



**Superintendent**

Rex Wertz  
324-2001

**Business Director**

Sam Holman  
324-2040

## Board of Trustees Meeting

Lincoln Center  
1325 Poplar St., Helena, MT 59601  
and via TEAMS

**Tuesday, March 10, 2026**  
5:30 p.m.

### MINUTES

**ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted:**

Jennifer McKee, Chair  
Jennifer Walsh, Vice Chair  
Siobhan Hathhorn, Trustee  
Linda Cleatus, Trustee  
Kay Satre, Trustee  
Jenny Murnane Butcher,  
Trustee  
Delaney Lynch, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees  
Rex Wertz, Superintendent  
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent  
Sam Holman, Business Director  
Todd Verrill, Facilities Director  
Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director  
Gary Myers, Director of Educational  
Technology  
Justine Alberts, Assistant Superintendent  
Lona Carter, Student Health Services and Special Education Director  
Taylor Lassiter, Communications Specialist  
Jane Shawn, HEA President  
Representatives from SMA/A&E and Dick Anderson Construction  
Representatives from Slate/RTA Architecture and Langlas  
Representatives from Mosaic Architecture/Cushing Terrell and Golden Eagle/Swank Enterprises  
Shane Swandal, Owner's Construction Representative  
Alec Pinero, Owner's Construction Representative  
Many guests of the public, as well as Helena School District staff and students

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

Board Chair Jennifer McKee called the meeting to order at 5:31 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 proposed changes.

The Board of Trustees then moved on to hear recognitions.

**III. RECOGNITIONS**

**A. Special Olympics Coach of the Year Award & Special Olympics State Bowling Tournament Awards**

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to C.R. Anderson Middle School Paraeducator Chris Findley, who has been honored as the Special Olympics Coach of the Year. This distinguished recognition reflects her outstanding leadership, dedication, and commitment to empowering student-athletes through inclusive athletics and meaningful opportunities for success.

The Board is also honored to recognize the following students who earned gold medals at the Special Olympics State Bowling Tournament: Gavynn Hilke, Parker Selch, Brynlee Caprara, Chance Raynor, Harlei Knuth, Brecken Caprara, Cael Thuotte, David Peterson, and Zoe Guinyard.

Congratulations as well to the following medal recipients: Logan Grant – Silver Medal; Ivanna Maw – Bronze Medal; and Brielle Thuotte – Silver Medal.

The Board extends its appreciation to our dedicated coaches — Chris Findley, Shiloh Corcoran, and Rebecca Cleveland — for their continued leadership and unwavering support of our student-athletes.

**B. Capital High School 2026 DECA State Career Development Conference Recognition**

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to Capital High School for its outstanding achievements at the 2026 DECA State Career Development Conference.

Byron Lloyd was named Montana DECA Member of the Year. The Member of the Year Award recognizes an exceptional chapter member for distinguished leadership, dedication, performance, and commitment to Montana DECA. Recipients are selected by the State Director and the Montana DECA Executive Council and are honored at the State Career Development Conference.

Capital High School once again earned Gold Certification for its School-Based Enterprise, Bear Necessities, demonstrating excellence in business operations and student leadership.

Capital High School also received DECA Thrive Level Recognition, a prestigious national distinction awarded to chapters that demonstrate exceptional achievement in membership and chapter campaigns. Thrive Level chapters exemplify strong community service, school outreach, and innovation, meeting rigorous national campaign requirements.

The Board further extends its appreciation to Advisor Jessica Freeman for her leadership, dedication, and continued support of Capital High School DECA students.

C. **Helena High School 2026 DECA State Career Development Conference Recognition**

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to Helena High School for its outstanding accomplishments at the 2026 DECA State Career Development Conference.

Cate Hardan was named State Champion in Hotel & Lodging Management, demonstrating exceptional skill and professionalism in competitive events.

Meadow Brown-Wilson was named State Champion in Marketing Communications, reflecting excellence in strategic thinking, presentation, and marketing expertise.

Helena High School once again earned Gold Certification for its School-Based Enterprise, The Catty Shack, recognizing excellence in business operations and student leadership.

The Board further extends its appreciation to Advisor Kacey Askin for his leadership, mentorship, and continued dedication to supporting Helena High DECA students.

D. **NFHS Heart of the Art Award**

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to Capital High School educator Laura Brayko on her receipt of the NFHS Heart of the Art Award. This distinguished honor recognizes individuals who exemplify the positive heart of the arts and who embody the core mission of education-based activities. Ms. Brayko is celebrated for her exceptional dedication to arts education, her ability to inspire creativity and confidence in students, and her commitment to fostering inclusive, engaging learning environments. Through her passion, leadership, and advocacy for the arts, she has made a meaningful and lasting impact on student growth, school culture, and the broader community. Her work reflects the transformative power of arts education and exemplifies excellence in teaching and professional service.

E. **2026 Montana Thespian Festival Recognition - Capital High School**

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to the following Capital High School students for their outstanding achievements at the 2026 Montana Thespian Festival:

Eden Guthrie – Recipient of the Outstanding Character Physicality Award.

Araya Harrison – Elected to one of five State Thespian Officer positions; received a Superior Rating for her monologue and qualified to compete at the International Thespian Festival.

Brycen Lougee – Received a Superior Rating for his monologue and qualified to compete at the International Thespian Festival.

The Board also recognizes and thanks Laura Brayko for her unwavering dedication and leadership, which continues to play an instrumental role in the success of these students and the Capital High School theater program.

F. **2026 Montana Thespian Festival Recognition - Helena High School**

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to the following Helena High School students for their outstanding achievements at the 2026 Montana Thespian Festival:

Abigail Zelenak – Recipient of the Outstanding Make-Up Award.

Natalie Zimmerman – Recipient of the Outstanding Set Design Award.

The Board further congratulates the entire cast for earning the Outstanding Ensemble Award and achieving an overall Superior rating for their performance.

The Board also extends its appreciation to Roger Scruggs for his steadfast leadership, dedication, and support, which have been instrumental in the continued success of these students and the Helena High School theater program.

G. **All-State Swimming Recognition - Capital High School**

The Board of Trustees proudly extends its sincere congratulations to Elizabeth Urban for her exceptional accomplishments as State Champion in the 100-Yard Butterfly and State Champion in the 100-Yard Breaststroke. Her dedication, perseverance, and commitment to excellence have earned her these distinguished titles and reflect the highest standards of athletic achievement. The Board also expresses its sincere appreciation to Coach Karen Zielinski for her steadfast leadership, encouragement, and mentorship, which continue to positively impact Elizabeth and all of the student-athletes she guides.

H. **State Wrestling Recognition - Capital High School**

The Board of Trustees is pleased to recognize and congratulate Taylor Lay on capturing the title of State Champion. This remarkable accomplishment reflects her determination, discipline, and competitive excellence throughout her wrestling career. The Board also extends its appreciation to Coach Cliff McKay for his dedication, leadership, and commitment to supporting student-athletes in achieving success both on and off the mat.

## IV. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Wertz presented his Superintendent's Report to the Board of Trustees and discussed topics with the Trustees including, but not limited to:

### Recognitions

- Maintenance Worker Appreciation Day – March 6
- Thank you to Callie Aschim & the Chamber of Commerce for hosting Community Outreach: Brews & Blueprints. The next event will be March 25 at 5:30 p.m. at Brothers Tapworks.
- Congratulations to the following 105.3 KMTX Teachers of the Month Recipients:
  - Elyse Ramirez, Smith Elementary School – November
  - Meghan Dolphay, Kessler Elementary School – January
- Thank you to Becca Leaphart, Brenda Carney, and the Helena Education Foundation for hosting their biennial Trading Places event. This meaningful initiative continues to strengthen connections and foster collaboration in support of our schools and community.
- Thank you to Principal Shinkle and educators Shay Coil, Mikayla Nickol, and Sheri Johnston for the invitation to read to Mrs. Johnston's second-grade class in celebration of Read Across America. It was a true pleasure to spend time with our students and share in such a meaningful literacy event.
- Thank you to educators Lucas Canney and Tom Kain, along with the many outstanding local businesses and sponsors, for hosting the 2026 Winter Trades Day. This event provides our students with valuable hands-on experiences and meaningful exposure to career pathways within our community.
- Thank you to the Holter Museum of Art and artists Leah, Cassie, and Katie for hosting the six-week Artists in Schools Residency Program at Kessler Elementary and Broadwater Elementary. Special thanks to the Montana Arts Council and the Robert Lehman Foundation for their generous grant funding, which made this enriching opportunity possible for our students.
- Thank you to Jeremy Slead and Christina Sieminski for inviting me to participate in PEAK Middle and High School's Great Conversations event. It was a pleasure to engage with students on leadership, collaboration, and personal growth.
- I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to The Boeing Company for its generous \$100,000 grant to the Helena Education Foundation. This significant investment will expand hands-on robotics learning opportunities at our high schools and strengthen K–12 professional development across the district, further enriching educational experiences for our students and staff.
- Other

### New Business

- Facilities Bond Projects –
  - HHS/PAL Precedent Tour-Spokane, Washington - December
  - KESS Precedent Tour-Spokane, Washington - January
  - CHS Precedent Tour- Spokane, Washington - March
  - Bond/Construction/Facility Meetings
    - HHS Project-HHS, PAL, District Kitchen, Stadium
      - Naming and Sponsorship Investigation  
The new stadium, adjacent to Helena High School, will feature a turf field with a projected \$2 million replacement cost in 10 years. There was a discussion about naming rights and sponsorship opportunities as a way to

offset future maintenance costs without burdening the district's funds or taxpayers. The conversation emphasized maintaining community connection and pride through the stadium name while ensuring a transparent and competitive process guided by legal counsel. Some Trustees also highlighted the significance of the name beyond funding, noting its role in reinforcing community identity. Superintendent Wertz confirmed that this is an initial discussion and that many more conversations and proposals will follow to balance financial practicality with community engagement.

- CHS Project
  - Offsite Tours
- KESS Project – Pass
- Grow Our Own
  - Legal Counsel Presentation
  - Book Study – UDL Playbook for School and District Leaders – Katie Novak & Mike Woodlock
- Mentoring Program
- New Podcast Series – From the Ground Up
- CMS Ongoing Work -
  - Compensation Philosophy
  - Pay Plan Rules
  - Independent and Administrative Salary Matrix
  - Activity/Athletic Coaching Compensation Market Analysis
- District Academic Focus Work – 2026-2027
  - Academic Performance Indicators and Targets
  - Data Dashboard
  - Behaviors and Academic Growth Correlation
    - Book Study – Behavior Code – Jessica Minahan & Nancy Rappaport
- Bridged Health Alliance
  - Update – Signed Agreements
- Copy/Print Center Equipment Lease Contracts and Efficiency Upgrades
  - Mr. Myers
- Dr. Plucker Gifted & Talented Program Review
- Ameresco Energy Audits Across the District (Elementary)
- Planning and Preparation for the 2026 – 2027 School Year Budget
  - Administrative Preparation and Work Sessions
- No School March 30 – April 3: Spring Break
- Cell Phone Usage
- Other

### **Outreach/Meetings**

- AA Superintendents Weekly Meeting
- Bond/Construction/Facility Meetings
  - Owner's Rep
  - HHS Project - Architect Team & Construction Team
  - HHS/PAL Community Meeting
  - CHS Project - Architect Team & Construction Team
  - KESS Project - Architect Team & Construction Team

- AASA National Conference on Education
- Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
- Community Outreach – Brews and Blueprints
- Board Leadership
- Legal Counsel
- HEA
- HEF
- HEF Executive Committee
- Parent Advisory Committee
- HEF/Boeing Press Event
- Health Benefits Committee
- Helena Food Share Board of Directors
- Helena Food Share Finance Committee
- Carroll College Collaboration
- Cabinet & Leadership
- TV, Print, Radio, and Media
- Other

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

**V. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no general public comment.

The Board of Trustees proceeded to hear the Facilities Bond Projects Updates.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Items for Information - Facilities Bond Projects Updates**

**1. Capital High School Update**

Representatives from Slate and RTA Architecture provided an update on the Capital High School design process. The team reported that work on the schematic design is progressing and is anticipated to be completed by March 27. They reviewed preliminary construction phasing plans and noted that early work may include concrete installation and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) components to help prepare the site for the larger phases of construction scheduled for the summer months.

The design team also shared that administrators and teachers recently participated in tours of six schools to help inform design priorities for Capital High School. Feedback from those visits highlighted the importance of natural light, well-designed commons-areas, and functional learning spaces. In addition, the team reported that work continues with district staff to refine program space needs, including classroom sizes and quantities. Representatives also discussed plans to

begin the pre-selection process for mechanical, electrical, and plumbing trades to ensure long-lead materials and equipment can be secured early and help maintain the project timeline.

Representatives from Slate and RTA Architecture addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

2. **Helena High Campus Update**
  - a. **Helena High School**
  - b. **Project for Alternative Learning (PAL)**
  - c. **District Kitchen**
  - d. **Competition Stadium**

Mr. Tim Meldrum of SMA and A&E provided an update on the Helena High School campus project. Mr. Meldrum reported that the project has progressed through the schematic design phase and that a recent cost analysis confirmed the project is currently on budget. He noted that the design team is now in the design-development phase, focusing on refining individual spaces and confirming building systems, including electrical, mechanical, cabinetry, finishes, and technology needs.

Mr. Meldrum shared that extensive engagement has taken place with Helena High School staff and district programs, including approximately 40–45 meetings with departments such as PAL, special education, culinary, marketing, and general education to ensure program needs are accurately reflected in the design. The design team also met with the district’s security consultant to review safety features and incorporate updated security approaches into the plans.

He reported that the design development phase is expected to conclude around April 16, after which the project will move into construction documentation. Preparations are underway for early construction activities, with site work anticipated to begin in June, starting at the south end of the campus and progressing north. Additional cost estimates will be completed as the design is further refined to ensure the project remains aligned with the approved budget.

Mr. Meldrum addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

The Board of Trustees took a brief recess and, upon returning, proceeded to review the Items for Information.

## **B. Items for Information**

### **1. Policy 2010: Instructional Program**

Ms. Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director, presented the information item, *Policy 2010: Instructional Program*. This policy was up for periodic review, with no substantive changes made during the Policy Committee Meeting when it was reviewed. It outlines that the School District provides instructional programs for grades pre-kindergarten through twelve and that the grouping and housing of instructional levels within school facilities are determined by plans developed by

the Superintendent and approved by the Board. The policy also states that students are assigned to classrooms or instructional groups based on factors such as class size, peer relationships, student–teacher relationships, instructional style, and other considerations intended to best support the needs of individual students while balancing the needs of others. Ms. Mizell addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

## 2. **Policy 2070: Network Information and Communication Systems**

Ms. Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director, presented the information item, *Policy 2070: Network Information and Communication Systems*. This policy governs student and staff use of District computer systems, networks, and internet access for educational purposes. It emphasizes responsible and lawful use, with supervision by staff and accountability for misuse. Network access is a privilege and may be suspended or withdrawn for violations of the District’s Acceptable Use Procedures, which require parental and student acknowledgment for minors. An update to the policy was made to include language on the responsible and appropriate use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools, aligning with the HPS Student Handbook. The policy clarifies that communications over District networks are not private, outlines security and indemnification responsibilities, and directs the Superintendent to provide training and procedures to ensure broad, lawful, and effective access to District technology resources. No changes were requested when the Policy was reviewed at the Policy Committee Meeting. Ms. Mizell addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

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

### C. **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. Acknowledge FY 2025-26 Out-of-District Attendance Agreements (Helena Resident Students Attending Other School Districts)
5. 2/6/26 Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting Minutes
6. 2/10/26 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 Kay Satre moved to approve the *Consent Action Items* as presented.

Trustee Linda Cleatus seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 6-0; motion carries unanimously.

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

## **D. Items for Action**

### **1. Resolution to Dispose of Personal Property – Outdated and Obsolete Curricular Resources from CHS**

Assistant Superintendent Justine Alberts presented the action item *Resolution to Dispose of Personal Property – Outdated and Obsolete Curricular Resources from Capital High School (CHS)*. The District currently owns various items of personal property consisting of obsolete curricular materials, including but not limited to teacher manuals, student textbooks, and student workbooks. These materials are no longer in use at Capital High School and are currently stored in the book room due to updated curriculum, outdated resources, and in preparation for upcoming updates associated with the building bond project. The Board of Trustees of Helena School District No. 1 expressed its intent to dispose of and/or donate these materials, as they are considered abandoned, obsolete, undesirable, or otherwise unsuitable for school purposes. Individuals interested in obtaining additional information or scheduling a time to view the materials may contact Assistant Superintendent Dr. Justine Alberts at 406-324-2032.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee entertained a motion to approve the *Resolution to Dispose of Personal Property – Outdated and Obsolete Curricular Resources From CHS*.

**Motion:** Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn moved to approve the *Resolution to Dispose of Personal Property – Outdated and Obsolete Curricular Resources From CHS*. Trustee Jenny Murnane Butcher seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 6-0; motion carries unanimously.

### **2. Policy 2020: Student and Family Privacy Rights**

Ms. Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director, presented the action item, *Policy 2020: Student and Family Privacy Rights*. This policy is updated to reflect changes from House Bill 599 regarding parental rights law. Parents may opt their child out of any personal analysis, evaluation, survey, or data collection that does not require personally identifiable information. Parents must opt in to any personal analysis, evaluation, survey, or data collection that requires personally identifiable information, unless that information is essential for establishing a student's education record or for a demographic survey to validate an achievement test used to gain admission to a postsecondary institution. During discussion when this policy was presented to the full Board for information, a question was raised regarding whether it conflicts with Policy 3410: Student Health/Physical Screenings/Examinations. The District's legal counsel clarified that the two policies are not in conflict. Ms. Mizell addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee entertained a motion to approve *Policy 2020: Student and Family Privacy Rights*.

**Motion:** Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve *Policy 2020: Student and Family Privacy Rights*. Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 6-0; motion carries unanimously.

### 3. Policy 3010: Entrance, Placement and Transfer

Ms. Mizell presented the action item, *Policy 3010: Entrance, Placement and Transfer*. This policy is updated to reflect House Bill 168, which permits districts to receive ANB funding for special education preschool students based upon aggregate hours of instruction. Additionally, students with disabilities may be eligible to continue enrollment until they reach twenty-two years of age, unless they have received a regular high school diploma. This policy was presented to the full Board of Trustees for information. The only revision involved reformatting the language in lines 16 through 28 to enhance clarity. Ms. Mizell addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee entertained a motion to approve *Policy 3010: Entrance, Placement and Transfer*.

**Motion:** Trustee Linda Cleatus moved to approve *Policy 3010: Entrance, Placement and Transfer*. Trustee Jenny Murnane Butcher seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 6-0; motion carries unanimously.

### 4. Policy 3097: Use of Video Monitoring Cameras

Ms. Mizell presented the action item, *Policy 3097: Use of Video Monitoring Cameras*, to the Board of Trustees. This policy has been updated to align with parental rights under House Bill 32, allowing video monitoring during events open to the public. At the last Policy Committee meeting, clarifying language was added to specify that no staff member or volunteer may make an audio or video recording of a student without parental permission unless at a public event. This policy was presented to the full Board of Trustees for information. The only revision involved reformatting the language in lines 28 through 29 to enhance clarity.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee entertained a motion to approve *Policy 3097: Use of Video Monitoring Cameras*.

**Motion:** Trustee Jenny Murnane Butcher moved to approve *Policy 3097: Use of Video Monitoring Cameras*. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 6-0; motion carries unanimously.

### 5. Policy 3141: Nonresident Student Enrollment

Ms. Mizell presented the action item, *Policy 3141: Nonresident Student Enrollment*. House Bill 250 changes the out-of-district attendance laws that went into effect on July 1, 2025, and applies to attendance agreements. The Board of Trustees may deny enrollment of an out-of-district student if accepting the student(s) would negatively impact the quality of education for resident students because the maximum student contract hours for a teacher of the class or maximum class sizes under accreditation standards would be exceeded. Additionally, the Board of Trustees may deny enrollment of a nondisabled student who has been suspended in or out of school in any school the student previously enrolled in within the previous three years. Ms. Mizell addressed questions

from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee entertained a motion to approve *Policy 3141: Nonresident Student Enrollment*.

**Motion:** Trustee Linda Cleatus moved to approve *Policy 3141: Nonresident Student Enrollment*. Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 6-0; motion carries unanimously.

## 6. Policy 3410: Student Health/Physical Screenings/Examinations

Ms. Mizell presented the action item, *Policy 3410: Student Health/Physical Screenings/Examinations*, to the Board of Trustees. House Bill 599 requires that a district provide parents with notice of the right to opt out of physical or mental health screenings or surveys and to be notified of the results of any such screenings. The policy has been updated to align with this requirement. Ms. Mizell addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee entertained a motion to approve *Policy 3410: Student Health/Physical Screenings/Examinations*.

**Motion:** Trustee Jenny Murnane Butcher moved to approve *Policy 3410: Student Health/Physical Screenings/Examinations*. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 6-0; motion carries unanimously.

## 7. Policy 7057: Use of Automated External Defibrillation

Ms. Mizell presented the information item, *Policy 7057: Use of Automated External Defibrillation*. This policy has been updated to reflect the components of the district's AED program and changes related to maintaining AEDs in accordance with Senate Bill 86. Specifically, SB 86 changes the requirement for maintaining a written plan for AEDs to requiring only a written notice of the location of the AED be provided to the 911 service covering the area. Ms. Mizell addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee entertained a motion to approve *Policy 7057: Use of Automated External Defibrillation*.

**Motion:** Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn moved to approve *Policy 7057: Use of Automated External Defibrillation*. Trustee Jenny Murnane Butcher seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 6-0; motion carries unanimously.

## 8. Policy 8100: Transportation

Ms. Mizell presented the information item, *Policy 8100: Transportation*. This policy has been updated to reflect legal references and to ensure compliance with House Bill 250 regarding transportation requirements for students with disabilities. Ms. Mizell addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee entertained a motion to approve *Policy 8100: Transportation*.

**Motion:** Trustee Linda Cleatus moved to approve *Policy 8100: Transportation*. Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 6-0; motion carries unanimously.

## 9. Approval of Bid for HMS Roof Project

Mr. Todd Verrill, Facilities Director, presented a recommendation to award the 2026 Helena Middle School Partial Roof Replacement Project to K&K Roofing. The project includes the replacement of approximately 11,980 square feet of roof across six sections. Five qualified contractors submitted bids on March 5, 2026, with K&K Roofing providing the lowest bid at \$229,280, which was \$37,150 below the next lowest bid. Mr. Verrill noted that K&K Roofing previously completed roofing work at Smith Elementary in 2024 with high satisfaction regarding professionalism and workmanship. The project is scheduled for completion during the summer of 2026, prior to the start of the 2026–27 school year. Mr. Verrill addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee entertained a motion to award the 2026 Helena Middle School Partial Roof Replacement Project to K&K Roofing.

**Motion:** Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn moved to award the 2026 Helena Middle School Partial Roof Replacement Project to K&K Roofing. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 6-0; motion carries unanimously.

## 10. Approval of Bid for Jefferson Roof Project

Mr. Todd Verrill, Facilities Director, presented a recommendation to award the 2026 Jefferson Elementary Partial Roof Replacement Project to K&K Roofing. The project includes the replacement of approximately 4,658 square feet of roof across two sections. Four qualified contractors submitted bids on March 5, 2026, with K&K Roofing providing the lowest bid at \$89,018, which was \$1,532 below the next lowest bid. Mr. Verrill noted that K&K Roofing previously completed roofing work at Smith Elementary in 2024 with high satisfaction regarding professionalism and workmanship. The project is scheduled for completion during the summer of 2026, prior to the start of the 2026–27 school year.

Mr. Verrill addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee entertained a motion to award the 2026 Jefferson Elementary Partial Roof Replacement Project to K&K Roofing.

**Motion:** Trustee Kay Satre moved to award the 2026 Jefferson Elementary Partial Roof Replacement Project to K&K Roofing. Trustee Siobhan Hathorn seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Vote:** 6-0; motion carries unanimously.

The Board of Trustees moved on to hear the Reports.

## E. REPORTS

### 1. Student Representatives Report

Mr. Brock Gardipee, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, was not in attendance; therefore, Ms. Delaney delivered the report on his behalf.

We continue to strengthen our connection with our sister school in Kumamoto. We received our first letter from Principal Watanabe. His letter highlighted our continued attempt to grow connections between our students. Principal Watanabe will be here for our graduation ceremony and plans to bring a group of students to their 60th celebration ceremony this December.

We are excited to continue our partnership with the Helena Indian Alliance, from which we will soon be receiving herbs, vegetables, and native plants to harvest this fall.

Our HISET options program has 5 people taking it, and they are working very hard to prepare for tests to earn their diplomas.

#### Recognitions:

1. Congrats to Connor Lamping for taking 3rd and Rylee Murgel for taking 4th at the State wrestling tournament.
2. Good luck to both our basketball teams as they move on to the state tournament.
3. Congrats to our Thespians who received top marks for their production.
4. Thank you, Mr. Hollow, for your work at the AA Band Festival. I heard great things about the performance.
5. Thank you to DECA for putting on a great Night to Shine, with around 890 people in attendance and raising a good amount of money to put toward nationals.
6. Thank you, Mr. Driggers, for your hard work on the bridge competition. Our students get very excited about this opportunity and enjoy it a lot.

#### Upcoming:

1. Our Spring Play will be this weekend at 6:30 p.m., Thursday-Saturday. They would love to see you there.
2. On 3/16 we will celebrate the valedictorians and salutatorians with an evening reception at 6:00.
3. ACTs for juniors will be April 8th while freshmen and sophomores take the PreACT.

- Additionally, that day Spanish 5 students, including myself will take the Seal of Biliteracy test.
4. Finally, the Vigilante Kickoff Assembly will be April 9th at 10:00 and Elementary students on our side of town will be able to come and show their floats they made.

Ms. Delaney Lynch, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, presented her report to the Board of Trustees.

Good evening, Trustees,

As we make our way toward spring break, CHS is busy the next couple of weeks!

#### Registration:

Current 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> graders have completed registration for the upcoming school year.

8<sup>th</sup> grade registration week starts on March 17th, including the annual 8<sup>th</sup> grade tour and 8<sup>th</sup> grade parent night- both hosted at Capital High School

#### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Tours:

Upperclassmen will be giving tours to incoming freshmen on March 17th. This is a joint effort between Student Council and NHS. Upperclassmen will be responsible for showing the incoming freshman around CHS and explaining basic things about how the school operates.

#### Bruin Talks:

Upperclassmen will be visiting current freshmen classes during homeroom to share some advice and answer any questions. This visit is meant to not only encourage collaboration and communication throughout the grade levels but also to keep freshmen motivated and informed about what their future could look like.

#### Spokane School Design Trip:

SLT and DAG group members were invited to visit some renovated high schools in the Spokane area. Participating teachers from a variety of curricular areas joined architects as well as Principal Zanto, Mrs. Kidder, Josh McKay, and Gary Myers in visiting these schools. They left last Monday, 3/2, at 6:00 a.m. in three vans and returned Tuesday night, 3/3. Participants met last Friday to discuss various highlights.

#### Professional Development last PLC Monday, “Equity and Opportunities to Respond:”

Recently, members of the CHS SLT met with Liz Tuss to continue reviewing literacy and engagement strategies at CHS. Last Monday during PLC time, SLT members presented highlights of a PowerPoint that Liz created regarding “opportunities to respond” occurring across classrooms at CHS. Each SLT member presented this information and led a discussion within each of their respective curricular departments.

Night to Shine:

Shout out to Jessica Freeman and CHS DECA for hosting this great community event. There were 22 acts, and they were outstanding! The Night to Shine provides the community with the opportunity to witness so many talented students found in our high schools.

Winter Trades Day- February 24:

A shout out to Mr. Canney for creating this hands-on opportunity for students from CHS, HHS, and East Helena High School. The event was held at the Fairgrounds. We had around 100 students sign up to work with professionals from many different trade areas.

As always, we are looking forward to a great couple of last weeks of 3rd quarter. Go Bru!”

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

**2. Helena Education Association Report**

Jane Shawn, Helena Education Association (HEA) President, presented the Helena Education Association report. Ms. Shawn reported that elections were held at the recent Representative Council and general membership meetings. Ms. Shawn was re-elected as president for another two-year term. Other board members include Kellen Alger as first vice president; Thomas Caffrey and Hillary Potuzak as high school representatives; Jesse Franzen as Helena Middle School representative; Ricki Thompson as elementary at-large representative; and Jessica Hoffman as paraeducator at-large representative. One board position remains open.

Ms. Shawn also shared an update on the mentoring program for new teachers, noting that it is a teacher-driven initiative supported by the district and designed to provide guidance and support from experienced teachers. She emphasized that the program has strong potential to positively impact new staff and strengthen teacher leadership across the district.

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

**3. Facilities & Technology Committee Report**

Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn presented the Facilities & Technology Committee report. Trustee Hathhorn reported that the technology and facilities teams have been preparing systems for spring break, including security checks and updates, and installing iPads and Chromebooks for the robotics program funded through HEF and Boeing.

At Smith Elementary, the HVAC project is nearly complete, and the solar project is currently in the design phase. The Central Elementary earthwork and resurfacing project, awarded to Helena Sand and Gravel for \$71,000, is ongoing. Materials from district warehouses are being relocated to the approved site for the district kitchen, with completion expected by March 31.

Mr. Verrill has been working to manage rising costs for district paper products, which currently total approximately \$13,000 per month for elementary schools and \$6,000 per month for the

high school. Environmental testing at Rossiter was conducted following several reported illnesses, with results confirming no environmental concerns. Hazmat testing has now begun at Kessler and Helena High School.

Trustee Hathhorn addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

4. **Budget and Finance Committee Report**

There was no Budget and Finance Committee report this evening.

5. **Teaching & Learning Committee Report**

There was no Teaching & Learning Committee report this evening.

6. **Policy Committee Report**

Trustee Jennifer Walsh presented the Policy Committee report. Trustee Walsh reported that the Policy Committee reviewed all policies presented to the board this evening. She noted that committee members spent significant time discussing the Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy, asking questions about district software, program availability, and how AI may be used to support student work. The discussion included ways to identify AI-assisted submissions versus student-generated work and how such tools may be appropriately integrated. The committee also reviewed the Instructional Program policy during its first reading, which clarifies that students are assigned to classes and teachers at the district's discretion. Trustee Walsh addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

7. **Health Benefits Committee Report**

Trustee Kay Satre presented the Health Benefits Committee report. Trustee Kay Satre reported on the Health Benefits Committee meeting held on February 26. The committee received updates regarding the health trust and noted that several contingencies remain under review, with responses requested by March 31. These contingencies include confirmation of a Medicare multiple provision within the provider network and review of the pharmacy benefit manager agreement with Capital Rx. The committee also reviewed the health plan's financial performance for the first quarter of the plan year. While revenue was slightly lower due to fewer staff and spouses participating in the plan, overall expenses were approximately \$400,000 lower than the previous year, largely due to decreased claims and savings from the new prescription drug program. Trustee Satre reported that the plan is currently performing better financially compared with the same time last year, and the committee will continue monitoring its performance. Trustee Satre addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

8. **Wellness Committee Report**

Trustee Linda Cleatus presented the Wellness Committee report to the Board of Trustees. Trustee Cleatus reported on the Wellness Committee's recent activities, including the Future Chefs competition, where 60 students submitted recipes and 12 competed, with the winner

advancing to regionals. The committee discussed engaging past participants and alumni to support current students. The committee also focused on nutrition and healthy food access, highlighting the Harvest of the Month program and sharing recipes such as lentil nachos with students and the broader school community. Concerns were raised about the decline in free and reduced lunch applications, with factors including online application challenges, Medicaid disruptions, and systemic enrollment issues. Strategies to improve participation included assisting families during high-traffic school events and addressing systemic barriers. Trustee Cleatus emphasized that accurate participation is critical, as it directly impacts Title funding and student support services. Trustee Cleatus addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

9. **Montana School Boards Association Report**

Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn presented the Montana School Boards Association report. Trustee Hathhorn reported on the recent Montana School Boards Association meeting, noting that much of the discussion focused on internal matters, including strategic planning. The group also discussed questions regarding schools' rights and considerations related to the presence of federal agents on school campuses. Trustee Hathhorn further shared that several districts, including Bozeman and Missoula, have submitted advocacy ideas and resolutions to help shape the Montana School Boards Association legislative platform. She noted that Helena Public Schools may also consider developing and submitting ideas or resolutions in the future. While the next legislative session is not imminent, Trustee Hathhorn emphasized the importance of early collaboration and planning to ensure district priorities are represented. Superintendent Weltz added that AA superintendents plan to meet this summer to begin discussing potential resolution ideas. Trustee Hathhorn addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

10. **Parent Council Visit Reports**

There were no Parent Council Visit reports this evening.

This concluded the reports portion of the agenda. The Board of Trustees then moved on to review upcoming meetings.

## **VII. UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Board Chair Jennifer McKee reviewed upcoming committee and board meetings with the Board of Trustees and Superintendent Weltz. Superintendent Weltz discussed the purpose and format of the district's work sessions with the architects, noting they are intended to provide trustees with additional opportunities to receive information and engage in ongoing project discussions. While some trustees noted that portions of the information may overlap with board meeting presentations and that the daytime schedule can be challenging, Superintendent Weltz emphasized that the sessions are designed to ensure trustees have ample opportunity to stay informed and participate in the process. He clarified that attendance is optional and that the sessions will continue as opportunities for trustees to engage if they are available.

**VIII. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS**

Superintendent Weltz highlighted the success of the third Crosstown game, noting strong student engagement, positive crowd management, and high praise from referees and parents. He acknowledged the efforts of the administration and athletic staff in ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for all attendees, emphasizing the pride and energy demonstrated by the student body. Additionally, Superintendent Weltz addressed upcoming weather-related concerns, including potential snowstorms, fire hazards, and dust storms. Communication plans were in place to update parents promptly regarding transportation and safety measures. Trustees and staff expressed appreciation for the community’s involvement and student pride, noting the positive impact on overall school spirit.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Board Chair Jennifer McKee adjourned the meeting at 8:54 p.m.

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Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary

Date