



**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, April 14, 2026**  
5:30 p.m.

### MINUTES

**ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted:**

Jennifer McKee, Chair  
Jennifer Walsh, Vice Chair  
Janet Armstrong, Trustee  
Siobhan Hathhorn, Trustee  
Linda Cleatus, Trustee  
Kay Satre, Trustee  
Jenny Murnane Butcher,  
Trustee  
Keith Meyer, Trustee  
Delaney Lynch, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees  
Brock Gardipee, Helena 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  
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

Trustee Kay Satre called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m., and the Board participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## II. REVIEW AGENDA

The Board of Trustees reviewed the agenda and determined that recognitions would take place prior to the presentation.

## III. RECOGNITIONS

### A. C.R. Anderson Science Olympiad State Tournament Results

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to the following students from C.R. Anderson Middle School for earning gold medals at the Science Olympiad State Tournament. Their achievements reflect exceptional dedication, teamwork, and excellence in science and academic competition.

Eileen McLane - Gold Medal in Botany and Entomology

Cassie Naipo - Gold Medal in Botany

Connar Gant - Gold Medal in Codebusters

Quinn Cestnik - Gold Medal in Codebusters

Caleb Harmon - Gold Medal in Codebusters and Code Craze

Serena Light - Gold Medal in Code Craze and Entomology

The Board of Trustees commends these students for their outstanding achievements and for representing C.R. Anderson Middle School and Helena Public Schools with distinction. Special thanks to Coach Megan Lane and Coach Leslie Hagengruber for their guidance and leadership, which were instrumental in the students' success.

### B. Helena Middle School Science Olympiad State Tournament Results

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to the following students from Helena Middle School for earning gold medals at the Science Olympiad State Tournament. Their achievements reflect exceptional dedication, teamwork, and excellence in science and academic competition.

Kasen Hicks - Gold Medal in Anatomy and Physiology

Jade Tran - Gold Medal in Anatomy and Physiology

Special thanks to coaches Sara Grotbo, Andrea Towery, and Audrey Howard for their guidance and leadership, which were instrumental in the students' success.

### C. Capital High School Science Olympiad State Tournament Results

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to the following students from Capital High School for earning gold medals at the Science Olympiad State Tournament. Their achievements reflect exceptional dedication, teamwork, and excellence in science and academic

competition.

Rowan Humbert – Gold Medal in Codebusters  
Sydney Harman – Gold Medal in Codebusters  
Elliot Ganno – Gold Medal in Codebusters

Special thanks to Coach DeLacey Humbert for her guidance and leadership, which were instrumental in the students' success.

**D. National Youth Orchestra Selection**

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to Helena High School student Elliot Cleary, who has been selected for the National Youth Orchestra. This prestigious program recognizes outstanding young musicians from across the United States, with approximately 80 students selected through a highly competitive national audition process. Participants will travel to the East Coast this summer for an intensive rehearsal and performance residency before touring internationally with the ensemble. Elliot's selection is a remarkable accomplishment and reflects his exceptional musical talent, dedication, and hard work. The Board of Trustees proudly recognizes Elliot for this outstanding achievement. The Board also extends special thanks to Orchestra Teacher Kevin Cleary for his dedication, mentorship, and support in fostering Elliot's musical growth and success.

**E. NSDA Montana West Coach of the Year**

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to Nick Taffs, Head Speech and Debate Coach at Capital High School, on being named the NSDA Montana West Coach of the Year. This prestigious award honors coaches who exemplify leadership, mentorship, and dedication to speech and debate. Coach Taffs has demonstrated exceptional leadership by fostering team spirit, sustaining student participation, advocating for the program, and highlighting student achievements within the school and community. This recognition reflects not only competitive success but also his lasting commitment to the growth and vitality of speech and debate at Capital High School.

**F. 2026 MFEA AA Speech Coach of the Year**

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to Jen Hermanson, Head Speech and Debate Coach at Helena High School, on being named the 2026 MFEA AA Speech Coach of the Year. This distinguished award, voted on by fellow coaches across the state, recognizes outstanding leadership, service, and dedication to speech and debate. Coach Hermanson has demonstrated exceptional mentorship, fostered student growth, promoted collaboration, and inspired excellence, making a lasting impact on her students, the Helena High program, and the Helena Public Schools community.

**G. NSDA Montana West Student of the Year**

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to Fiona Kuntz from Capital High School, who has been named the NSDA Montana West Student of the Year. This prestigious honor recognizes a graduating senior who exemplifies the tenets of the NSDA Code of Honor,

including humility, integrity, leadership, and service. Fiona has demonstrated exceptional dedication, serving as a role model, fostering collaboration, and promoting excellence within the Capital High Speech and Debate program, making a lasting impact on her peers and the Helena Public Schools community.

H. **Speech and Debate National Qualifiers**

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to the following Helena High School and Capital High School students who have been selected as Speech and Debate National Qualifiers. This distinguished honor reflects excellence in critical thinking, public speaking, research, and performance. Students earning national qualification have demonstrated exceptional skill, dedication, and perseverance through a highly competitive process, representing their schools and the Helena community with distinction.

Elliot Ganno (CHS) - Informative Speaking  
Reese LaFond (CHS) - Original Oratory  
River Muery (CHS) - Congressional Debate  
June Forsythe-Vincello (CHS) - Big Questions Debate  
Claudia Cook (CHS) - Big Questions Debate  
Jack Tobin (CHS) - World Schools Debate  
Kale Covey (CHS) - Expository Speaking, Impromptu Speaking  
Sydney Harman (CHS) - Storytelling, Prose Interpretation  
Price Lester (HHS) - World Schools Debate  
Maverick Franklin (HHS) - Expository Speaking, Impromptu Speaking  
Justice Kitts (HHS) - Expository Speaking, Storytelling

The Board of Trustees commends these students for their outstanding accomplishments and for representing Helena Public Schools at the national level. The Board also extends special thanks to Coach Nick Taffs and Coach Jen Hermanson for their leadership, dedication, and mentorship in guiding students to this level of achievement. Their commitment to excellence in speech and debate is deeply appreciated.

I. **National Merit Finalists**

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to Helena High School students Grey Gildroy and Brady Lay, who have been named National Merit Finalists for the Class of 2026. This distinguished honor recognizes their exceptional academic achievement, outstanding performance on the PSAT/NMSQT, and dedication to excellence in scholarship. Being named a National Merit Finalist places Grey and Brady among the top students in the nation, highlighting their remarkable intellect, perseverance, and commitment to learning. The Board proudly commends these students for representing Helena High School and Helena Public Schools with distinction and excellence.

J. **Helena Education Foundation's Harrison Writing Award and Going to the Sun Art Award Winners**

The Board of Trustees is proud to recognize the exceptional talent of Helena Public Schools students who have received the Harrison Writing Awards and the Going to the Sun Awards, presented by the Helena Education Foundation.

The Harrison Writing Awards honor excellence in expository and creative writing. Their winning prose and poetry will be featured in the annual Pen & Ink magazine, and they will be celebrated at the community launch event on May 6 at the Holter Museum. The 2026 recipients are:

Reese LaFond from CHS for “Whose Flesh”  
Eleanor Kakuk from CHS for “What Should Have Been a 2 Hour Trip”

The Going to the Sun Awards recognize outstanding talent in the visual arts, with winning artwork showcased in Pen & Ink and at the community launch event on May 6 at the Holter Museum. The 2026 recipients are:

Finn Morrison from HHS for "Roadside Mongolian Blessing"  
June Forsythe-Vincello from CHS for "The Story Studio"  
Megan Abelin from CHS for "Shadow's Teeth"  
Reese LaFond from CHS for "The Land Does Not Wait"

The Board commends all award recipients for their creativity, dedication, and exceptional accomplishments, and congratulates them for representing Helena Public Schools with distinction.

#### **IV. PRESENTATION: 2025 District Audit: Tony Gerharz, Manager, Wipfli LLP**

The Board of Trustees received a presentation on the Helena Public Schools 2025 District Audit from Tony Gerharz, Manager, Wipfli LLP. Mr. Gerharz reported that the audit resulted in an unmodified opinion, indicating the financial statements are accurate and reliable. No findings were identified related to internal controls or compliance with federal funding requirements. He noted minor challenges related to timing of federal documentation, which did not delay the audit process. The audit also included a review of the district’s child nutrition program, with no issues identified. Additionally, a new accounting standard related to compensated absences was reviewed, with no changes required to the district’s reported liabilities. Mr. Gerharz addressed questions from the Board of Trustees.

#### **V. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

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

##### **Recognitions**

- Retirement – Lona Carter, Student Health Services & Special Education Director
- C.R. Anderson Leadership and Staff
- April 1 National Paraprofessional Appreciation Day
- April 4 National School Librarian Day
- April 6-10 National Assistant Principals Week
- April 19-25 Public School Volunteer Week/National Volunteer Recognition Week
- April 22 Administrative Professionals Day
- April 28 School Bus Driver Appreciation Day

- Thank you to Callie Aschim & the Chamber of Commerce for hosting Community Outreach: Brews & Blueprints. The next event will be on April 15 at 5:30 p.m. at Brothers Tapworks.
- Congratulations to the following 105.3 KMTX Teacher of the Month recipient:
  - Jamie O'Malley, Helena High School– February
- Congratulations to our students from Helena Middle School and C.R. Anderson Middle School who qualified for the Helena Regional Civics Bee (of the National Civics Bee), hosted by the Helena Area Chamber of Commerce.
- Congratulations to Mrs. Ramirez from Smith Elementary School and her students. All entries that Mrs. Ramirez submitted to Young Writers USA for publication in *Monster Mini Tales: Fictional Worlds* were accepted!
- Other

### **New Business**

- 2026 SYNC Conference
- Applications are now being accepted for the 2026–2027 Student Board Representatives. Packets must be submitted to the district office by Wednesday, April 22 at 4:00 p.m. Interviews will be conducted on May 4.
- April 13–17, 2026: Celebrating the Week of the Young Child at Our Elementary Schools
- Facilities Bond Projects –
  - HHS/PAL
  - CHS
  - KESS
  - Bond/Construction/Facility Meetings
    - HHS Project-HHS, PAL, District Kitchen, Stadium
      - Naming and Sponsorship Investigation
  - CHS Project
  - KESS Project
- Hawthorne Community Center – Update
- New Podcast Series – From the Ground Up
  - Warren Elementary – Kinder Sprouts
- CMS Ongoing Work -
  - Activity/Athletic Coaching Compensation Market Analysis
  - Administrative Salary Matrix
- District Academic Focus Work – 2026-2027
  - Academic Performance Indicators and Targets
  - Data Dashboard
- Board of Public Education Meeting
  - Funding Commission
  - MAST
- Dr. Plucker Gifted & Talented Program Review
- Ameresco
  - Contract Finalization
- Budget Staffing and Budget Planning and Preparation for the 2026–2027 School Year
  - Administrative & Director
  - Teacher
  - Support Services
- Spring Levies

- Elementary General Fund Operations Levy
- Elementary Operations, Infrastructure, and Licensing Technology Fund Levy
- High School Operations, Infrastructure, and Licensing Technology Fund Levy
- JROTC Program
- Community Leadership Meeting - Planning and Preparation
- Planning for the 2026 Summer Conference is underway, with AA Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, and Business Managers in attendance
- May 1 - Vigilante Day – No School Grades 9-12/11:00 a.m. Dismissal K-8
- Mentoring Program – Superintendent Weltz, along with Jane Shawn, Maria Foot, Jake West, and Jill Putnam, presented an update on the District’s mentoring program. The team shared that the program is designed to complement existing Professional Learning Communities by focusing on building district knowledge, fostering connections beyond grade-level teams, and supporting new staff through mentorship relationships. Presenters highlighted strong early interest, with over 35 mentor applications submitted within the first five days. Key components of the program include mentor training, a comprehensive handbook with resources and expectations, structured checklists to guide mentor-mentee interactions, and an emphasis on relationship-building and staff well-being. The program will also include mid-year and end-of-year surveys to evaluate effectiveness and inform continuous improvement. The team noted ongoing collaboration with Human Resources and district leadership to support implementation and mentor matching, with plans to continue development over the summer. The group addressed questions from the Board of Trustees.
- Other

### **Outreach/Meetings**

- 2026 SYNC Conference
- AA Superintendents Weekly Meeting
- Bond/Construction/Facility Meetings
  - Owner’s Rep
  - HHS Project - Architect Team & Construction Team
  - CHS Project - Architect Team & Construction Team
  - KESS Project - Architect Team & Construction Team
  - KESS Community Meeting
- Helena Housing Authority
- City of Helena
- Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
- Community Outreach – Brews and Blueprints
- Board Leadership
- Legal Counsel
- HEA
- HEF
- HEF Executive Committee
- Parent Advisory Committee
- Teacher Advisory Committee
- Helena Food Share Board of Directors
- Helena Food Share Finance Committee
- Cabinet & Leadership

- TV, Print, Radio, and Media
  - KTVH
  - Montana Public Radio
- 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.

## **VI. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Amanda Osborne provided general public comment. Ms. Osborne is a parent of students in the district. Ms. Osborne’s general public comment addressed several key topics, including but not limited to the following: student cell phone use in schools; concerns regarding the impact of cell phones and social media on student learning, attention, and mental health; national and international efforts to limit youth access to social media; and the consideration of policies to restrict or limit cell phone use during the school day, with an emphasis on prioritizing student well-being.

Ms. Courtney McAdams provided general public comment. Ms. McAdams is a parent of a student in the district. Ms. McAdams’ general public comment addressed several key topics, including but not limited to the following: student cell phone use and its impact on engagement; support for district funding measures alongside a request for increased transparency; the need for greater communication of academic performance data and outcomes; comparisons to practices in other districts; concerns regarding curriculum implementation timelines; and student achievement data, including proficiency rates and ACT performance, with an emphasis on prioritizing academic outcomes.

Ms. Danita Light provided general public comment. Ms. Light’s general public comment addressed several key topics, including but not limited to the following: support for and participation in dual enrollment and alternative programs, including PEAK and Explore School; advocacy for continued funding and support of these programs; the importance of inclusive educational opportunities for neurodivergent and homeschooled students; and appreciation for district staff and programs that provide flexible, supportive learning environments.

The Board of Trustees took a brief recess and then proceeded with the Facilities Bond Projects updates.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

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

#### **1. Kessler Elementary School Update**

Representatives from Mosaic provided an update on the Kessler Elementary design process. The presentation highlighted ongoing collaboration with project partners and continued progress through schematic design. The design reflects input gathered from students, staff, and the community, with an emphasis on inclusion, student belonging, whole-child wellness, and connections to the surrounding natural environment. Presenters reviewed key design elements, including the organization of the building around a central “heart” space, learning neighborhoods, and community areas. Updates also included site-responsive features such as integration with the hillside, preservation of views, and access to outdoor learning and play spaces. Additional

highlights included plans for a student-informed mural to be incorporated into the new building and continued development of floor plans and building layout. Representatives from Mosaic addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

## **2. Capital High School Update**

Representatives from Slate/RTA Architecture provided an update on the Capital High School design process. The team reported that the schematic design phase has been completed and submitted, with ongoing collaboration between design teams, contractors, and district staff to review plans and ensure alignment with budget expectations. The presentation highlighted the complexity of phasing construction while maintaining a fully operational school, including plans for multiple phases, temporary classroom spaces, and summer work to address demolition and abatement. Updates also included site and facility improvements focused on safety, traffic flow, and accessibility, as well as the addition of new and renovated learning spaces, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) areas, activity spaces, and a central “heart” for student use. The design emphasizes modern, student-centered learning environments, improved campus organization, and enhanced safety and visibility. Ongoing engagement with staff and students continues to inform the project as planning progresses. Representatives from Slate/RTA Architecture addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

## **3. 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/A&E and Bob Heberly with Dick Anderson Construction provided an update on the Helena High School campus project. The team reported that the design development phase is nearing completion, with continued collaboration among design and construction partners to finalize plans and prepare for upcoming pricing and bidding processes. Updates included progress on the district kitchen project, which is advancing toward completion of construction documents and anticipated groundbreaking in the coming months. The kitchen design focuses on operational efficiency, including production, storage, and distribution functions, along with site improvements for access and logistics. The presentation also included updates on the Helena High School and Project for Alternative Learning (PAL) facility designs, which continue to be refined based on stakeholder input. Project planning includes phased construction and coordination of timelines, with early construction activities expected to begin soon. Ongoing coordination with contractors and subcontractors is supporting cost estimates, material selection, and overall project readiness. Representatives from SMA/A&E and Dick Anderson Construction 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 2085: Graduation Requirements**

Ms. Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director, presented the information item, *Policy 2085: Graduation Requirements*. This policy is updated to reflect graduation requirements in alignment with state standards as well as revised language on waiver of requirements. New language has been added on the ability to achieve credit toward graduation requirements for participation in identified alternative programs. Administration addressed questions regarding the policy.

### **2. Policy 4000: Public Relations**

Ms. Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director, presented the information item, *Policy 4000: Public Relations*. The policy outlines the District's commitment to maintaining open communication with the public, providing opportunities for community input, and ensuring transparency in decision-making. It also establishes the Superintendent's responsibility for developing communication programs and encourages Board and staff engagement with the community through various outreach efforts. Ms. Mizell addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

### **3. Policy 7050: Food Services**

Ms. Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director, presented the information item, *Policy 7050: Food Services*. This policy is presented for periodic review, with updates made to reflect current governing authorities and applicable guidelines. It affirms the District's support of the National School Lunch Program by providing nutritious, appealing meals to students. The District may utilize certain federal funds to provide free meals for eligible students and will incorporate federally provided food commodities into meal preparation. Free and reduced-price meals are offered in accordance with federal and state guidelines, with families informed of eligibility criteria and student participation kept confidential; parents retain the right to appeal eligibility determinations. The District does not accept food donations without Board approval, and any approved donations must meet applicable safety and legal standards. Meal prices are established to fully cover the cost of food service operations, including labor, food, and related expenses. 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. 3/10/26 Board of Trustees Full Board Meeting Minutes**
- 6. Resolution to Dispose of Personal Property – Outdated and Obsolete Technology Equipment**
- 7. Resolution to Dispose of Personal Property – Outdated and Obsolete Facilities Vehicles**

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 Jenny Murnane Butcher 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. Approval of the Helena Public Schools Girls Flag Football Program**

Mr. Eric Peterson, Activities Director, presented the proposed addition of a Girls Flag Football program. The presentation included an overview of growing statewide participation, student interest survey results indicating strong interest among female students, and the program’s alignment with equity considerations under Title IX and the Ridgway Settlement. Mr. Peterson noted that the program is currently recognized as an emerging sport by the Montana High School Association, with the potential for full sanctioning in the future. He also highlighted minimal startup and ongoing costs, supported in part by grant funding. The administration recommended approval of the program as a way to expand student opportunities and engagement. Mr. Peterson addressed questions from the Trustees regarding the information presented.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee entertained a motion to approve the *Helena Public Schools Girls Flag Football Program*.

**Motion:** Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn moved to approve the *Helena Public Schools Girls Flag Football Program*. Trustee Keith Meyer seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

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

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

Ms. Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director, presented the action item, *Policy 2010: Instructional Program*. This policy is up for periodic review with no substantive changes. The policy 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.

Board Chair Jennifer McKee entertained a motion to approve *Policy 2010: Instructional Program*.

**Motion:** Trustee Keith Meyer moved to approve *Policy 2010: Instructional Program*. Trustee Jenny Murnane Butcher seconded the motion.

**Public Comment:** None.

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

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

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

Board Chair Jennifer McKee entertained a motion to approve *Policy 2070: Network Information and Communication Systems*.

**Motion:** Trustee Jenny Murnane Butcher moved to approve *Policy 2070: Network Information and Communication Systems*. Trustee Kay Satre 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**

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 through the fourth quarter and toward graduation, CHS is a busy place to be.

MTSS Bruin Talks:

Before spring break, teachers on the MTSS team organized senior-to-freshman presentations during announcement time. Select seniors visited freshman classrooms and shared items that they wish they had known their freshman year now that their high school careers are winding down.

#### 2026-2027 Registration:

The last week of registration week saw the annual 8<sup>th</sup>-grade tour/visit by 8th graders from C.R. Anderson Middle School. One of the presentation stations was the activity fair. We had almost 40 different clubs/activities representing CHS. This was a great way to welcome incoming freshmen and to get them involved. Incoming freshmen were presented with opportunities to sign up, as well as introductory-level activities for clubs and sports alike.

#### ACT and PreACT Testing:

A big shout-out to Dana Meldrum and Mick Morris for all the time and preparation that went into the testing. Juniors took the ACT and were assigned to various classrooms, and testing was online via a district Chromebook. Sophomores took the PreACT in the gym, and this assessment was paper-and-pencil. A shout out to the maintenance department for setting up chairs and tables in the gym last Wednesday morning.

#### Architect and Department Meetings:

This week, on Monday and Tuesday, Slate/RTA Architects will be meeting with all departments for a class period to discuss programming and space needs. Architects will be showing each department their proposed classroom areas and possible design ideas.

#### Cash On Delivery – Drama Department Play:

Performances start this week and run April 16–18 and April 23–25 at 6:00 p.m. in the Capital High School Auditorium. Tickets are \$8 for students and senior citizens, \$10 for adults, and \$15 for VIP seating.

#### Senior Graduation Speaker Tryouts:

Applications are due Wednesday, April 15 and tryouts will be held on Wednesday, April 22, starting at 3:30 in the library conference room.

I would like to shout out Adam Clinch for quite possibly the most impactful speech I've ever heard. We are looking forward to wrapping up the school year on a high note. Go Bru!"

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

Mr. Brock Gardipee, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, presented his report to the Board of Trustees. "It's great seeing you all again, it's been a while! Helena High has had some great things going on in the past month, so let's get into it.

#### School-wide info:

- We just had our Vigilante Kick-off Assembly, and it was a great time! We had three elementary schools bring over students to show off the projects they made, and it was really cool to see. Students also learned about the parade that takes place and how to get involved, and I know many are excited to get started.
- I would also like to thank HEF for putting on the Distinguished Students and Educator event! It was cool seeing the students surprise the teachers!
- We just finished ACT testing and Seal of Biliteracy testing, and I know everyone who participated did a great job.

Recognitions:

- Congrats to our Mock Trial groups who did great at state. Our Team A took first, while our Team B took second. This is the seventh straight championship for HHS.
- Congrats to our eight athletes who signed to continue their athletic careers in college.

Upcoming Events:

- April 23 is our NHS induction ceremony at the HMS Auditorium at 6:30 p.m.
- AP testing starts in the first week of May.
- And the state music festival is in Helena during the Vigilante parade weekend.”

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

**2. Helena Education Association Report**

Ms. Jane Shawn, Helena Education Association (HEA) President, presented the Helena Education Association report. Ms. Shawn reported on the Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE) annual conference, including the election of a Helena teacher as MFPE President. Ms. Shawn also shared information about ongoing advocacy efforts related to the Respect Campaign, which focuses on wages, fairness, and unemployment eligibility for education support professionals. She noted upcoming participation in a statewide Day of Action at the Capitol and additional professional development opportunities focused on member engagement and organizing. 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. Updates included progress on relocating warehouse facilities to accommodate the new district kitchen project, with materials moved and remaining structures being removed or repurposed at no cost to the district. Additional updates included site cleanup efforts and potential future lease considerations. Trustee Hathhorn reported on recent facilities incidents, including a sprinkler-related water event at Helena High and a power-related equipment issue at Capital High that resulted in a small fire and insurance claim; both have been addressed. Ongoing efforts to manage operational costs were noted, including equipment replacements to reduce supply expenses. Environmental testing at Rossiter continues, with results to date below regulatory levels of concern. Technology updates included ongoing state reporting requirements, administration of ACT and PreACT testing, system upgrades, and equipment replacements. Safety and communication systems were also reviewed and tested, with minor issues identified and addressed. Additional updates included improvements to the district print center and continued efforts to support communication regarding upcoming levies. Trustee Hathhorn addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

**4. Teaching & Learning Committee Report**

Trustee Jenny Murnane Butcher presented the Teaching & Learning Committee report. She highlighted the development of a new analytics and insights platform that provides access to

student benchmark data and allows for analysis by subgroup, classroom, and district levels. The tool is supporting more responsive instructional practices by helping educators use formative assessment data effectively. Additional updates included the review of intervention curriculum efforts in primary grades, with early data indicating successful outcomes at certain schools and potential for broader application across the district. Trustee Murnane Butcher addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

5. **Budget and Finance Committee Report**

Trustee Jenny Murnane Butcher presented the Budget and Finance Committee Report. Trustee Murnane Butcher reported that the district's budget remains in a healthy position as the fiscal year nears completion. The committee reviewed expenditure data, including salary and benefit costs compared to operations and maintenance expenses, noting continued improvement in overall budget health and reduced reliance on interlocal funds for operational costs. The importance of maintaining healthy interlocal balances to support future Moody's ratings and upcoming bond issuances was discussed. The committee also reviewed anticipated year-end interlocal fund activity related to building supply purchases and potential special education costs. In addition, the committee received an update on bond finances and reviewed preliminary budget planning for the upcoming school year, including retirements, staffing changes, and early retirement incentives. Trustee Murnane Butcher addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

6. **Policy Committee Report**

Ms. Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director, presented the Policy Committee Report. Ms. Mizell reported that a significant portion of the meeting focused on reviewing the Administration of Medication policy. The committee worked collaboratively with district nurses to gather feedback and ensure the policy aligns appropriately with district procedures. Ms. Mizell noted that the policy had become outdated over time, and the committee is working to strengthen and refine it through a collaborative process. Additional work is needed, and the policy will return to the Policy Committee for further review before being brought forward to the Board in the coming months. Ms. Mizell addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

7. **Health Benefits Committee Report**

There was no Health Benefits Committee Report this evening.

8. **Wellness Committee Report**

There was no Wellness Committee Report this evening.

9. **Montana School Boards Association Report**

Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn presented the Montana School Boards Association report. Trustee Hathhorn reported that the recent meeting primarily focused on internal strategic planning. She also shared updated information regarding legislative funding for education, bonds, and levies over time, noting that programs such as the STARS Act have provided meaningful support for

school funding. However, she noted that Montana schools still remain behind many comparable states in overall education funding, indicating that additional work remains to be done. Trustee Hathhorn addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

**10. Parent Council Visit Reports**

The Board discussed temporarily removing Parent Council visit reports from the meeting agenda due to the significant number of meetings and limited trustee availability throughout the year. Trustees expressed continued support for attending Parent Council meetings and recognized the value of trustee participation and community connection. The Board agreed to pause the agenda item over the summer, with the possibility of revisiting the process in the future, including consideration of assigning trustees to specific schools.

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

**VIII. UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Board Chair Jennifer McKee reviewed upcoming committee and Board meetings with the Board of Trustees and Superintendent Weltz.

**IX. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS**

There were no further Board or Superintendent comments.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Board Chair Jennifer McKee adjourned the meeting at 10:24 p.m.

---

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary

Date