
5	6		1				1		10		1	1										20
6	5	1						1	3		1								1			12
7	3	2			1				6													12
8	3	5	1			1		1	3				1									15
9	7	50	10									1		1								69
10	10	30	2												1		1	1				45
11	12	19	4	3																		38
12	12	29	3	2											1	1		1				49
	90	145	21	5	1	3	2	3	48	1	2		1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	335



Superintendent

Rex Weltz
324-2001

Business Manager

Janelle Mickelson
324-2040

Board of Trustees Meeting

Lincoln Center
1325 Poplar St., Helena, MT 59601
And on TEAMS

Tuesday, March 11th, 2025
5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted.

Siobhan Hathhorn, Chair
Jennifer McKee, Vice Chair
Linda Cleatus, Trustee
Jeff Hindoién, Trustee
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee
Kay Satre, Trustee
Rachel Robison, Trustee
Charlie Snellman, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees
Adella Harris, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees
Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Janelle Mickelson, Business Director
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Todd Verrill, Facilities Director
Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
Justine Alberts, Curriculum Director
Tim McMahon, Activities Director
Jane Shawn, HEA President
Lona Carter, Student Health Services & Special Education Director
Karen Ogden, Communications Officer
Lisa Cordingley, HEF Executive Director
Brian Kessler, Helena High School Principal
Brett Zanto, Capital High School Principal
Bridget Ekstrom, D.A. Davidson & Co
Tim Meldrum, SMA Architecture + Design
Ali Martin, SMA Architecture + Design
Many guests of the public as well as Helena School District Staff and Students

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. and the Board participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. REVIEW AGENDA

The Board of Trustees reviewed the agenda and there were no suggested changes.

The Board of Trustees moved on to the recognitions portion of the agenda.

III. RECOGNITIONS

The Board of Trustees recognized the students listed below.

A. National Merit Finalists-Capital High School

Congratulations to the following students who have advanced from a competitive pool of over 16,000 semifinalists to earn the prestigious distinction of National Merit Finalists. Representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, National Merit Finalists are selected based on their exceptional academic performance, as well as their proven accomplishments, leadership abilities, and potential for success in rigorous college studies. This remarkable achievement reflects their dedication and hard work, positioning them for continued success in higher education and beyond.

- Adeline Walters
- Mason Whitney

B. National Merit Finalists-Helena High School

Congratulations to the following students who have advanced from a competitive pool of over 16,000 semifinalists to earn the prestigious distinction of National Merit Finalists. Representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, National Merit Finalists are selected based on their exceptional academic performance, as well as their proven accomplishments, leadership abilities, and potential for success in rigorous college studies. This remarkable achievement reflects their dedication and hard work, positioning them for continued success in higher education and beyond.

- Evelyn Callery
- Eva Skibicki

C. Speech and Debate National Qualifiers for Capital High School & Helena High School & NSDA Montana West Student of the Year-Helena High School

The Board of Trustees extends its heartfelt congratulations to the outstanding students from Capital High School and Helena High School for their exceptional achievements in Speech and Debate. The Board commends these students for their academic and extracurricular

accomplishments and wishes them continued success as they prepare for their respective national competitions.

Capital High School

Zaraj Carrucini-Original Spoken Word Poetry

Tanner Davis-Informative Speaking

Jack Tobin-World School Debate

Mason Whitney-Prose

Helena High School

Maverick Franklin-Expository Speaking

Layla Riggs-Congressional Debate

Ethan Taylor-Impromptu Speaking

Additionally, the Board extends its congratulations to Layla Riggs from Helena High School, who has been selected as the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) Montana West Student of the Year. This honor is a testament to her exceptional contributions to the field of Speech and Debate.

The Board would like to express its deep gratitude to Coach Jen Hermanson and Assistant Coach Nick Taffs for their unwavering dedication in guiding all of their students toward success.

D. State Wrestling Tournament Recognition-Capital High School

The Board of Trustees is proud to extend its sincere congratulations to Taylor Lay, a student from Capital High School, for her exceptional achievement as the State Champion in the 130-pound wrestling category. Taylor's dedication, perseverance, and outstanding skills have earned her this prestigious title, demonstrating her hard work and athletic excellence. We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to Coach Shawn Graham for his unwavering support and guidance, not only for Taylor but for all the student-athletes he mentors. We celebrate Taylor's remarkable accomplishment and wish her continued success in her future athletic endeavors.

E. State Swimming Tournament Recognition-Capital High School

The Board of Trustees is proud to extend its sincere congratulations to the following Capital High students for their exceptional achievements at the State Swimming Tournament:

Elizabeth Urban-State Champion in the 100 Butterfly

Isaac Urban-State Champion in the 100 Freestyle and 50 Freestyle

Elizabeth and Isaac's dedication, perseverance, and outstanding skills have earned them these prestigious titles, highlighting their hard work and athletic excellence. We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to Coach Julie Shannon and Assistant Coach Eddie Lary for their

unwavering support and guidance, not only for Elizabeth and Isaac but for all the student-athletes they mentor. The Board celebrates Elizabeth and Isaac's remarkable accomplishments and wish them continued success in their future athletic endeavors.

The Board of Trustees moved on to review the Superintendent's Report.

IV. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

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

Recognition

- Board of Trustees Work Session At Bryant Elementary School-February 25th, Thank You Principal Tia Wilkins & Bryant Staff
- March 3 Maintenance Worker Appreciation Day
- Thank you to Lisa Cordingley and the Helena Education Foundation for distributing grant awards across the district to our outstanding educators.
- Congratulations to the following 105.3 KMTX Teacher of the Month Recipient for February:
 - Mrs. Kristin Lynde-Helena Middle School
- Other

New Business

- USI Data Dive
- HSD Pre-Bond Community Meeting & Facility Tour at HHS
- Master Facilities Plan Update with PAL Staff
- Technology 2025 Levy
- Master Facilities Planning
 - Pre Bond-Work – SMA
 - Helena High School
 - Capital High School
 - Kessler Elementary
 - Activity Facilities Pre-Planning
- County Elections Office Meeting – Timing
- 2025 Legislative Session – Busy
- Summer Jumpstart Program
- Continuing Work with CMS To Develop a Compensation Manual and Classification Tool
- Copier RFP
- Work Compensation RFP
- Food Service RFP
- Accreditation Process – Mr. Myers & Mr. McKay
- Superintendent Recommendations for Future Consideration and Action by the Board of Trustees

- Superintendent Wertz presented a draft ten-year plan to the Board of Trustees, emphasizing the importance of communication, transparency, and clear goals for the district. He shared recommendations grounded in the 2024 Facilities Master Plan, the 2022 Deferred Maintenance Report, and budget projections. His vision for the district includes improving facilities, managing costs responsibly, and ensuring safe and healthy environments for students and staff.

Superintendent Wertz proceeded to discuss the bonds and the Helena School District Master Plan Phase 1. The proposed high school bond would fund the new construction of Helena High School, which would include a new central kitchen, space for the Project for Alternative Learning (PAL), a performing arts area, updated classrooms, an updated CTE facility, and the relocation of Vigilante Field. Additionally, Capital High School would undergo remodeling, with planned additions such as an auxiliary gym, updated CTE facilities, a new commons and cafeteria, a performing arts upgrade, updated classrooms, and an improved track/football field. The proposed K-8 Bond would provide a new Kessler Elementary School.

Superintendent Wertz recommended the closure of Hawthorne Elementary, citing \$4.6 million in deferred maintenance costs. Superintendent Wertz outlined three recommendations for the Board to consider. The first recommendation is to close the school in the 2025-2026 school year. The second recommendation is to delay the closure by one additional year. The third recommendation is to maintain the status quo and not close the school. If the Board of Trustees were to close Hawthorne Elementary School, it would free up funds that could potentially grow programs and consolidate resources across the district supporting all students in the elementary district.

Further recommendations included the sale/lease of district properties, the purchase of 60-80 acres for transportation and future needs, and the district's ongoing efforts to address budget shortages, workforce challenges, and declining enrollment.

Superintendent Wertz concluded by outlining aspirations for 2025-2027, such as meaningful salary increases for staff, expanded CTE programs, and the creation of a Helena Public Schools Career Center. Superintendent Wertz addressed all questions posed by the Board of Trustees regarding his presentation. The Board discussed various topics, including but not limited to the current state of district facilities, the financial challenges facing the district, redistricting, the potential closure of Hawthorne Elementary School, Policy 9150 - School Closure, and determining the next steps for future planning, including decisions on school closures.

That concluded the Superintendent's Report portion of the agenda. The trustees moved on to hear general public comment.

V. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Sam King gave general public comment. Mr. King is a parent of two children who attend Hawthorne Elementary School. Mr. King's general public comment addressed several key topics, including but not limited to the financial considerations of potentially closing Hawthorne Elementary School, the impact of such a closure on the community, and the importance of securing funding through bonds and levies before making any decisions regarding future school closures.

Ms. Jennifer Schaefer gave general public comment. Ms. Schaefer is a kindergarten teacher at Jim Darcy Elementary School. Ms. Schaefer's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to the challenges of potential school closures, the importance of maintaining strong community connections within schools, the impact of recent changes to music and P.E. schedules, the need for a reconsideration of the current schedule to better support students, and the broader financial challenges facing the district as decisions are made about the budget.

Ms. Becca Leaphart gave general public comment. Ms. Leaphart is a former student of Hawthorne Elementary School and now a parent to two children who attend Jefferson Elementary School. Ms. Leaphart's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to gratitude for the board's hard decisions, the importance of community adaptation in school changes, and prioritizing decisions that benefit the most students within a limited budget. She shared a personal story about social challenges when new students joined her school, stressing the resilience of communities. Ms. Leaphart also highlighted concerns about reduced music and P.E. time, advocated for a five-out-of-seven high school teacher schedule, and called for reevaluating combination classes that complicate scheduling crucial programs like small reading groups.

Mr. Joshua Jones gave general public comment. Mr. Jones is a Special Education Teacher at Hawthorne Elementary School and a parent of a child that attends Hawthorne school. Mr. Jones' general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to praising the Hawthorne staff for their dedication to supporting students, particularly those in special education, leading to significant academic growth. He expressed concern that closing Hawthorne would cause trauma, especially for students with special needs, who could regress and be moved to more restrictive environments. He also highlighted potential overcrowding at other schools and staffing challenges due to the closure. Mr. Jones urged the board to extend the closure timeline to one to three years, allowing time for proper preparation and minimizing disruption for students, families, and staff.

Ms. Sara Dramstad gave general public comment. Ms. Dramstad is a music teacher at Four Georgians Elementary School and Jefferson Elementary School and a parent of a student at Four Georgians school. Ms. Dramstad's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to supporting the closure of Hawthorne Elementary School and restoring traditional music and P.E. schedules. She highlighted the challenges of the current alternating schedule, which has led to confusion and emotional strain for students. Ms. Dramstad emphasized that closing Hawthorne and reallocating resources would benefit all students by creating a more consistent and effective learning environment.

Ms. Retta Leaphart gave general public comment. Ms. Leaphart is a former student of Hawthorne Elementary School. Ms. Leaphart's general public comment addressed several key topics including

but not limited to her personal experience as a former Hawthorne student, the emotional impact of closing Hawthorne Elementary School, the importance of community in the district, and the need to restore music and P.E. programs.

Ms. Kathryn Dunkelberger gave general public comment. Ms. Dunkelberger is a Hawthorne Elementary School parent, community member, and employee. Ms. Dunkelberger's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to concerns over the transparency of the potential Hawthorne closure process, the negative impact that closing the school would have on the community and the long-term consequences of closing the school. Ms. Dunkelberger raised concerns about the safety and practicality of relocating students and emphasized the importance of Hawthorne's reputation, noting that its closure would affect families' real estate decisions.

Mr. Adam Clinch gave general public comment. Mr. Clinch is a former student of Hawthorne Elementary School and an advocate for all neighborhood elementary schools. Mr. Clinch's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to expressing his support for neighborhood schools, highlighting the importance of community identity and belonging. Mr. Clinch cautioned against relying on short-term financial solutions, stressing the lasting impact that closing Hawthorne would have on community ties. He emphasized that rebuilding these connections would be irreplaceable, beyond financial considerations, and urged that Hawthorne Elementary School be included in the bond proposal.

Mr. Pat Bousliman gave general public comment. Mr. Bousliman is the parent of two students who attend Hawthorne Elementary School. Mr. Bousliman's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to the lack of clear financial data supporting the closure of Hawthorne Elementary, the school's strong performance in reading and math, providing good value for the expenditure, the adequacy of the school's infrastructure, including the drop-off/pick-up area and library, and the positive impact of Hawthorne's teachers on his child's love of reading.

Ms. Rachel Labossiere gave general public comment. Ms. Labossiere stated she is a taxpayer and a parent of two children who attend Kessler Elementary School. Ms. Labossiere's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to prioritizing high school education and its future, concerns about the poor condition of school facilities, and the need for financial decisions that benefit the broader community. She emphasized securing funding for schools, aligning decisions with future education needs, and maintaining a strong school community as students progress through their education, ultimately advocating for a sustainable, financially sound future for the district.

Peyton Cottrell gave general public comment. Peyton is a 5th grade student at Hawthorne Elementary School. Peyton's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to her support for keeping Hawthorne Elementary School open, her positive experience at Hawthorne, and the caring and supportive teachers and staff there.

Ms. Jennifer Skogley gave general public comment. Ms. Skogley stated she is a music teacher in the district and a homeowner and taxpayer. Ms. Skogley's general public comment addressed several key topics including not limited to the challenges of increased teaching loads, which has hindered her ability to provide differentiated lessons for her students. She expressed frustration with reduced music instruction time, emphasizing the positive impact of music on academic outcomes and mental health. Ms. Skogley advocated for returning to the previous model of two music classes per week to improve

student learning and benefit both teachers and music staff.

Ms. Beagan Wilcox Bolz gave general public comment. Ms. Wilcox Bolz is a parent of three children who attend Hawthorne Elementary School. Ms. Wilcox Bolz's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to concerns about the lack of transparency surrounding Hawthorne's potential closure. She sought clarity on why Hawthorne is the only school under consideration for closure, questioning the financial rationale, including the savings and potential property sales. Ms. Wilcox Bolz also emphasized the school's central role in the community and the uncertainty this situation creates for students.

Ms. Anna Alger gave general public comment. Ms. Alger is a teacher in the district and a parent of students in the district. Ms. Alger's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to the need to return to the previous scheduling model for gym and music classes with two sessions per week, highlighting the impact on students' engagement and well-being. Additionally, Ms. Alger reflected on the significance of school communities, emphasizing that the value of a school lies in its people and relationships, not its size or location.

Ms. Andrea Reveley gave general public comment. Ms. Reveley is a parent of children who attend Kessler Elementary School. Ms. Reveley's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to her appreciation for Kessler Elementary's dedicated teachers and staff, who go above and beyond despite budget constraints. Ms. Reveley expressed concern about the limited PE and music classes and advocated for restoring these services. Additionally, she supported meaningful salary adjustments and improved health insurance for school staff.

Mr. Jack Evans gave general public comment. Mr. Evans is a former Hawthorne Elementary School student and now his child attends Hawthorne. Mr. Evans' general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to his personal connection to Hawthorne Elementary, the vital role of neighborhood schools in strengthening communities, and concerns about the potential closure. He criticized the financial justification, warning it could lead to overcrowding, larger class sizes, and less effective education. He also expressed frustration with the lack of transparency and data, urging for long-term, sustainable solutions instead of short-term decisions that could harm the community.

Mr. Tom Clinch gave general public comment. Mr. Clinch is a former Hawthorne Elementary School student and now his child attends Hawthorne. Mr. Clinch's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to his personal connection to Hawthorne, the importance of neighborhood schools, the value of individualized attention at Hawthorne, concerns about the impact of closing the school, and the need for sustainable community investment through Hawthorne.

Ms. Britt McMahon gave general public comment. Ms. McMahon is a former teacher at Hawthorne Elementary School and her child used to attend the school as well. Ms. McMahon's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to her personal connection to Hawthorne Elementary School, the impact of transitioning her daughter from Hawthorne to Kessler School and the importance of strong, supportive school communities, the need for updated technology and improved school buildings across the district to support students' educational opportunities and stated the qualities she loved about Hawthorne exist beyond the school's walls and are present in other schools in the district.

Ms. Kristie Klein gave general public comment. Ms. Klein is the parent of a fifth-grade student and a

Special Education paraprofessional at Hawthorne Elementary School. Ms. Klein's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to her commitment to Hawthorne Elementary School, her concern over the uncertainty regarding staff positions and the unfairness of not knowing if they will have jobs in the upcoming school year, concerns about the consequences of displacing students and how it would stretch resources too thin across other schools, and emphasized that trustees should prioritize the education and well-being of students, advocating for transparency in decision-making and clear communication regarding the motivations behind the potential closure.

Ms. Lindsey Wilkerson gave general public comment. Ms. Wilkerson is a music teacher in the district for various elementary schools. Ms. Wilkerson's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to the challenges of her current schedule, where teaching a large number of students across several schools limits her ability to make meaningful progress and fully invest in their development. Despite these challenges, she expressed gratitude for her colleagues and the opportunity to work with dedicated staff and administrators. Ms. Wilkerson also voiced support for administrative measures that could restore elementary music and P.E. FTE.

Mr. Alex Street gave general public comment. Mr. Street is a parent of children in the district. Mr. Street's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to concerns about the lack of clear communication regarding the potential closure of Hawthorne, particularly about plans for students and teachers. He questioned the presented operational savings and the discrepancy between these savings and larger figures related to deferred maintenance. Mr. Street also expressed concern over framing the closure as a trade-off for restoring P.E. and music programs, warning that this could lead to divisiveness. Additionally, he raised questions about the timing of the closure decision, suggesting it may be risky to make such a decision before the bond vote results are known.

Mr. Aaron Pratt gave general public comment. Mr. Pratt attended Helena Public Schools, is a taxpayer, and a parent of a student at Hawthorne Elementary School. Mr. Pratt's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to concerns about the lack of communication regarding the plan to close Hawthorne, the professionalism of the process and its potential negative impact on students, staff, and families. Mr. Pratt criticized the idea of closing Hawthorne as a way to save other programs and emphasized the need for a collective, positive vision for the district's future and expressed his willingness to support such a plan.

Ms. Traci Swingley gave general public comment. Ms. Swingley shared that she attended Hawthorne Elementary as a student, was a parent of children who attended the school, and now has a grandchild there. She also worked as a paraprofessional at Hawthorne. Ms. Swingley explained that her presentation tonight is a collaboration of her own words and those of her children, who were unable to attend. Ms. Swingley's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to expressing concern that the proposal to close Hawthorne would be divisive, harm community traditions, and undermine the school's important role in the lives of families. Ms. Swingley highlighted the significance of traditions at Hawthorne, urging the board to preserve them for future generations and stressing that the voices of the community, especially children and grandchildren, matter.

Mr. Joseph Naiman-Sessions gave general public comment. Mr. Naiman-Sessions shared that he is the father of a special needs child, and his children attend Hawthorne Elementary School. Mr. Naiman-Sessions' general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to his concern as a parent of a child with special needs attending Hawthorne Elementary. He shared his

child's progress in overcoming challenges, emphasizing the importance of consistency and structure in their development. Mr. Naiman-Sessions expressed concern that closing Hawthorne would negatively impact not only his child but also other special needs students who thrive in stable environments. He urged the board to consider the potential harm that such transitions could cause, especially for neurodivergent individuals, and asked that the needs of the most vulnerable students be prioritized in the decision-making process.

Mr. Dan Stevens gave general public comment. Mr. Stevens stated that he is a parent, public school supporter and voter. Mr. Stevens' general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to stating he has concerns regarding the lack of proper public notice and transparency related to the Master Facilities Plan. He expressed that the development of the plan lacked public input and had never been voted on or approved by the board. He urged the board to set aside the findings of the plan until the process is restarted with proper public inclusion and transparency.

Ms. Kim Hogberg gave general public comment. Ms. Hogberg was a student at Hawthorne Elementary School. Ms. Hogberg's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to sharing her support for Hawthorne Elementary School and her positive experience with her children attending Kessler Elementary School. She expressed concerns about Kessler's current facilities, emphasized the need for a new facility, and encouraged the board to move forward with plans for Kessler's facility improvements.

Ms. Jaimie Talia gave general public comment. Ms. Talia is a teacher at Hawthorne Elementary School and has children that attend school in the district. Ms. Talia's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to her concerns about the closure of Hawthorne Elementary, its importance as a community hub, and whether the savings justify the closure. She questioned how the decision would impact the district's mission, public trust, and the notice given to staff and families. Ms. Talia also highlighted the extra time and resources teachers contribute and urged the board to prioritize improving learning environments to maintain staff support.

Ms. Katie Kelley gave general public comment. Ms. Kelley is the parent of a child who attends Hawthorne Elementary School. Ms. Kelley's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to her support for Hawthorne Elementary, the strong sense of community at the school, and the importance of its teachers and programs. She expressed concerns about overcrowding at other schools, particularly Kessler, and the lack of clarity regarding the financial implications of closing Hawthorne. Ms. Kelly emphasized the need for transparency in the decision-making process and urged the board to prioritize keeping Hawthorne open for the benefit of the community.

Ms. Justine Christianson is here this evening to give general public comment on behalf of a third grade Hawthorne student who asked Ms. Christianson to share her letter with the Board of Trustees. Her letter addressed several key topics including but not limited to the kindness of the staff and teachers at Hawthorne, the student's enjoyment of the playground, and the positive school environment that has led to forming friendships and feeling safe after experiences of bullying at a previous school. The student expressed a strong desire for Hawthorne to remain open, emphasizing the happiness and sense of belonging it provides.

Ms. Lisa Richidt gave general public comment. Ms. Richidt's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to the high quality of staff at Hawthorne, the importance

of neighborhood schools, and the negative impact of closing Hawthorne, especially on students who consider it a second home. She questioned the financial justification for the closure, expressed concerns about the challenges of relocating students, and highlighted the disruption for students, particularly those who have already experienced multiple changes. Ms. Richidt also urged the board to focus on the urgent need for new high schools and prioritize educational investments for all students.

Ms. Kaitlin Albus gave general public comment. Ms. Albus is a music teacher in the Helena School District. Ms. Albus' general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to her experience as a music teacher in the district, the resilience of students in the face of change, and the importance of reframing challenges positively for children. She shared a personal story about her son's school transition, highlighting how children can adapt and thrive despite changes. Ms. Albus also encouraged the board to trust in children's ability to adjust to school closures and emphasized the importance of clear communication regarding levies and bonds for the community. Lastly, she stated that regardless of the size of the school, all students would be in good hands.

Ms. Renee Kelley gave general public comment. Ms. Kelley is a parent to two children who attended Hawthorne Elementary School and the parent of an incoming kindergartener at Hawthorne. Ms. Kelley's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to her personal experience as a military child, the importance of community, and concerns regarding the metrics used in the decision-making process for Hawthorne's future. She expressed frustration that student-driven data, such as cost per student, has not been prioritized in the discussion. Ms. Kelley also emphasized the resilience of children, while cautioning that some students, particularly neurodiverse or those with special needs, may require more time to adjust. She urged the Board to consider longer timelines and more targeted data before making decisions about the school's future.

Ms. Carrie Jones gave general public comment. Ms. Jones' general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to concerns over the high school bond, stating that the focus should be on replacing the high school rather than closing Hawthorne Elementary. She noted that the savings from closing Hawthorne would be minimal and raised issues about voter engagement, citing a lack of data on past bonds and levy elections. Ms. Jones warned that the proposed closures could harm community trust and divide families, offering to share data that illustrates the potential impact of moving forward with the plan.

Mr. Chris Goss gave general public comment. Mr. Goss is a Hawthorne parent, taxpayer and voter. Mr. Goss' general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to stating concerns about the closure of Hawthorne Elementary. He questioned the urgency of closing Hawthorne by June 30th and called for greater transparency in the timeline and decision-making process. Mr. Goss also sought clarity on reboundary plans and the placement of students, urging trustees to provide more information to build trust with the community.

Ms. Angela King gave general public comment. Ms. King is a parent of children who attend Hawthorne Elementary School. Ms. King's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to advocating for the value of both tenured and non-tenured teachers at Hawthorne Elementary, emphasizing their importance to her children's education. She also expressed concern about the reduction of full-time music and P.E. programs, stressing that all students deserve access to a well-rounded education and expressing frustration with the need for "either or" discussions regarding essential services.

Ms. Hanna Warhank gave general public comment. Ms. Warhank stated she is a taxpayer and a parent of a child who attends Hawthorne Elementary. Ms. Warhank's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to stating her concerns about the lack of transparency regarding the closure of Hawthorne Elementary. She criticized the district for presenting a pre-determined message to staff and emphasized that there has been no public discussion or board votes on the matter since 2024. Ms. Warhank also referenced past district statements about the challenges and costs of closure, such as the need for additional classroom space and modular classrooms and noted that the minimal reduction in student enrollment makes the closure difficult to justify.

Ms. Jesika Fischer gave general public comment. Ms. Fischer is the Principal and P.E. teacher at Hawthorne Elementary School. Ms. Fischer's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to expressing gratitude to the trustees, urging them to carefully consider the impact of Hawthorne's potential closure, especially on special needs students, and inviting trustees to visit the school to see firsthand the work being done, which would better inform their decision-making.

Ms. Julia Gustafson gave general public comment. Ms. Gustafson is a parent of a child who attends Central Elementary School. Ms. Gustafson's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to expressing her appreciation for the district's transparency throughout the process and the efforts made to inform parents. She expressed support for the upcoming bond and volunteered to assist with the special election, echoing her belief in the importance of the bond work. Ms. Gustafson extended an invitation to Hawthorne parents to visit Central, highlighting the welcoming atmosphere and upcoming events to learn more about the school.

Ms. Laura Holien gave general public comment. Ms. Holien stated that her mother went to Hawthorne Elementary School, she went to Hawthorne, and her children attend Hawthorne. Ms. Holien's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to expressing concern about the divisive nature of the discussion and hoped for a more unified approach. Ms. Holien highlighted the importance of considering how changes will affect students' future placements, particularly regarding middle and high school boundaries, and questioned the practicality of moving Hawthorne students to Central due to potential challenges with transitioning to CR Anderson for middle school. She urged trustees to carefully reconsider boundary changes and their long-term impact.

Ms. Rachael Heberly gave general public comment. Ms. Heberly is the parent to children who attend Hawthorne Elementary School and C.R. Anderson Middle School. Ms. Heberly's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to the importance of maintaining community connections for students, particularly those who faced challenges during the pandemic, and concerns about how siblings would be placed in different schools. She emphasized the need for thoughtful planning to ensure that students' friendships and developmental needs are considered in the decision-making process.

Ms. Laura Kneedler gave general public comment. Ms. Kneedler is a Hawthorne parent and a former educator. Ms. Kneedler's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to expressing strong opposition to closing Hawthorne School, emphasizing its positive impact on students, including her own child. She highlighted the importance of the school's supportive environment and warned of the emotional and academic consequences of its closure. Acknowledging financial challenges, she urged the district to work with the community to find solutions, citing local fundraising efforts as a model for transparency and collaboration.

Mr. Kraig Mougeot gave general public comment. Mr. Mougeot attended Helena Public Schools and has children that attend Hawthorne Elementary School. Mr. Mougeot's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to sharing concerns about the proposed closure of Hawthorne, questioned why music and P.E. programs were targeted for cuts, and stated there is a need for increased preschool services in Helena. He questioned the district's reliance on the bond for funding and raised concerns about community resistance to further taxes. He also highlighted the impact of closing a neighborhood school on families and the potential strain on other schools like Central.

Ms. Heidi Friedlander-Keaster gave general public comment. Ms. Friedlander-Keaster stated that she is a Marine Corps Army Veteran and a parent of students who attend Bryant Elementary School and Helena Middle School. Ms. Friedlander-Keaster's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to concerns about equity in education, the potential closure of Hawthorne, and the disparity between privileged and underprivileged students. She highlighted the importance of music and P.E. for vulnerable students and pointed out that families at Hawthorne have resources that others may not. Ms. Friedlander-Keaster urged Hawthorne parents to contribute financially to support the school if it stays open and emphasized the need for privileged communities to support broader educational equity.

Olivia Eby gave general public comment. Olivia is a former Hawthorne Elementary student and a current student at Capital High School. Olivia's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to her strong support for Hawthorne as a great school with a supportive community, the positive impact of teachers and staff on her education, concerns about the closure of the school, and the importance of maintaining gym and music classes for students.

Ms. Sarah Christopherson gave general public comment. Ms. Christopherson is a taxpayer and a neighbor to Hawthorne Elementary School. Ms. Christopherson's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to her strong support for Hawthorne as a valuable community asset, her personal connection to the neighborhood, and the school's positive impact. She emphasized the importance of Hawthorne's smaller class sizes and its role in fostering community spirit. Additionally, she expressed concern about the potential demolition of a historic building and urged the board not to close Hawthorne or deprive the community of this important resource.

Mr. Kevin Cleary emailed the Board of Trustees with his general public comment for tonight's meeting. Mr. Cleary's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to his support for restoring elementary school music and P.E., which he sees as essential for young learners' development. He expressed his support for the proposed closure of Hawthorne Elementary, citing fiscal concerns related to low enrollment and district needs. Additionally, he backed the board's proposals to redraw boundary lines, particularly for balancing middle school enrollments, acknowledging the potential challenges of this decision.

Ms. Rhiannon Annie Tague emailed the Board of Trustees with her general public comment for tonight's meeting. Ms. Tague is a parent of students in the district, and a teacher in the district. Ms. Tague's general public comment addressed several key topics including but not limited to her support for closing Hawthorne Elementary due to low enrollment and financial constraints. She believes this decision would allow for better resource allocation, including restoring music and P.E. classes and eliminating combined classrooms. As both a teacher and parent, she stressed the importance of

prioritizing the broader needs of the district and urged the board to make a timely decision to avoid uncertainty for Hawthorne families and educators.

That concluded general public comment, and the Board of Trustees moved on to review the Consent Action Items.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consent Action Items

1. Personnel Actions
2. Warrants
3. Approval of FY 2024-25 Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Nonresident Students Attending Helena School District)
4. Acknowledge FY 2024-25 Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Helena Resident Students Attending Other School Districts)
5. 2.11.25 Board of Trustees Full Board Meeting Minutes

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

B. Items for Action

1. Smith HVAC Replacement Project

Mr. Todd Verrill, Facilities Director for Helena Public Schools, introduced the action item *Smith HVAC Replacement Project* to the Board of Trustees. Mr. Verill’s memorandum shared with the board states:

Dear Helena School District Board of Trustees,

I respectfully request the board of trustees award the Smith Elementary School Heating System Replacement project to Tri-County Mechanical and Electrical, LLC (Tri-County). Work for this project includes:

- Replace building steam heating with hydronic heating system
- Two high efficiency modular boiler plants
- Replace classroom floor mounted unit ventilations
- Replace roof mounted air handling equipment
- Replace temperature control equipment
- Install A/C throughout

The facilities office received two sealed bids and conducted a public bid opening on 4 March 2025. Tri-County submitted the lowest bid with a proposal of \$1,672,755.00. (see attached memos and bid tabulation worksheets). Tri-County is a reputable local company, and I am confident they will complete the project in a timely and professional manner.

Mr. Verrill addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the *Smith HVAC Replacement Project*.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the action item *Smith HVAC Replacement Project* as presented.”

Motion: Trustee Jeff Hindoen moved that the elementary board award the contract for the Smith Elementary School HVAC Replacement Project to Tri-County Mechanical and Electrical in the amount of \$1,672,755.00. Trustee Linda Cleatus seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 6-0 motion carries unanimously. *(Please note that Trustee Jennifer Walsh did not vote as she is a trustee strictly for the high school district and this action item is for the elementary district).*

2. **Policy 5000 Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination**

Ms. Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff for Helena Public Schools, presented the action item *Policy 5000 Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination* to the Board of Trustees. This policy came before the full Board of Trustees at a previous board meeting for information with no recommended changes and was reviewed again by the Policy Committee with no recommended changes. Ms. Ridgway addressed all questions proposed by the trustees regarding the action item *Policy 5000 Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination*.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the action item, *Policy 5000 Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination* as presented.”

Motion: Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve *Policy 5000 Equal Employment Opportunity*

and Non-Discrimination. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

3. **Policy 5050 Montana VEBA (Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association) Health Benefit Plan-Repeal**

Ms. Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff for Helena Public Schools, presented the action item *Policy 5050 Montana VEBA (Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association) Health Benefit Plan* to the Board of Trustees. This policy came before the full Board of Trustees at a previous board meeting for information with no recommended changes and was reviewed again by the Policy Committee with no recommended changes. The recommendation of the Policy Committee is to repeal this policy. Ms. Ridgway addressed all questions proposed by the trustees regarding the action item *Policy 5050 Montana VEBA (Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association) Health Benefit Plan*.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion to repeal *Policy 5050 Montana VEBA (Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association) Health Benefit Plan*.”

Motion: Trustee Linda Cleatus moved to repeal *Policy 5050 Montana VEBA (Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association) Health Benefit Plan*. Trustee Jennifer McKee 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 review the Items for Information.

C. **Items for Information**

1. **Bond 101, Bridget Ekstrom of D.A. Davidson & Co**

Ms. Bridget Ekstrom of D.A. Davidson & Co presented a bond information overview to the Board of Trustees and addressed several key topics including but not limited to a tax-exempt bond market update, general obligation debt limitation, reviewing the elementary-2017 and 2019 bonds, and the high school-original 1996 and 1997 bonds (refinanced in 2004, 2009, and 2012), elementary-sample new debt service (with 2% tax base growth), elementary-sample mill levy tax impact analysis (10 mills), elementary trends in taxable value, high school trends in taxable value, elementary 2024/25 top 50 taxpayers, high school 2024/25 top 50 taxpayers, and recent rating information excerpts.

The Board of Trustees moved on to the next item for information.

2. **Pre-Bond Update, SMA Architecture + Design**

Mr. Tim Meldrum and Ms. Ali Martin with SMA Architecture + Design presented a pre-bond planning update to the Board of Trustees. Mr. Meldrum and Ms. Martin addressed several key topics including but not limited to the pre-bond planning process, master plan vision and goals and initial action projects, project priorities, post bond schedule, and next steps.

The Board of Trustees moved on to hear reports.

D. REPORTS

1. **Student Representatives Report**

Ms. Adella Harris, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, presented her Student Representative Report. Ms. Harris commented, “Happy March from the Bengals at Helena High! This month, like every other, is full of so much to learn, celebrate, and love.

By the end of the month, all students will have had an opportunity to enter their registration requests to help with the development of the master schedule for the 25-26 school year. Thank you to our counselors for all the time and hard work they put in to ensure students are signed up for the right courses. Our counseling team works to understand the pathways available to help our students be college and career ready.

We held a great community meeting on March 4 and appreciate all that were able to attend. Our students were the true stars of the show that night, providing great tours of our building and giving an incredible insight into what day-to-day life looks like for HHS students. We look forward to continuing these discussions with the community.

We appreciate Capital High inviting a few members of our staff to observe and talk through their intervention time. There is a positive feel around the newly instated intervention period at CHS and we are excited to see how we can look further into our own schedule to provide stronger Tier 2 and 3 support for our students. Currently, we have an amazing Intervention Team meeting regularly to review where we are at within the HHS offerings for Tier 1, 2, and 3 supports.

The teachers and staff continue to utilize the consensus method at HHS with a whole staff meeting revolving around what is going well this year, what can be improved upon, and how to continue building our message on the importance of public education and school attendance. Next steps involve focus groups with teachers to dive deeper into the four main categories present – attendance, behaviors, student relationships/engagement, and building off of the positive. We look forward to the outcomes of this structure.

Congratulations to all our students who were recently named as Distinguished Achievers and Scholars.

Congratulations to Connor Lamping for his 5th place finish at the State Wrestling Tournament.

Congratulations to our Boys' Basketball team for winning the Western AA Conference this year. Go Bengals!!

Congratulations to Taylor Larsen (historian), and Ella Carlson, (secretary), for their recent elections to district positions for the district 3 Student Council team for MASC.

Our band recently participated in the AA Music Festival and received glowing remarks from the festivals guest instructors. Dr. Gonzalez mentioned that our students were "kind, thoughtful, and artistically driven throughout their time together – a testament to the great education they are receiving from their director Cody Hollow." Great work to our band!

Good luck to our basketball teams as they compete for a state title this weekend in Bozeman! Spring sports started yesterday on Monday, March 10 with incredible turnout and involvement all around. Including a record-breaking number for our Girls Track team in attendance of 80+ athletes.

Last evening was our Junior Parent Night, and our Sophomore Parent Night will be on March 17. Our counselors do a great job of providing information to parents in regard to registration items, college and career preparation, and resources available to students to help them succeed.

On March 20, we will be hosting a learning night centered around topics we believe will be beneficial to our Bengal families. Based on feedback from a survey, we will have sessions around mental health support, resources available at HHS, how to navigate HHS systems, free or low-cost approaches to help students get off devices, and a session called Hidden in Plain Sight – centered around items easily available to hide such as vapes, drugs, and alcohol etc....for parents and staff to be aware of. This parent learning night will be our first approach at this event which we are very excited for.

Another full month at HHS ready to be put in the books with less than three months left until our Bengals either step up or step out, into their next adventure."

Ms. Harris addressed questions the Board of Trustees had regarding her report.

Mr. Charlie Snellman, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, presented his Student Representative Report. Mr. Snellman commented, "Good evening, Trustees, CHS students and educators are continuing their success in academics and extracurricular activities this month, as we move closer and closer to June! It feels like time just keeps flying by... it seems the time-old adage holds true!

It's registration season at CHS! Over the past two weeks, current sophomores and juniors have been busy selecting classes for next school year. This week, freshmen are completing their course selections, and next week, we'll welcome our future Bruins for the annual 8th Grade Tour on Wednesday, March 19th. That evening, CHS will also host 8th Grade Parent Night at

6:30 PM, giving families a chance to learn more about graduation requirements, course offerings, and the high school experience at Capital.

The CHS Drama Department recently wrapped up its production of "Mean Girls," which drew large and enthusiastic crowds. With excitement building around each performance, this may well have been one of the most watched productions in recent years. A big congratulations to our incredible student actors, musicians, tech crew, and staff directors for their fantastic work on stage and behind the scenes.

Student leadership continues to make an impact through our CHS Student Council's "For Students, By Students" grant program. These funds—generated through Student Council fundraising efforts—were awarded to support student clubs and activities across campus:

- \$903 to Fish Ecology for a student fishing trip
- \$700 to MTSS for High Five reward incentives
- \$1,000 to BPA for State Conference travel
- \$1,000 to HOSA for State Conference travel
- \$400 to French Club to host a cultural celebration for French 1-4 students
- \$600 to Math Club for participation in the MTCM Math Contest
- \$400 to Speech & Debate to help offset costs for Nationals

We're also in the final stages of preparing for our ACT and Pre-ACT Testing Day on April 8th. All juniors will take the ACT and all sophomores will take the Pre-ACT. Logistics and room assignments are being finalized, and we are grateful to our staff for their support in making this day a success.

During our most recent PLC session on March 3rd, teachers reviewed literacy data, including Freshman MAP results and ACT trends. CHS is developing a new instructional walkthrough tool to help collect data on literacy strategies across content areas. Once finalized, we will begin conducting classroom observations to support this schoolwide focus.

Attendance continues to be a schoolwide goal. Although February saw a slight dip due to winter weather, our current average daily attendance rate stands at 93.2%, an improvement from last year's 91% average. School-related absences are excluded from this calculation. We will continue encouraging consistent attendance through the spring.

Additionally, CHS HOSA, in collaboration with the Helena Health Science Advisory Board (HHSAB) and Carroll College's Student Nursing Association, hosted a successful Fusion Event in February at Carroll College highlighting cardiovascular health, complete with a hands-on CPR breakout session. Building on that success, we are excited to announce that another Fusion Event will be held on March 24th at Helena College—this time it's all about the brain! Stay tuned for more information later this week.

Upcoming Events & Activities

- March 3rd: SATs, Jazz, and 8th Grade Concert – CHS Auditorium @ 7PM
- March 3rd–4th: State AA Band Festival

- March 10th: Spring Sports Begin
- March 10th: Tenor-Bass, Treble, and Jubilettes Concert – CHS Auditorium @ 7PM
- March 10th: CHS Choir Spring Concert – CHS Auditorium @ 7PM
- March 13th: 8th/9th Grade Combined Orchestra Concert – HMS Auditorium @ 6PM
- March 13th–15th: State AA Basketball (Boys and Girls) – Bozeman
- March 13th: Inaugural Puzzle Competition – CHS Library @ Lunch
- March 19th: 8th Grade Tour Day (during school hours)
- March 19th: 8th Grade Parent Night – CHS Auditorium @ 6:30PM
- March 24th: CHS Concert with CRA 8th Grade – CHS Auditorium
- March 24th: Health Science Fusion Event at Helena College”

Mr. Snellman addressed questions the Board of Trustees had regarding his report.

2. **Helena Education Association Report**

Ms. Jane Shawn presented the Helena Education Report. Ms. Shawn expressed appreciation for the public comments shared during the meeting, noting that everyone was respectful and courteous. She also announced the results of HEA's recent elections, with several new members elected to the HEA Board of Directors:

- Kellen Alger as 2nd Vice President
- Erika McMillin as Secretary
- Shannon McNamee as Capital High Rep
- Ryan Cooney as Helena High/PAL Rep
- Samantha Hoggatt as C.R. Anderson Rep

Ms. Shawn mentioned that the MFPE will hold its annual conference on April 11th and 12th, which will include discussions on setting the state union budget and selecting officers and NEA representatives from the district. Several HEA representatives will attend the conference. Lastly, Ms. Shawn highlighted that HEA would participate in the consensus bargaining process with Diane Groves after spring break. Preliminary meetings with Keri have already been scheduled, and she is optimistic about achieving positive outcomes.

3. **Facilities & Technology Committee Report**

Trustee Jeff Hindoiien presented the Facilities & Technology Committee Report. Trustee Hindoiien began by giving a summary of the monthly technology update. The senior network engineer position remains open, but temporary solutions are in place. The committee also discussed the cybersecurity incident involving PowerSchool, where both students and parents have been notified about identity monitoring services.

The committee reviewed progress on new employee onboarding processes, which are now more automated through the help desk platform. They are also working on improving access for substitutes and guest teachers to ensure they can safely use resources without complications.

Other ongoing efforts include addressing technical issues related to copiers, with plans for a

district-wide update. The new help desk system is proving effective, with a significant percentage of tickets resolved with a single touch. However, challenges remain in interfacing with the OPI systems for state reporting, particularly in terms of student achievement data and charter schools.

Looking ahead, the committee is preparing for the end of support for Windows 11 after July and is working to ensure systems are updated and ready for ACT and AP testing. Finally, the district is developing an analytics and insights platform that will integrate data from various sources, providing a comprehensive view of student performance and other key metrics.

Next, Trustee Hindoien gave a summary of the monthly facilities report. The February weather posed significant challenges for the district, with frozen sewer lines, burst pipes, and various smaller equipment issues across facilities. Staff worked over 400 hours of overtime handling snow removal and other maintenance tasks. The committee acknowledged their hard work and dedication, particularly the custodial staff who managed daily snow removal efforts.

Project updates include the award of the Smith HVAC project contract, and a HVAC assessment is ongoing for Helena High School. A new 800-amp breaker is expected to be installed at Capital High during spring break, and the Rossiter painting project will also be completed by the end of the break.

Mike Higgins is the new Safety and Operations Manager. The custodial team continues to work hard despite some staff vacancies, with a new evening custodial supervisor, Mark McGuire, onboard. However, there are still four custodial vacancies to fill.

In terms of safety and security, the district is receiving reimbursement for water fixture replacements in schools. Work continues on various projects, including labor inspections and the preparation of the chlorine injection system at Warren Elementary. Overall, the committee emphasized the importance of continued collaboration and efforts in maintaining the facilities.

4. **Budget and Finance Committee Report**

Trustee Linda Cleatus presented the Budget and Finance Committee Report on behalf of Trustee Janet Armstrong. The district is currently facing a deficit, which is being covered by the interlocal fund. The fund, which is essentially an emergency savings account and is money that we cannot count on, started the year with \$5.99 million, and it is projected to end with \$3.7 million if no unexpected events arise. So far this year, \$2.3 million has been pulled from this fund for operations.

The district is awaiting the conclusion of the legislative session, as no bills have passed yet. If the "Stars Act" passes, the district expects to receive \$2 to \$2.1 million in additional funds. Additionally, a 3% inflationary adjustment and the passing of the elementary levy could bring in another \$718,000. However, if the "Stars Act" does pass, the legislation may also require the district to pay \$500,000 for beginning teacher pay, \$600,000 for steps in teacher contracts, and \$150,000 for lanes in teacher contracts.

Other financial concerns include increases in liability insurance of around \$140,000 (last year it was \$196,000), rising utility costs, potential declines in enrollment, changes in federal

funding, and possible tariffs, all of which are expected to have negative financial impacts.

With the potential additional funding from the legislative session, the district might see between \$2.72 million to \$2.82 million. However, after addressing the deficit and required expenses, the district could still face a minimum deficit of \$790,000. If the technology levies are passed, \$520,000 will be pulled from the interlocal fund, reducing the deficit to \$270,000.

From a financial standpoint, it is crucial for the technology levy to pass. Additionally, there are no funds currently allocated for compensation increases beyond the current contracts.

5. **Policy Committee Report**

Trustee Jennifer Walsh presented the Policy Committee Report. A key topic discussed at the March Policy Committee meeting was the 5055 Leave of Absence policy, which is being revisited due to some terminology and process-related matters. The committee plans to review it again at a future meeting. In addition, the committee conducted regular policy reviews and voted on two policies presented during the meeting. The Policy Committee will not meet in April, with the next meeting scheduled for May.

6. **Teaching & Learning Committee Report**

Trustee Kay Satre presented the Teaching and Learning Committee meeting report. The Teaching and Learning Committee met on March 5th to review the winter benchmark assessment data for reading and math at the elementary level. There were discussions about curriculum updates and ongoing efforts to ensure that teaching and learning remain innovative while focusing on outcomes and assessments. The committee shared examples of actions being taken, including principals collaborating with leadership teams to create action plans, and schools implementing various instructional strategies, such as 70 minutes of math instruction per day and developing engagement activities.

The committee reviewed benchmark data, such as the percentage of students meeting 100% of typical growth for reading and math. Notably, several grade levels showed promising progress, with a significant number of students already meeting their typical growth expectations halfway through the school year.

Additionally, there were updates on curriculum innovations, including the introduction of a phonics supplement in elementary schools and plans for middle school math pilot programs. CHS has had positive outcomes from its intervention time, and HHS is planning to implement a similar approach next year.

Overall, there is ongoing refinement in curriculum and teaching practices, with a strong emphasis on improving student learning and outcomes.

7. **Health Benefits Committee Report**

Trustee Kay Satre presented the Health Benefits Committee meeting report. The Health Benefits Committee met on March 5th to continue reviewing proposals for the district's health plan. They discussed submissions from four companies bidding to become the Third Party

Administrator (TPA) for the medical portion of the health plan, as well as proposals from five companies for dental and vision coverage. The committee's goal is to lower costs while evaluating these options.

The scoring from a questionnaire, along with financial evaluations, will determine the finalists for the health plan's TPA, with interviews scheduled for April. The committee is also awaiting an update from the Montana School Assurance Alliance on the health trust project, although it has been postponed until late summer or early fall.

The district has also been consulting with USI, an insurance consultant, for their perspective on the health trust and the current health plan. They have assessed the district's plans, noting that the actuarial value of Option 1 is around 92% and Option 2 is 79%. Special attention was given to the district's pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) Express Scripts. The district is already considering bids for a new PBM. Additionally, Rich is working on an analysis to explore ways to lower the actuarial value of the health plan, which could lead to changes in benefits and insurance costs. Overall, the committee is actively working through multiple proposals and processes to improve the district's health benefits while managing costs effectively.

8. **Wellness Committee Report**

There was no Wellness Committee Report this evening.

9. **Montana School Boards Association Report**

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn presented the Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA) Report. The board has an upcoming meeting in the next couple of weeks, and many members are actively engaged with the legislature on various matters. MTSBA has been supporting legislative initiatives, particularly those related to the Stars Act and inflation adjustments, which have been discussed previously. However, there has been pushback from legislators regarding the proposed funding increases, with some discussions focused on reducing the amount to be awarded. The final outcome remains uncertain. Chair Hathhorn highlighted that a prolonged delay in funding could pose a setback for the school district, particularly with regards to middle school funding, which is essential for the district's budget. Several board members have been working closely with legislators and providing testimony. Despite the challenges, MTSBA has seen positive collaboration and productive efforts throughout this process.

10. **Parent Council Visit Reports**

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn presented her report from the Kessler Elementary School Parent Council Meeting. The meeting focused primarily on the school's building deficiencies, a topic that had been discussed previously. Parents expressed excitement about the potential for a Kessler rebuild and showed a strong interest in actively participating in the planning process. They also shared their enthusiasm for the upcoming carnival, which the students are eagerly anticipating. A significant portion of the discussion centered around legislative bills, and there were several questions related to the district's finances, sparking robust conversations. Overall, Chair Hathhorn found the meeting engaging and informative, noting it was a pleasure to be part of such an involved and service-oriented discussion.

Trustee Kay Satre presented her report from the Capital High School Parent Council Meeting. The meeting included updates on ACT and Pre-ACT testing and registration for the upcoming school year, with a focus on the counselors' efforts to meet with each class. There was particular attention given to the transition process for incoming 8th graders into high school. Additionally, the council discussed a project aimed at reviewing and streamlining the high school curriculum. Departments have been asked to address redundancies and small classes, which is one of the strategies to balance class sizes from 6th to 12th grade. The meeting also touched on the challenges of creating workload equity, flexibility, and a robust curriculum, with high school teachers working to balance these factors effectively.

Trustee Kay Satre presented her report from the Warren Elementary School Parent Council Meeting. One highlight was the Charlie Cart, a food-based educational initiative in partnership with Food Share and St. Peter's Health, which will be coming to Warren for a week, giving students the opportunity to cook and learn about food. The school is also preparing for Career Day on March 28th, featuring 17 presenters for 2nd to 5th graders, as well as a Folk Night event for 4th and 5th graders, where they will gather with peers at Bryant Elementary School. Other special events mentioned included food trucks for Teacher Appreciation Week, a giant sundae celebration for the 100th day of school, and funding allocated to each class for special field trips. The council also discussed a tech levy aimed at addressing concerns over a shortage of Chromebooks needed for assessments. Finally, there was a brief discussion on legislative matters, with a focus on the ongoing efforts and ideas from both parents and administrators to enhance the school experience.

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 announced that upcoming meetings will be held to discuss Superintendent Wertz's recommendations and School Policy 9150, though the dates are yet to be determined.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn reviewed upcoming meetings with the Board of Trustees.

- Wednesday, March 12th, Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting, Lincoln Center, 5:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 25th, Board of Trustees Work Session, Helena High School, 3:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 8th, Budget & Finance Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, April 8th, Full Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Wednesday, April 9th, Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Monday, April 14th, Facilities & Technology Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, April 22nd, Board of Trustees Work Session, Kessler Elementary, 3:30 p.m.

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

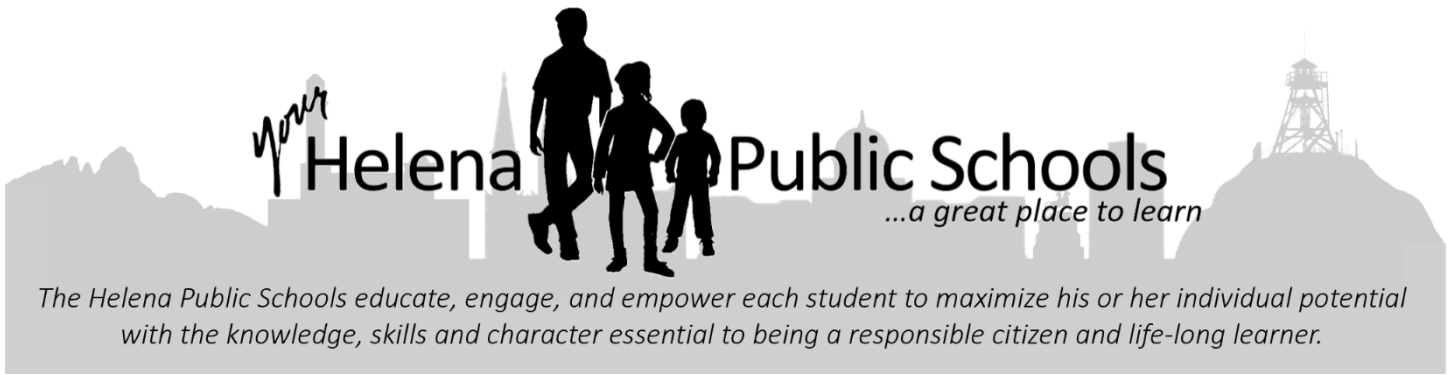
VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

The Board of Trustees and Superintendent Weltz discussed several key topics including but not limited to the ongoing process for addressing various district matters, including the recommendations Superintendent Weltz presented this evening.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn adjourned the meeting at 11:57 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary Date



**Board of Trustees
Special Board Meeting**

Wednesday, March 12th, 2025
Lincoln Center
1325 Poplar St., Helena, MT, 59601
5:00 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Siobhan Hathhorn, Chair	Linda Cleatus, Trustee
Jennifer McKee, Vice Chair	Jeff Hindoien, Trustee
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee	Kay Satre, Trustee
Rachel Robison, Trustee	Rex Wultz, Superintendent

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

The Board of Trustees reviewed the agenda, and no changes were made.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation

The Board of Trustees determined the Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation would be conducted at a future meeting.

2. Evaluation & Contract of the Superintendent

(Personnel Specific: This portion of the meeting will be closed because the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure. MCA 2-3-203)

The Board of Trustees entered closed session at 5:23 p.m. to conduct the evaluation and contract of Superintendent Rex Weltz.

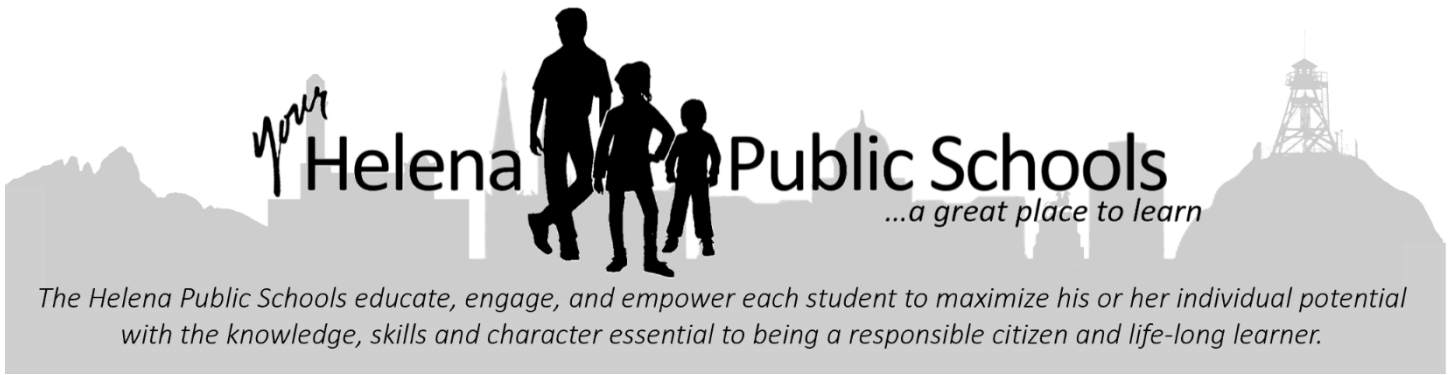
The Board of Trustees reentered open session at 8:36 p.m.

V. BOARD COMMENTS

There were no final board comments.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.



Pre-Bond Planning Key Stakeholders Meeting

Tuesday, March 18th, 2025
Helena High School Little Theater
4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDEES

<i>Trustees</i>	<i>Others</i>
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Siobhan Hathhorn, Board Chair	Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee	Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Rachel Robison, Trustee	Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
	Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager
	Todd Verrill, Facilities Director
	Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
	Justine Alberts, Curriculum Director
	Tim Meldrum, SMA Principal/Partner
	Ali Martin, SMA Associate Architect
	Carley Smith, SMA Marketing Coordinator
	Several Members of the Key Stakeholders Group
	Several Community Members
	Several Employees of Helena Public Schools

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn called the meeting to order at 4:13 p.m.

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

The agenda was reviewed, and no changes were requested.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Item For Information

1. Pre-Bond Planning Discussion

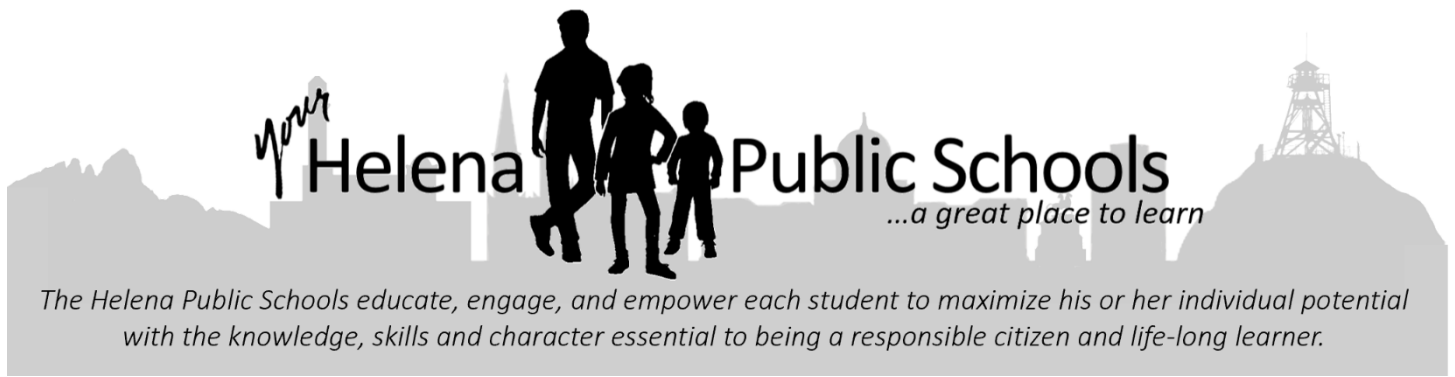
Many members of the pre-bond planning key stakeholder group, community members, and Helena Public School staff came together to review a presentation by SMA Architecture + Design. The meeting was facilitated by Tim Meldrum, Principal/Partner; Ali Martin, Associate/Architect; and Carley Smith, Associate/Marketing Coordinator, all from SMA Architecture + Design. The presentation covered several key topics including but not limited to a recap of the Facilities Master Plan recommendations, prioritized projects, recent school costs in Montana, the pre-bond planning process, bond process and schedule, stakeholder priorities, potential bond scopes and amounts, massing studies, and a Menti poll. At the conclusion of the meeting, SMA invited attendees to take a tour of Helena High School.

V. BOARD COMMENTS

There were no further board comments.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:22 p.m.



Board of Trustees
Special Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 19th, 2025

Lincoln Center

1325 Poplar St., Helena, MT, 59601

12:00 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Siobhan Hathhorn, Chair	Linda Cleatus, Trustee
Jennifer McKee, Vice Chair	Jeff Hindoien, Trustee
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee	Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
Bea Kaleva, District Counsel	Rex Wertz, Superintendent
Candice Delvaux, Board Reporter	Tom Foley, Human Resources Specialist

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

The Board of Trustees reviewed the agenda, and no changes were made.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

1. Termination Hearing for Classified Staff Member

(Personnel Specific: This portion of the meeting will be closed because the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure. MCA 2-3-203)

The Board of Trustees entered closed session at 12:06 p.m. to conduct the termination hearing for a classified staff member.

The Board of Trustees reentered open session at 12:10 p.m.

B. ITEM FOR ACTION

1. Board Decision Regarding Termination Hearing of Classified Staff Member

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented, "At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the termination of the classified employee Mr. Richard McWilliams.

Motion: Trustee Jeff Hindoiien moved to approve the termination of the employee Mr. Richard McWilliams. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 5-0 motion carries unanimously.

V. BOARD COMMENTS

Superintendent Wertz, along with the Board of Trustees, discussed the scheduling of future board meetings.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn adjourned the meeting at 12:38 p.m.

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting Date: 4/8/2025

Item VII.B.1-B.10

- ☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance
- ☐ Review of Agenda
- ☐ Recognitions
- ☐ Presentation
- ☐ Superintendent's Report
- ☐ General Public Comment
- ☐ Consent Action Items
- ☒ Reports
- ☐ Upcoming Meetings
- ☐ Board/Superintendent Comments
- ☐ Adjournment

- Item Title: **Reports**
- 1. Student Representatives Report
 - 2. Helena Education Association Report
 - 3. Facilities & Technology Committee Report
 - 4. Budget & Finance Committee Report
 - 5. Teaching & Learning Committee Report
 - 6. Policy Committee Report
 - 7. Health Benefits Committee Report
 - 8. Wellness Committee Report
 - 9. Montana School Boards Association Report
 - 10. Parent Council Visit Report

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting Date: 4/8/2025

Item VIII.

- ☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance
- ☐ Review of Agenda
- ☐ Recognitions
- ☐ Presentation
- ☐ Superintendent's Report
- ☐ General Public Comment
- ☐ Consent Action Items
- ☐ Reports
- ☒ Upcoming Meetings
- ☐ Board/Superintendent Comments
- ☐ Adjournment

Item Title: Upcoming Meetings

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting Date: 4/8/2025

Item IX.

☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

☐ Review of Agenda

☐ Recognitions

☐ Presentation

☐ Superintendent's Report

☐ General Public Comment

☐ Consent Action Items

☐ Reports

☐ Upcoming Meetings

☒ Board/Superintendent Comments

☐ Adjournment

Item Title: Board/Superintendent Comments

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting Date: 4/8/2025

Item X.

☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

☐ Review of Agenda

☐ Recognitions

☐ Presentation

☐ Superintendent's Report

☐ General Public Comment

☐ Consent Action Items

☐ Reports

☐ Upcoming Meetings

☐ Board/Superintendent Comments

☒ Adjournment

Item Title: Adjournment