



Board of Trustees Summer Retreat Meeting

Thursday, July 17th, 2025
Bryant Elementary School
1520 Livingston Ave., Helena, MT, 59601
9:00 a.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Jennifer McKee, Chair	Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Jennifer Walsh, Vice Chair	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent 6-12
Janet Armstrong, Trustee	Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Linda Cleatus, Trustee	Justine Alberts, Assistant Superintendent PreK-5
Siobhan Hathhorn, Trustee	Candice Delvaux, Board Reporter
Jenny Murnane Butcher, Trustee	Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
Kay Satre, Trustee	Bea Kaleva, District Counsel
Rachel Robison, Trustee	Eric Peterson, Activities Director
	Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
	Kaitlyn Hess, Data and Federal Programs Director
	Several HPS Principals & Assistant Principals
	Tim Meldrum, Partner/Principal with SMA
	Architecture + Design
	Ali Martin, Associate Principal/Director with
	SMA Architecture + Design
	Lisa Cordingley, Guest of the Public

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Jennifer McKee called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.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. **CONSENT ACTION ITEMS**

1. Personnel Actions
2. Warrants
3. Acknowledge FY 2025-26 Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Helena Resident Students Attending Other School Districts)
4. Resolution to Dispose of Personal Property-Technology Surplus
5. 6.10.25 Board of Trustees Full Board Meeting Minutes

Board Chair Jennifer McKee commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the Consent Action Items as presented.”

Motion: Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn moved to approve the Consent Action Items as presented. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 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. **Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Carpenters Collective Bargaining Agreement For 2025-2026**

Ms. Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director, presented the action item *Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Carpenters Collective Bargaining Agreement For 2025-2026* to the Board of Trustees.

Background:

Pursuant to MCA 39-31-306, an agreement reached by the public employer and the exclusive representative must be reduced to writing and must be executed by both parties.

The Helena School District and the Western States Regional Council of Carpenters reached a tentative agreement on June 11, 2025. The District negotiation team recommends ratification.

The two (2) year agreement was open for wages for July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. A summary of the conditions of the contract are noted below. Upon the Board's approval, a final copy will be made available electronically.

- The District shall contribute to the employee cafeteria plan an amount of \$1,069.40 per month/\$12,832.80 for the 2025-2027 benefit years.
- A two percent (2%) increase of \$.54 per hour to the base wage from \$26.99 to \$27.53 per hour for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.
- Increase the longevity schedule as follows:
 - Employed 5+ to 10 years \$.60 per hour additional
 - Employed 10+ to 15 years \$0.85 per hour additional
 - Employed 15+ to 20 years \$1.10 per hour additional
 - Employed 20+ years \$1.60 per hour additional
- An increase in the clothing allowance from \$300 to \$500 per year to be paid in July.
- Any retiring carpenter with twenty (20) years of carpenter service with HPS will receive \$200 for each year of service at the time of retirement. Any retiring carpenter with fifteen (15) to nineteen (19) years of carpenter service with HPS will receive \$100 for each year of service at the time of retirement.
- The estimated salary cost of this settlement is \$4,209.00 for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Considerations:

- HPS and the Carpenters have a collaborative relationship and productive negotiations history.
- This agreement continues to bring parity to the bargaining units within HSD that work together on facility projects.
- This agreement supports the directive of the Board to support our staff members and address issues relative to the district budget.

Superintendent recommendation:

Approve and ratify the collective bargaining agreement as agreed upon between HPS and Carpenters.

Ms. Mizell addressed all questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee commented, "At this point I would entertain a motion for the *Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Carpenters Collective Bargaining Agreement For 2025-2026*.

Motion: Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve the action item *Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Carpenters Collective Bargaining Agreement For 2025-2026*. Trustee Janet Armstrong seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

2. **Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Painters Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2025-2027**

Ms. Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director, presented the action item *Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Painters Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2025-2027* to the Board of Trustees.

Background:

Pursuant to MCA 39-31-306, an agreement reached by the public employer and the exclusive representative must be reduced to writing and must be executed by both parties. The Helena School District and District Council #82 and Local Union #1922 of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades reached a tentative agreement on June 18, 2025. The District negotiation team recommends ratification.

The two (2) year agreement was open for wages and language for July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027. A summary of the conditions of the contract are noted below. Upon the Board's approval, a final copy will be made available electronically.

- The District shall contribute to the employee cafeteria plan an amount of \$1,069.40 per month/\$12,832.80 for the 2025-2027 benefit years.
- A two percent (2%) increase of \$.55 per hour to the base wage from \$27.44 to \$27.99 per hour for the 2025-2026 fiscal year and a two and a half percent (2.5%) increase of \$0.70 from \$27.99 to \$28.69 per hour for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.
- Increase the longevity schedule as follows:
 - Employed 1+ to 5 years, an additional \$0.10 per hour (i.e., \$0.10 per hour additional year one, \$0.20 per hour additional year two, \$0.30 per hour additional year three, etc.)
 - Employed 5+ years, and additional \$0.05 per hour each year with no cap (i.e., \$0.50 per hour year five, \$0.55 per hour year six, \$0.60 per hour year seven, etc.)
- An increase in the clothing allowance from \$300 to \$500 per year to be paid in July.

- A total of four (4) floating personal days for the 25-26 fiscal year; one floating personal day to sunset June 15, 2026, with commitment to assess in June if there is agreement to remove the sunset clause.
- The estimated salary cost of this settlement is \$5,535 for the 2025-2027 fiscal years.

Considerations:

- HPS and the Painters have a collaborative relationship and productive negotiations history.
- This agreement continues to bring parity to the bargaining units within HSD that work together on facility projects.
- This agreement supports the directive of the Board to support our staff members and address issues relative to the district budget.

Superintendent recommendation:

Approve and ratify the collective bargaining agreement as agreed upon between HPS and Painters.

Ms. Mizell addressed all questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion for the *Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Painters Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2025-2027.*”

Motion: Trustee Linda Cleatus moved to approve the action item *Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Painters Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2025-2027.* Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

3. **Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Administrator Salary Schedule for 2025-2026**

Ms. Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director, presented the action item *Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Administrator Salary Schedule for 2025-2026* to the Board of Trustees.

Background:

Attracting and retaining top talent in the current job market is more challenging than ever. Salary is a significant factor for candidates evaluating job offers and for current employees considering their long-term career prospects. To maintain our position as an employer of choice and attract the best candidates, we must align our compensation packages to keep pace with inflation.

Investing in competitive salaries is a direct reflection of our commitment to acknowledge and reward the valuable contributions of our current employees. A well-compensated workforce is likely to be engaged, motivated, and dedicated to their roles, resulting in increased productivity and higher morale across the organization. Moreover, competitive compensation fosters loyalty and reduces turnover risk, thereby promoting continuity and stability within our workforce.

The total estimated salary cost to the general fund is approximately \$61,000 for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Superintendent recommendation:

Approve a two percent increase to the salary schedule for administrators to remain competitive in the market, enhance recruitment efforts, retain our current talent, and promote equity across all employee groups.

Ms. Mizell addressed all questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion for the *Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Administrator Salary Schedule for 2025-2026.*”

Motion: Trustee Janet Armstrong moved to approve the action item *Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Administrator Salary Schedule for 2025-2026.* Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

4. Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Independent Salary Matrix for 2025-2026

Ms. Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director, presented the action item *Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Independent Salary Matrix for 2025-2026* to the Board of Trustees.

Background:

Attracting and retaining top talent in the current job market is more challenging than ever. Salary is a significant factor for candidates evaluating job offers and for current employees considering their long-term career prospects. To maintain our position as an employer of choice and attract the best candidates, we must align our compensation packages to keep pace with inflation.

Investing in competitive salaries is a direct reflection of our commitment to acknowledge and reward the valuable contributions of our current employees. A well-compensated workforce is likely to be engaged, motivated, and dedicated to their roles, resulting in increased productivity and higher morale across the organization. Moreover, competitive compensation fosters loyalty and reduces turnover risk, thereby promoting continuity and stability within our workforce.

The total estimated salary cost to the general fund is \$38,356 for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Superintendent recommendation:

Approve a two percent increase to the salary matrix for independents to remain competitive in the market, enhance recruitment efforts, retain our current talent, and promote equity across all employee groups.

Ms. Mizell addressed all questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion for the *Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Independent Salary Matrix for 2025-2026*.”

Motion: Trustee Linda Cleatus moved to approve the action item *Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Independent Salary Matrix for 2025-2026*. Trustee Jennifer Walsh seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

5. Approval of MTSBA Membership Renewal For 2025-2026

In 2025, the Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA) marks its 100th anniversary, alongside 160 years of service by elected trustees supporting Montana's public education system. MTSBA is a nonprofit organization that provides governance, policy, legal, financial, and legislative support to school boards across the state. As a membership-based organization, MTSBA offers trustees access to training, resources, and consultation aimed at improving district operations and student outcomes. It also plays an active role in shaping education policy at the state level. This centennial year also coincides with the start of a ten-year decennial study on education quality, expected to inform future initiatives and strategic planning. The Board of Trustees and Superintendent Weltz engaged in a discussion regarding MTSBA membership renewal.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion for the *Approval of MTSBA Membership Renewal For 2025-2026*.”

Motion: Trustee Jennifer Walsh moved to approve the action item *Approval of MTSBA Membership Renewal For 2025-2026*. Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

V. ITEM FOR INFORMATION

1. Board of Trustees Summer Retreat Discussion

The Board of Trustees, in collaboration with the district's administrative team, continued the day with a site visit to the Bryant Elementary Summer School program. This was followed by a series of collaborative team-building activities held on the Bryant patio, designed to strengthen relationships and enhance organizational culture. The group engaged in focused discussions on topics including, but not limited to, an informational bond presentation delivered by SMA Architecture + Design, a comprehensive review of district academic performance data, and a Board of Trustees training, which concluded the session.

VI. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

There were no closing comments.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Jennifer McKee adjourned the meeting at 4:51 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary