Helena Public Schools
...a great place to learn

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

# Board of Trustees
# Budget and Finance Committee Meeting

Lincoln Center
and via Microsoft Teams
Tuesday, May 12, 2026
12:00 p.m.

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# MINUTES

## ATTENDEES

**Trustees:**
Janet Armstrong, Committee Chair
Jenny Murnane Butcher, Trustee

**Others:**
Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Jane Shawn, HEA President
Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
Candice Delvaux, Executive Assistant
Lona Carter, Student Health Services & Special Education Director
Taylor Lassiter, Communications Specialist
Sam Holman, Business Director
Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
Dr. Justine Alberts, Assistant Superintendent PreK-5
Dr. Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment and Federal Programs Director
Todd Verrill, Facilities Director
Guest of the Public

## I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

Trustee Janet Armstrong called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. Following the call to order, members of the Budget and Finance Committee and other attendees introduced themselves.

## II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment.

## III. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were made to the agenda.

## IV. REVIEW OF MINUTES

The committee reviewed and accepted the April 14, 2026, Budget and Finance Committee meeting minutes.

## V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

### A. Budget to Actual Reports

Superintendent Rex Weltz and Business Director Sam Holman presented the current budget-to-actual reports for both the elementary and high school districts. The committee reviewed year-end budget projections and noted that the elementary district remains in a positive financial position with approximately 5.5% of the budget remaining, reflecting adjustments for unfilled positions and other budget refinements. Superintendent Weltz also discussed overtime expenditures, which were primarily related to custodial staffing shortages, and noted that additional funding for overtime has been incorporated into the 2026–2027 budget. Recruitment and retention efforts for custodial and paraeducator positions continue to be a focus. The high school district budget was also reviewed, with approximately 11% remaining, and staff reported that both budgets are tracking as expected as the fiscal year draws to a close. Superintendent Weltz and Business Director Holman addressed questions from the committee regarding the financial information presented.

### B. Interlocal Fund Financial Activity

Superintendent Rex Weltz and Business Director Sam Holman reviewed the Interlocal Fund Financial Activity Report. Superintendent Weltz reported that the fund remains in a strong financial position, with expenditures generally consistent with prior years. The committee discussed a recent Chromebook purchase that will be reflected in the next report, as well as routine year-end utility and payroll-related expenditures. Superintendent Weltz emphasized the importance of maintaining a healthy Interlocal Fund balance in preparation for future bond issuances and noted that planned curriculum purchases will occur following the completion of current pilot programs.

An overview of building-level Interlocal Fund balances and other designated accounts was also provided. Superintendent Weltz and Business Director Holman addressed questions from the committee regarding the financial information presented.

**C. Bond Update**

Superintendent Weltz and Business Director Sam Holman provided an update on the district's bond projects. While expenditures have remained relatively limited to date, staff anticipates construction activity and associated costs will increase significantly over the summer months as projects move into active construction phases. The committee received updates regarding project preparations at Capital High School, Helena High School, and the Kessler Elementary project, including classroom relocations, asbestos abatement, utility coordination, site preparation, and construction phasing. Administration recognized the extensive coordination occurring between district staff, architects, construction managers, and school personnel to minimize disruptions during construction. The committee expressed appreciation for the monthly bond expenditure report, noting that it provides valuable transparency regarding project progress and bond fund activity.

**D. Levies Update**

Superintendent Weltz and Business Director Holman reviewed the impact of the recently failed operational and technology levies on the district's FY 2026-27 budget planning. Discussion focused on Montana's school funding formula and the requirement that a portion of annual inflationary funding increases be approved through local operational levies. Administration explained that, because the levies were unsuccessful, the district will receive significantly less operating revenue than originally projected despite increases in personnel and operating costs. The committee also discussed projected increases in utility costs, maintenance supplies, transportation, and other operating expenses, noting that many cost increases continue to outpace the state's allowable annual funding growth. Committee members and administration discussed the importance of continued legislative advocacy related to school funding, including potential changes to the inflationary funding cap and operational levy requirements during the next legislative session. The discussion emphasized the challenges districts face in balancing operational needs while also seeking voter approval for capital improvements, and the importance of providing sustainable funding for both educational programs and school facilities. Superintendent Weltz and Business Director Holman addressed questions from the committee regarding the financial information presented.

## VI. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Trustee Armstrong expressed appreciation for the addition of the monthly Interlocal Fund and Bond Project reports, noting that the reports provide valuable transparency for both the Board and the public as bond projects progress. Superintendent Weltz shared that bond expenditures are expected to increase as construction activity accelerates during the summer months.

## VII. ADJOURNMENT

Budget and Finance Committee Chair Janet Armstrong adjourned the meeting at 12:46 p.m.