



*The Helena Public Schools educate, engage, and empower each student to maximize his or her individual potential with the knowledge, skills and character essential to being a responsible citizen and life-long learner.*

## **Board of Trustees Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting**

Wednesday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025

12:00pm

Lincoln Center & TEAMS

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### **MINUTES**

#### **ATTENDANCE**

*Trustees: Others:*

Kay Satre, Committee Chair	Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Rachel Robison, Trustee	Candice Delvaux, Board Reporter
Jennifer McKee, Board Chair	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
	Rex Weltz, Superintendent
	Justine Alberts, Curriculum Director
	Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment and Federal Programs Director
	Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
	Lona Carter, Student Health Services & Special Education Director
	Jeremy Slead, PEAK Educator
	Several HSD Administrators
	Several Guests of the Public

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Committee Chair Kay Satre.

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

There was no general public comment.

### III. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested to the agenda.

### IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The committee reviewed and accepted the minutes from the 5.7.25 Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting.

### V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

#### A. End of Year Student Achievement Data

Ms. Kaitlyn Hess, Director of Assessment and Federal Programs, provided an end-of-year update on student achievement data. She began by reviewing the Helena Public Schools Comprehensive Assessment System, which is designed to ensure all students receive a high-quality education aligned with rigorous academic standards. The mission of the assessment system is to deliver accurate, meaningful data that supports student learning, informs instructional practices, and guides decision-making across the district. Ms. Hess outlined the various district benchmarks and state assessments administered at different grade levels, including—but not limited to—Acadience, i-Ready, MAP Growth, PreACT, MAST, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), and the ACT.

Ms. Hess then presented data from the Acadience Reading assessments for Kindergarten and 1st Grade, focusing on the percentage of students meeting typical growth for the 2024 and 2025 school years, as well as the percentage of students scoring proficient or above for 2023, 2024, and 2025. She highlighted that Goal 1 of the HPS 2024–2025 District Goals is to ensure that by spring 2026, 80% of first-grade students will be proficient in foundational reading skills, as measured by district Acadience scores. Following the Acadience data, Ms. Hess presented i-Ready Reading proficiency data by cohort for grades 3, 4, and 5 from 2023 through 2025, along with the percentage of students meeting typical growth during the same period. This data offered valuable insight into reading achievement and growth trends across the intermediate grade levels.

Ms. Hess continued by reviewing i-Ready Reading data for grades 2, 3, 4, and 5, specifically highlighting the percentage of students achieving proficiency or above, as well as those meeting typical growth expectations for the years 2023, 2024, and 2025. She referenced Academic Goal 3 from the HPS 2024–2025 District Goals, which states: By spring 2025, an average of 80% of third-grade students will score at or above grade level, demonstrating proficiency in grade-level standards as measured by the i-Ready Reading assessment. The associated subgoal is: By spring 2026, 70% of third-grade students will meet their annual typical growth in reading, as evidenced by spring i-Ready data. Ms. Hess noted that this year’s professional development has focused on deepening educators’ understanding of foundational reading skills, particularly those emphasized in K–2 instruction through programs such as UFLI and LETRS. The current instructional focus is now shifting toward writing and reading comprehension, with summer training highlighting best practices that promote depth of understanding and the application of reading skills. Additionally, there is an intentional effort to increase student exposure to complex texts, moving away from past instructional practices that often limited access to such materials.

The committee engaged in a robust discussion regarding the Montana Alternative Student Testing (MAST) before transitioning to a review of i-Ready Math data, specifically the percentage of students in grades 1 through 5 achieving proficiency or above for the years 2023, 2024, and 2025. Principals received guidance on supporting instructional transitions, particularly between second and third grade, where challenges with pacing and instructional shifts have been observed. This year, second grade experienced difficulty maintaining pacing and adapting to significant changes in mathematical strategies that previously received limited instructional time.

The committee then examined the i-Ready Math Typical Growth Trend Data for grades 1 through 5, covering the spring assessment windows from 2023 to 2025. Ms. Hess referenced Academic Goal 2 from the HPS 2024–2025 District Goals, which states: By spring 2025, an average of 70% of third-grade students will score at or above grade level, demonstrating proficiency in grade-level math standards, as measured by the i-Ready Math assessment. The accompanying subgoal specifies: By spring 2026, 70% of third-grade students will meet their annual typical growth in math, as measured by district i-Ready data.

Additionally, the committee reviewed i-Ready Math cohort data for grades 2 through 5, analyzing both proficiency and growth percentages from 2023 through 2025. Ms. Hess concluded by sharing national norms for grades 1–5, noting that all grade levels are currently performing above the national average in both reading and math.

The committee then reviewed i-Ready Math data for grades 6 through 8, including the percentage of students meeting typical growth and proficiency benchmarks by grade level. This analysis included both current-year results and trend data from 2022, 2023, and 2024. Ms. Hess also presented i-Ready Reading data for grades 6 through 8, highlighting the percentage of students meeting typical growth and proficiency benchmarks, as well as corresponding trend data over the same three-year period. She noted that the spring 2025 benchmark assessment was administered in March, earlier than in previous years when students were assessed in May. As a result, the scores from this cycle may not reflect typical end-of-year performance and should not be compared directly to prior years' trend data. With the introduction of MAST testing this year, middle schools opted to combine the winter and spring benchmark assessments into a single administration in March. Additionally, cohort comparisons were not applicable due to this shift in testing timelines and structure.

The committee proceeded to review ACT data for grades 9, 10, and 11, including Reading scores for grades 9 through 11 and Math scores for grades 10 and 11, as well as the percentage of students meeting all four college readiness benchmarks from 2021 through 2025. Ms. Hess detailed the percentages of students meeting the college readiness benchmarks in Math, Reading, English, and Science over this five-year span.

Ms. Hess addressed questions from the Teaching and Learning Committee regarding the information presented.

## **B. PEAK Discussion**

The Teaching and Learning Committee reviewed the 2024–2025 End-of-Year Comprehensive Data Report for the Helena Public Schools PEAK Gifted and Talented (GT) Program. Dr. Justine Alberts, Assistant Superintendent for PreK–5, presented a comprehensive analysis covering a range of data points, including but not limited to:

- District Enrollment vs. PEAK GT Identified (2024–2025)
- PEAK GT Identified vs. Participating Students (2024–2025)
- Gender Comparison: Identified and Participating PEAK GT Males vs. Females (2024–2025)
- Participation Rates by School Level: Elementary, Middle, and High School (2024–2025)
- PEAK GT Identified vs. Participating Students in Title I Schools (Elementary, Middle, and High – 2024–2025)
- Twice Exceptional Students (2024–2025), excluding those on 504 Plans
- Free and Reduced Lunch Status: District vs. PEAK GT Identified Students (2024–2025)
- Ethnic Demographics: District vs. PEAK GT Identified Students (2024–2025)
- End-of-Year Student Evaluations (2023–2024)
- Parent Evaluations (2024–2025)

Dr. Alberts addressed questions from the Teaching and Learning Committee regarding the information presented.

## **VI. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS**

There were no further board or superintendent comments.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:07 p.m. by Committee Chair Kay Satre.