



Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting

Friday, November 21st, 2025
Lincoln Center
1325 Poplar St., Helena, MT 59601
& Via TEAMS
12:00 p.m.

Members of the public can attend in person or remotely by clicking the link below:

[Join the meeting now](#)

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

III. 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.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consent Action Items

1. 10.14.25 Full Board Meeting Minutes
2. 10.24.25 Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting Minutes
3. 11.7.25 Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting Minutes

B. Item For Action

1. Approve Committee Recommendation of Mosaic/Cushing Terrell as Kessler Elementary Architect

V. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

VI. ADJOURNMENT

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting Date: 11/21/2025

Item I.

☒ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

☐ Review of Agenda

☐ General Public Comment

☐ Consent Action Items

☐ Item For Action

☐ Board/Superintendent Comments

☐ Adjournment

Item Title: **Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance**

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting Date: 11/21/2025

Item II.

☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

☒ Review of Agenda

☐ General Public Comment

☐ Consent Action Items

☐ Item For Action

☐ Board/Superintendent Comments

☐ Adjournment

Item Title: **Review of Agenda**

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting Date: 11/21/2025

Item III.

☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

☐ Review of Agenda

☒ General Public Comment

☐ Consent Action Items

☐ Item For Action

☐ Board/Superintendent Comments

☐ Adjournment

Item Title: **General Public Comment**

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting Date: 11/21/2025

Item IV.A.1.-A.3

☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

☐ Review of Agenda

☐ General Public Comment

☒ Consent Action Items

☐ Item For Action

☐ Board/Superintendent Comments

☐ Adjournment

Item Title: **Consent Action Items**
1. 10.14.25 Full Board Meeting Minutes
2. 10.24.25 Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting
Minutes
3. 11.7.25 Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting Minutes

Board Action	1st Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Other
Hathhorn					
McKee					
Satre					
Murnane Butcher					
Cleatus					
Walsh					
Armstrong					
Meyer					



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, October 14th, 2025
5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted.

Jennifer McKee, Chair
Jennifer Walsh, Vice Chair
Kay Satre, Trustee
Siobhan Hathhorn, Trustee
Jenny Murnane Butcher,
Trustee
Linda Cleatus, Trustee
Janet Armstrong, Trustee
Brock Gardipee, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees
Delaney Lynch, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees
Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Janelle Mickelson, Business Director
Todd Verrill, Facilities Director
Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
Gary Myers, Director of Educational
Technology
Justine Alberts, Assistant Superintendent
PreK-5
Kaitlyn Hess, Data & Federal Programs
Director
Lona Carter, Student Health Services & Special Education Director
Taylor Lassiter, Communications Specialist
Jane Shawn, HEA President
Becca Leaphart, HEF Executive Director
Brenda Carney, HEF Deputy Director
Many guests of the public as well as Helena School District Staff & Students

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chair Jennifer McKee called the meeting to order at 5:30 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 hear recognitions.

III. RECOGNITIONS

The Board of Trustees recognized the following students:

A. State AA Boys Golf Champion-Capital High School

We are thrilled to celebrate Capital High School's John Gilbert, who captured the title of State AA Boys Golf Champion! John's hard work, dedication, and composure on the course truly exemplify the spirit of excellence we're so proud of in our students. A heartfelt thank you also goes to Coach Casey Lyndes for his outstanding leadership and for the time, energy, and mentorship he devotes to helping our student athletes reach their highest potential. Congratulations to John, Coach Lyndes, and the entire Capital High golf team on this incredible accomplishment!

B. 2025-2026 All-State Honor Musicians-Capital High School

We are delighted to recognize the Capital High School students who were selected to participate in the Montana All-State Honor Music Festival! This prestigious achievement reflects not only their incredible talent and dedication to their craft but also countless hours of practice and passion for music. We extend our sincere appreciation to educators Thomas Baty, Kevin Cleary, and Duane Zehr for their exceptional guidance, encouragement, and commitment to fostering artistic excellence in our students. Congratulations to these outstanding musicians and their dedicated teachers on this remarkable accomplishment!

CHS Orchestra

Vivian James, Violin

Claudia Cook, Bass

CHS Band

Thomas Byron-Oboe

CHS Choir

Andrew Granberg

Aiden Lightfoot
Lydia Marshall

C. 2025-2026 All-State Honor Musicians-Helena High School

We are delighted to recognize the Helena High School students who were selected to participate in the Montana All-State Honor Music Festival! This prestigious achievement reflects not only their incredible talent and dedication to their craft but also countless hours of practice and passion for music. We extend our sincere appreciation to educators Kevin Cleary, Cody Hollow, and Molly Kohoutek for their exceptional guidance, encouragement, and commitment to fostering artistic excellence in our students. Congratulations to these outstanding musicians and their dedicated teachers on this remarkable accomplishment!

HHS Orchestra

Elliot Cleary, Violin
Freya Elias, Cello
Isabel Ward, Violin

HHS Band

Jacob Lighthiser-Percussion
Eliza Loveland-Clarinet

HHS Choir

Ella Nasset
Brady Lay
Nadja Bolotsky
Ayden Hinson
Leah Leonard

IV. PRESENTATION

Helena Education Foundation-Becca Leaphart, Executive Director

Ms. Becca Leaphart, Executive Director of the Helena Education Foundation, provided an overview of the Foundation's recent activities and initiatives. She introduced Brenda Carney, the new Deputy Director, and highlighted fall programs, including the New Educator Event, the Carnival Classic, and the Fabulous First program, which provides hardcover books to all first graders and engages high school drama students in performances for younger students. Ms. Leaphart also discussed the upcoming Great Conversations event on November 19th, where nine educators will be recognized with the "Let's Talk About Great Teachers" award. Additionally, she provided updates on grant cycles, including the Great Ideas and Spark Grants, and reported on the Boeing-funded STEAM program introducing Legos for hands-on classroom

activities. Ms. Leaphart addressed questions from the board throughout her presentation.

The Board of Trustees moved on to hear the Superintendent Report from Superintendent Weltz.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Weltz presented his Superintendent Report to the Board of Trustees and discussed topics including but not limited to:

Recognitions

- o Chief of Staff Barb Ridgway - Retirement
- o National IT Professionals Day - September 16th, 2025
- o Walk, Bike, & Roll to School Day - October 1st, 2025
- o National Coaches Day - October 6th, 2025
- o National Custodian & Maintenance Appreciation Day - October 2nd, 2025
- o National Principals Month - October
- o HEF - Becca Leaphart and the Helena Education Foundation for hosting Fabulous Firsts and Fabulous Firsts Act II: Storybook Theatre
- o Congratulations to our High School National Merit Semifinalists: CHS - Nolan Holzer and HHS - Brady Lay and Grey Gildroy

New Business

- o Light Up October
- o The Queen City Rumble Speech and Debate Tournament is coming to Helena on Saturday, November 1st, 2025, and they are in need of judges! You can sign up via this link: <https://tinyurl.com/2025QCRumbleJudges>
- o Applications are currently being accepted for the position of Director of Finance
- o Lincoln Center hosts the Montana Association of School District Attorneys Comprehensive Legal Workshop for School Trustees, Administrators and Legal Professionals on October 15th
- o School Funding Interim Commission Road Show Update
- o MCEL Conference
- o Bridge Alliance Update
- o The district is still accepting applications for the vacant Board of Trustees position through October 31st
- o New Trustee Interview Process Update
- o Gifted and Talented Program Review - Dr. Plucker
- o Other

Bond Updates

Bridget Ekstrom, Managing Director and Finance Banker with D.A. Davidson, presented an update

on the Bond Finance Timeline. She reviewed the schedule for upcoming board and Bond Finance Committee meetings, outlined the process for preparing and distributing the official bond offering documents, and explained the tax-exempt benefits of the bonds. Ms. Ekstrom also described the credit rating process and emphasized outreach to local investors. The official bond offering is scheduled for November 20, with bond proceeds expected to be available to the district on December 18.

- o Bond Finance Committee Meetings
- o Helena High School Architect RFQ
- o Capital High School Architect RFQ
- o Kessler Architect RFQ
- o Secure Education Consultant Involvement – Professional Services & Plan/Design
- o Other

Outreach/Meetings

- o SAM Fall Conference
- o MQEC General Membership Meeting
- o AA Superintendents
- o Board of Health Meeting
- o Chamber of Commerce
- o Board Leadership
- o HEA
- o HEF
- o HEF Executive Committee
- o Parent Advisory Committee
- o Teacher Advisory Committee
- o Cabinet & Leadership
- o TV, Print, Radio, Media
- o City of Helena
- o Other

Other

That concluded the Superintendent's Report portion of the agenda. Superintendent Weltz responded to questions from the Board of Trustees, after which the trustees proceeded to hear general public comment.

VI. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. John C. Board gave general public comment. Mr. Board's general public comment addressed several key topics, including but not limited to, commending the Board's leadership on the school bonds. He reflected on his 45 years of teaching experience and expressed concern about inadequate public school funding in Montana, emphasizing the importance of sufficient funding for the future of students and democracy. He encouraged the Helena School Board to consider joining a legal action against the state to

secure increased public education funding.

There was no further general public comment and the Board of Trustees proceeded to review the Consent Action Items.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consent Action Items

1. Personnel Actions
2. Warrants
3. Approval of FY 2025-26 Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Non-Resident Students Attending HPS)
4. Approval of 9.9.25 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 Jennifer Walsh moved to approve the *Consent Action Items* as presented. Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn 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. Policy 5055: Leaves of Absence

Ms. Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director, presented the action item, *Policy 5055: Leaves of Absence* to the Board of Trustees. The policy was revised to clarify language related to sick leave and bereavement leave not covered by a collective bargaining agreement. Also, noted was a change from nonrefundable sick leave donations to refundable sick leave donations for any unused donation.

Ms. Mizell addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the action item *Policy 5055: Leaves of Absence*.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the action item *Policy 5055: Leaves of Absence*.”

Motion: Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve *Policy 5055: Leaves of Absence*. Trustee Linda Cleatus seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

2. **Policy 5085: Substitutes and Student Teachers/Interns**

Ms. Mizell presented the action item, *Policy 5085: Substitutes and Student Teachers/Interns*, to the Board of Trustees. This policy has been revised to clarify how classified staff will be compensated when called upon to substitute for a teacher. The language in lines 16 through 19 was previously presented as a single paragraph and has now been separated into two sentences for improved clarity. Ms. Mizell addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the action item, *Policy 5085: Substitutes and Student Teachers/Interns*.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the action item *Policy 5085: Substitutes and Student Teachers/Interns*.”

Motion: Trustee Linda Cleatus moved to approve *Policy 5085: Substitutes and Student Teachers/Interns* as presented. Trustee Janet Armstrong seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

3. **Policy 5051: Insurance Benefits for Employees**

Ms. Mizell presented the action item, *Policy 5051: Insurance Benefits for Employees*, to the Board of Trustees. Changes to the policy include the requirement that employees may only obtain insurance coverage outside the enrollment period due to a qualifying event, and that medical examinations are no longer permitted for enrollment. Ms. Mizell addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the action item, *Policy 5051: Insurance Benefits for Employees*.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the action item *Policy 5051: Insurance Benefits for Employees*.”

Motion: Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn moved to approve *Policy 5051: Insurance Benefits for Employees* as presented. Trustee Jennifer Walsh seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

The Board of Trustees moved on to hear the Items For Information.

C. Item For Information

1. Klint Fisher Memorial Project Update

Mr. Tim Meldrum, COO/Principal, with A&E + SMA, presented an update on the *Klint Fisher Memorial Project* to the Board of Trustees. He shared that the project honors the late architect Clint Fisher, highlighting his passion for K–12 education, community engagement, and outdoor experiences. The memorial design includes outdoor gathering spaces, landscaping, and a commemorative plaque, incorporating “Clint Orange,” a signature color associated with Fisher. The project is funded and supported by community members and local contractors, with no cost to the district, and plans include establishing a Clint Fisher Foundation to continue his legacy through scholarships and educational opportunities.

2. Policy 2005: School Year, Calendar and Day

Ms. Mizell presented for information, *Policy 2005: School Year, Calendar and Day*, to the Board of Trustees. This policy has been updated to align with House Bill 591. The purpose is to educate students about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of the United States and the values on which the United States was founded. Ms. Mizell and Mr. Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent 6-12, addressed questions from the trustees regarding *Policy 2005: School Year, Calendar and Day*.

3. Policy 2016: Human Sexuality and Identity Instruction

Ms. Mizell presented for information, *Policy 2016: Human Sexuality and Identity Instruction*, to the Board of Trustees. This policy has been updated to align with the revised definition of human sexuality and identity instruction as defined in House Bill 471. The policy further clarifies the parent or guardian’s right of consent for human sexuality instruction (opt out) and identity instruction (opt in) and the notice provisions. Ms. Mizell, Superintendent Weltz, and Assistant Superintendent McKay addressed questions from the trustees regarding *Policy 2016: Human Sexuality and Identity Instruction*.

4. Policy 2100: Recognition of Native American Cultural Heritage

Ms. Mizell presented for information, *Policy 2100: Recognition of Native American Cultural Heritage*, to the Board of Trustees. The policy emphasizes that schools in close proximity with Montana Tribes will work in consultation when providing instruction and implementing education goals for the inclusion of cultural heritage of Native Americans. Ms. Mizell and Assistant Superintendent McKay addressed questions from the trustees regarding *Policy 2100: Recognition of Native American Cultural Heritage*.

5. **Policy 2140: Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training**

Ms. Mizell presented for information, *Policy 2140: Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training*, to the Board of Trustees. This policy has been updated to reflect the training timeline requirement of employees and clarifies how training may be delivered in accordance with Senate Bill 369. Ms. Mizell addressed questions from the trustees regarding *Policy 2140: Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training*.

6. **Policy 4332: Display of Flags and Banners on District Property**

Ms. Mizell presented for information, *Policy 4332: Display of Flags and Banners on District Property*, to the Board of Trustees. This is a new policy created to align with House Bill 819 regarding the specific flags and banners that can be displayed on district or school property. This does not apply to personal clothing, jewelry or accessories worn by school employees except where uniform policies or official dress codes apply. Ms. Mizell and Superintendent Weltz addressed questions from the trustees regarding *Policy 4332: Display of Flags and Banners on District Property*.

7. **In-District Boundary Change Review**

Assistant Superintendent McKay presented for information, *In-District Boundary Change Review*, to the Board of Trustees. He reviewed the history of the process, which began in November 2022 as part of the SMA Master Facility Planning, and highlighted preliminary enrollment data and potential boundary adjustments to balance student populations across elementary, middle, and high schools. The discussion included considerations for Kinder Sprouts placement, special education programs, and maintaining functional classroom capacity. Most proposed changes involve minor adjustments along district edges. A public comment period will be held during which the proposal will be available on the district website, included in the superintendent's newsletter, and shared via social media. Community members may submit questions or comments through a web link or by phone, and the district will respond to inquiries as they are received. Action on boundary changes will take place at a future meeting, with implementation scheduled for the start of the 2026–27 school year. Assistant Superintendent McKay addressed trustees' questions regarding the *In-District Boundary Change Review*.

D. REPORTS

1. **Student Representatives Report**

Mr. Brock Gardipee, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, presented his Student Representative Report. Mr. Gardipee commented, "Hello everyone, it's good to see you all again! We have had some big stuff going on at Helena High this past month! To start, Helena High has made a student leadership insight group where student sport or club

leaders like myself give insight and direction into decision making. This council meets monthly to have input on issues and find ways to support each other. In the first week of October, Ms. Navarrete led our college application week where students were able to apply to colleges in Montana for free and receive support while doing so. The teachers also shared their college or career paths for students to see and learn. HHS students also took the RBHI screener, which gave crucial insight into how students' mental health has been and if support was needed. Students also experienced an annual earthquake drill which was a good reminder that we live in a seismic zone and that we must be prepared for the possibility of an earthquake. And finally, our school leadership team has finalized our goals for the year. In order to determine these goals, they use data from student testing. This year, we have 5 main goals which include, Reading (reviewing disciplinary literacy strategies and re-emphasizing the importance of quality writing), Math (looking at ways we can include more effective math practice and skill building across the departments and growing student scores on ACT) Intervention (we are reviewing our MTSS multi-tiered system of support systems and thinking through how we best support students in the classroom and in intervention specific settings to grow their skills and provide support), SEL (connected to interventions we are hoping to formulate a stronger system for identifying students who are at risk of drop out and falling behind to allow for a quicker and earlier connection to keep them in school), and Family engagement (working to build continued opportunities to engage with our families and build the school family connection). We do this to increase student success; while improving staff and students' wellbeing so HHS can continue to produce students at the top of the state. I'd like to thank Mrs. Schulte and Mrs. Smith for taking on the task of leading student council and doing an amazing job so far. And to end my report I'd like to share that by the end of this month the 1st quarter will be over! I wasn't sure if that was good or bad news, so I'll let it be up to you to decide."

Ms. Delaney Lynch, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, presented her Student Representative Report. Ms. Lynch commented, "Good evening, Trustees, as we settle into the school year, things at Capital High are in full swing. Students and teachers alike are settling into busy schedules packed with both academic and athletic activities.

RBHI Screener:

Almost 1,100 students went through the recent mental health wellness screener that was administered during 2nd period. Students were allowed to opt out of it, but many chose to participate. Capital partnered with Pureview and RBHI, to give students immediate attention in need.

Clubs:

HOSA is about to take their annual trip to Butte for the Fall Leadership Conference. Student Council is preparing for their annual MASC trip and Make a Wish donation. Other clubs such as Green Club and Fish Ecology Club are planning upcoming activities for their members to participate in.

Homecoming:

Homecoming week was a little over a week ago. CHS saw a great week full of school spirit-

dress up days, the homecoming assembly, a student council sponsored BBQ, and the homecoming dance held that Friday night.

Music Program:

Music concerts have started for the 25-26 school year. Last Monday and Tuesday there were choir and orchestra concerts. Tomorrow night there is a choir concert.

College Applications:

College Application Day was recently held as a lot of students applied to various colleges. Students were guided through the application process, specifically to Montana schools, using the Apply Montana website. This also included a parent's night. FAFSA Parent Night is tonight, Oct. 13th.

Digger Days:

Digger Day was recently held and approximately 100 CHS students participated in the excellent hands-on CTE trades activity for students. A shout out to Mr. Canney, the Drafting and Carpentry Teacher, for all his efforts in setting up this opportunity.

Cognia Accreditation:

Capital High has been preparing for the upcoming Cognia since this past summer.

Accreditation is used at all levels of education and is recognized for its ability to effectively drive improved learner performance and continuous improvement in education. Systems and institutions seeking to achieve or maintain accreditation understand, honor, and embrace the concept of continuous improvement.

Capital High has long been a Cognia accredited institution. Candidate schools must seek accreditation renewal every 6 years. The Cognia external review team will be visiting Capital High next Monday, 10/20.

It is a great time to be at CHS and both students and staff are looking forward to a great 2025-2026 school year. Go Bru!

2. **Helena Education Association Report**

Ms. Jane Shawn, Helena Education Association President, presented her report to the Board of Trustees. Ms. Shawn reported that several HEA members attended the NEA Representative Assembly in Portland, Oregon, in July. She has since visited all district schools, meeting with teachers and paraprofessionals to address questions and share feedback. Ms. Shawn noted that elementary staff have expressed appreciation for the restored PE and music services, which have reduced stress levels, and that high school teachers report having sufficient time for planning and student engagement. She also highlighted positive feedback regarding new recess schedules being piloted in some elementary schools, which have led to improved student behavior and fewer playground conflicts. Additionally, educators will attend the upcoming

MFPE Educators Conference in Missoula, where Helena’s own Kellen Alger will be honored with the NEA Excellence in Teaching Award.

3. **Facilities & Technology Committee Report**

Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn presented the Facilities & Technology Committee Report. Trustee Hathhorn highlighted the update from Technology Director Gary Myers. A recent planned power outage at Central School revealed issues with backup batteries, which have since been addressed in coordination with Northwestern Energy. The technology department continues to manage extensive data reporting requirements for OPI, which have become more complex due to student enrollment across multiple schools. The team has completed nearly 1,000 work orders since the start of the school year and recently welcomed a new technician. Trustee Hathhorn also noted that technology expenses draw approximately \$2 million annually from the general fund, emphasizing the growing costs associated with maintaining infrastructure, safety systems, and device replacement cycles. She commended the technology staff for their organization and commitment to supporting district needs within limited resources.

4. **Budget and Finance Committee Report**

Trustee Janet Armstrong presented the Budget and Finance Committee Report. Trustee Armstrong reported that the district’s financial position continues to strengthen due to several years of focused work and strategic decisions. The committee discussed the upcoming bond sale process, noting that the district’s improved financial stability and multi-year contracts support a favorable credit rating, ultimately benefiting local taxpayers. Bonds will be available in \$5,000 increments with various term options and will be widely publicized for community participation. Trustee Armstrong also highlighted the importance of maintaining a healthy Interlocal Fund to support technology, curriculum, and bridge funding needs. She noted that the district is currently in a strong financial position but emphasized the need to continue advocating for improved state funding, as inflation pressures persist despite the current 3% cap.

5. **Teaching & Learning Committee Reports**

The Teaching and Learning Committee has met twice since the last full Board of Trustees meeting so there were two reports this evening. Trustee Jenny Murnane Butcher presented the first report. The first meeting focused on a recent court decision requiring school districts to serve students with disabilities up to age 21. Although the current financial impact is minimal, the requirement represents an unfunded mandate that could have future budget implications. The committee also reviewed district goals and priorities for teaching and learning, including strategies for measuring progress toward those goals. Additionally, the committee discussed the assessment schedule, noting ongoing frustration with testing time guidance from OPI, which suggests spending less time on assessments—a challenge for teachers and students striving to do their best.

Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn presented the second report highlighting the Instruction Before Construction initiative, where administrators are surveying educators to inform architectural planning for school construction projects. The committee also discussed a third-party review of the district’s Gifted and Talented program, which dates back to 1999, to ensure it meets

current student and community needs. Additionally, the committee examined academic data, focusing on growth goals for elementary students, stretch growth strategies for students approaching proficiency, and ongoing monitoring of math and reading goals.

6. **Policy Committee Report**

Trustee Jennifer Walsh presented the Policy Committee Report to the Board of Trustees. Trustee Walsh reported that the Policy Committee met on October 7th, with their previous meeting having been in May. The committee focused on catching up on pending items and reviewing new legislative policies. Of note, the committee discussed Policy 3097 regarding video surveillance and noted that the policy does not apply to public events such as sporting events. The committee will continue to monitor and provide context for policies as they are further developed throughout the school year.

7. **Health Benefits Committee Report**

Trustee Kay Satre presented the Health Benefits Committee Report. Trustee Satre reported that the Health Benefits Committee met on September 25th to elect officers and confirm membership. Ross Gustafson, a math teacher at Capital High, was re-elected chair, and Julie McGuire, a Capital High secretary, was elected vice chair. The committee held an informal discussion regarding the Bridged Health Alliance proposal, noting that revised cost and savings estimates are needed due to inaccuracies in the initial presentation. Members also discussed the compressed timeline for decision-making, emphasizing the need to meet with Alliant, the district's health plan consultant, and with Bridge representatives for further analysis. A decision is targeted for the end of November, with final recommendations subject to board review and approval.

8. **Wellness Committee Report**

Trustee Linda Cleatus presented the Wellness Committee Report to the Board of Trustees. Trustee Cleatus highlighted the work of Robert Worthy, including Taco Tuesdays with local bison and 200 lbs of golden beets and 300 lbs of spaghetti squash for salad bars. The committee is on track with its strategic plan, including high school vending machines serving up to 100 meals per day and the "Harvest of the Month" program educating fourth graders across ten schools with support from Helena High, Capital High, and Carroll College. Ms. Keri Mizell noted that, with this being the last year of USDA grant funding for Harvest of the Month, the committee is exploring additional grants and potential support from Sodexo. Partnerships with PAL and Carroll College students provide nutrition education and Serve Safe certification, and the committee plans to expand the Charlie Cart, a mobile kitchen offering mini lessons tied to Harvest of the Month recipes. Year three focuses on sustainability amid funding uncertainties, while the Montana Partnership to End Childhood Hunger has secured a \$1 million USDA grant to support local food hubs, including district schools.

9. **Montana School Boards Association Report**

Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn stated that Montana School Boards Association has not met but highlighted the MCEL Conference coming up. She encouraged trustees to attend a Trustee Engagement session on Thursday at 2:10 p.m. during the MCEL Conference.

10. **Parent Council Visit Reports**

Trustee Kay Satre provided a report from the Jim Darcy Elementary School Parent Council Meeting. The meeting included a report from Principal Jill Nyman on upcoming conferences, aiming for 100% engagement this year compared with 97% in the fall and 98% in the spring last year. The meeting also covered I-Ready and Acadience assessments, with guidance for parents on interpreting fall reports. Several teachers presented requests for additional resources, including modest monthly budgets for snacks and supplementary materials to support the new reading curriculum. The PTO operates through three committees—Family Engagement, Teacher Support, and Fundraising—each sharing updates on their work. Trustee Satre noted the enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment of PTO members in supporting students’ learning experiences.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee provided a report from the Helena High School Parent Council Meeting. There was significant excitement following the recent bond passage and the prospect of a new school. Principal Kessler discussed strategies to improve student performance in math and reading, noting that many students are very close to proficiency and that small, targeted efforts could make a meaningful difference.

That concluded the Reports portion of the agenda. The Board of Trustees moved on to review upcoming meetings.

VIII. UPCOMING MEETINGS

Board Chair Jennifer McKee reviewed upcoming committee and board meetings, and the Board then moved to final comments.

IX. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

There were no further comments.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Jennifer McKee adjourned the meeting at 9:01 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary

Date



Superintendent

Rex Weltz
324-2001

Business Manager

Janelle Mickelson
324-2040

Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting

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

Friday, October 24th, 2025
12:00 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted.

Jennifer McKee, Chair
Jennifer Walsh, Vice Chair
Kay Satre, Trustee
Siobhan Hathhorn, Trustee
Jenny Murnane Butcher,
Trustee
Linda Cleatus, Trustee
Janet Armstrong, Trustee
Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Janelle Mickelson, Business Director
Todd Verrill, Facilities Director
Gary Myers, Director of Educational
Technology
Kaitlyn Hess, Data & Federal Programs
Director
Justine Alberts, Assistant Superintendent
PreK-5
Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
Taylor Lassiter, Communications Specialist
Jane Shawn, HEA President
Shane Swandal, Hulteng CCM, Inc.
Erin Gallagher, Trustee Candidate
Caitie Butler, Trustee Candidate
Several Representatives of A&E + SMA
Many guests of the public as well as Helena School District Staff

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chair Jennifer McKee called the meeting to order at 12:01 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.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment and the Board of Trustees moved on to review the Item For Action.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Item For Action

1. Approve Committee Recommendation of A&E + SMA as Helena High School Architect

Mr. Todd Verrill, Facilities Director, presented the action item, *Approve Committee Recommendation of A&E + SMA as Helena High School Architect* to the Board of Trustees. Facilities Director Todd Verrill recommended the Board of Trustees award the Helena High School addition and renovation project to A&E + SMA Design. Seven firms submitted qualifications, and a seven-member committee reviewed the submissions, shortlisting three for interviews. After interviews, A&E + SMA Design was selected based on their experience and proven track record with the district. Representatives from A&E + SMA were present and addressed questions from the Board of Trustees.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion for the following action item, “*Approve Committee Recommendation of A&E + SMA as Helena High School Architect*.”

Motion: Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn moved to approve the action item *Approve Committee Recommendation of A&E + SMA as Helena High School Architect* as presented. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

B. Item For Information

1. Interview of Candidates for Board of Trustees Vacancy

The Board conducted interviews for the current Board of Trustees vacancy with two candidates, Ms. Erin Gallagher and Ms. Caitie Butler. During these interviews, the Board also responded to questions posed by the candidates. Applications for the vacant position will be accepted through October 31, 2025. Additional candidate interviews are scheduled for October 28 and November 7, 2025, with the Board’s final selection and appointment expected following the conclusion of the November 7 interviews.

V. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Trustees thanked the candidates for their interest and discussed the time commitment, challenges, and rewards of Board service. They emphasized the importance of community engagement, and the value of diverse trustee backgrounds. Several trustees shared brief reflections on balancing service with family and work. Superintendent Weltz expressed appreciation to the candidates and clarified that his role in the appointment process is limited to answering questions and does not include participating in the final selection.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Jennifer McKee adjourned the meeting at 1:18 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary

Date



Superintendent

Rex Weltz
324-2001

Business Manager

Janelle Mickelson
324-2040

Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting

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

Friday, November 7th, 2025
12:00 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted.

Jennifer McKee, Chair
Jennifer Walsh, Vice Chair
Kay Satre, Trustee
Siobhan Hathhorn, Trustee
Jenny Murnane Butcher,
Trustee
Linda Cleatus, Trustee
Janet Armstrong, Trustee
Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Janelle Mickelson, Business Director
Todd Verrill, Facilities Director
Kaitlyn Hess, Data & Federal Programs
Director
Justine Alberts, Assistant Superintendent
PreK-5
Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
Taylor Lassiter, Communications Specialist
Jane Shawn, HEA President
Shane Swandal, Hulteng CCM, Inc.
Katrina Chaney, Lewis & Clark County Superintendent of Schools
Becca Leaphart, HEF Executive Director
Randy Parmer, Senior Systems Administrator
Members of the Slate + RTA Architecture Team
Several Candidates for the Vacant Trustee Position
Many guests of the public as well as Helena School District Staff

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chair Jennifer McKee called the meeting to order at 12:00 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 hear general public comment.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment and the Board of Trustees moved on to hear the Superintendent's Report.

IV. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Rex Wertz presented his Superintendent's Report to the Board of Trustees, covering a proposed early retirement incentive for teachers, which will be reviewed by the Budget and Finance Committee and subsequently by the full Board of Trustees.

That concluded the Superintendent's Report portion of the agenda after which the trustees proceeded to hear an item for action.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Item For Action

1. Approve Committee Recommendation of Slate + RTA as Capital High School Architect

Mr. Todd Verrill, Facilities Director, presented the action item, *Approve Committee Recommendation of Slate + RTA as Capital High School Architect*, to the Board of Trustees. Facilities Director Todd Verrill recommended the Board of Trustees award the Capital High School addition and renovation project to Slate + RTA. Eight firms submitted qualifications, and a seven-member committee reviewed the submissions, shortlisting three for interviews. After the interviews, Slate + RTA was selected as the committee's recommended firm. Representatives from Slate + RTA were present and responded to questions from the Board of Trustees.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee commented, "At this point I would entertain a motion for the following action item, *Approve Committee Recommendation of Slate + RTA as Capital High School Architect*."

Motion: Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn moved to approve the action item, *Approve Committee Recommendation of Slate + RTA as Capital High School Architect*. Trustee Jennifer Walsh

seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0; motion carries unanimously.

That concluded the approval of the Item for Action. The Board of Trustees moved on to the Item For Information, *Interview of Candidates for Board of Trustees Vacancy*.

B. Item For Information

1. Interview of Candidates for Board of Trustees Vacancy

The Board conducted interviews with four candidates—Mr. Allen Cormany, Mr. Keller Higbee, Ms. Stephi Johnson, and Mr. Keith Meyer—for the vacant Board of Trustees position. During the interviews, the Board also addressed questions posed by the candidates. Applications for the position were accepted through October 31, 2025, with additional interviews conducted on October 24 and October 28.

Following the interviews, the Board engaged in thoughtful deliberation and proceeded to vote on their final selection.

C. Item For Action

1. Appoint a Trustee to Vacant Trustee Position

Board Chair Jennifer McKee commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion for the following action item, “*Appoint a Trustee to Vacant Trustee Position*.”

Motion: Trustee Jenny Murnane Butcher moved to appoint Mr. Keith Meyer to the vacant trustee position. Trustee Jennifer Walsh seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 6-1; motion carries. *(Please note that Trustee Linda Cleatus voted against.)*

Mr. Keith Meyer was officially sworn in as a member of the Helena Public Schools Board of Trustees by Ms. Katrina Chaney, Lewis & Clark County Superintendent of Schools.

VI. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

The Board and Superintendent expressed appreciation for all individuals who applied for positions, recognizing their passion, sincerity, and willingness to contribute. They encouraged continued involvement in district opportunities, noting that many openings exist for community participation. Additionally, discussion included the possibility of district administration developing a long-term

strategic plan. Board members observed that such a plan could help guide district goals and priorities, and they expressed openness to revisiting the concept in the future.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Jennifer McKee adjourned the meeting at 2:06 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary

Date

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Item IV.B.1.

Meeting Date: 11/21/2025

☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

☐ Review of Agenda

☐ General Public Comment

☐ Consent Action Items

☒ Item For Action

☐ Board/Superintendent Comments

☐ Adjournment

Item Title: **Item For Action**
1. Approve Committee Recommendation of Mosaic/Cushing Terrell as Kessler Elementary Architect

Board Action	1st Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Other
Hathhorn					
McKee					
Satre					
Murnane Butcher					
Cleatus					
Walsh					
Armstrong					
Meyer					



Selection Criteria Scoring Form - Helena School District
 Kessler Elementary New Construction and Site Renovation
 Selection Committee Ranking Summary - **POST INTERVIEW**
 Rank each firm with a numerical rating of 1, 2, or 3 based on quality of interview

Interview	Mosaic / Cushing Terrell	Dowling / ALSC	CWG / Integrus
Committee member 1	1	3	2
Committee member 2	2	1	3
Committee member 3	1	3	2
Committee member 4	1	3	2
Committee member 5	1	3	2
Committee Member 6	1	3	2
Committee Member 7	1	3	2
TOTAL	8	19	15
Ranking	1	3	2

The firm with the lowest total score will be recommended to the board for fee negotiation



Selection Criteria Scoring Form - Helena School District
 Kessler Elementary New Construction and Site Renovation
 Design RFQ Interviews
 Committee Member Signature Consensus on Scoring


 Procurement Officer Signature


 Committee Member Signature


 Committee Member Signature


 Committee Member Signature


 Committee Member Signature


 Committee Member Signature


 Committee Member Signature

 Committee Member Signature

November 18th, 2025

Date: _____

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Item V.

Meeting Date: 11/21/2025

☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

☐ Review of Agenda

☐ General Public Comment

☐ Consent Action Items

☐ Item For Action

☒ Board/Superintendent Comments

☐ Adjournment

Item Title: **Board/Superintendent Comments**

HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting

Item VI.

Meeting Date: 11/21/2025

☐ Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance

☐ Review of Agenda

☐ General Public Comment

☐ Consent Action Items

☐ Item For Action

☐ Board/Superintendent Comments

☒ Adjournment

Item Title: **Adjournment**