



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 Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, June 9, 2026
5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted:

Jennifer Walsh, Chair
Kay Satre, Vice Chair
Janet Armstrong, Trustee
Siobhan Hathhorn, Trustee
Jenny Murnane Butcher, Trustee
Keith Meyer, Trustee
Keller Higbee, Trustee
Lisa Cordingley, Trustee
Ella McCullough, Capital High School Student Representative to the Board of Trustees
Tyson Schulte, Helena High School Student Representative to the Board of Trustees
Rex Wertz, Superintendent
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Sam Holman, Business Director
Todd Verrill, Facilities Director
Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
Justine Alberts, Assistant Superintendent
Taylor Lassiter, Communications Specialist
Jane Shawn, HEA President
Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
Eric Peterson, Activities Director
Lona Carter, Student Health Services & Special Education Director
Representatives from SMA/A&E Architecture and Dick Anderson Construction
Representatives from Slate/RTA Architecture and Langlas
Representatives from Mosaic Architecture, Cushing Terrell and Golden Eagle/Swank Enterprises
Many members of the public, as well as Helena School District staff and students

I. CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and the Board participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. REVIEW AGENDA

The Board of Trustees reviewed the agenda and determined that Action Item No. 2, *Approval of the Health Benefit Committee's Recommendation for Plan Year 2026–2027 Premium Rates*, would be considered prior to Action Item No. 1, *Approval of the Helena Public Schools Baseball Program for the 2026–27 School Year*.

III. OATH OF OFFICE FOR 2026-2027 BOARD OF TRUSTEES STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

A. 2026-2027 Board of Trustees Student Representatives

1. Ella McCullough, Capital High Representative

2. Tyson Schulte, Helena High Representative

Assistant Superintendent Josh McKay introduced the incoming 2026–2027 Board of Trustees Student Representatives, Ella McCullough (Capital High School) and Tyson Schulte (Helena High School). The Board was informed that both student representatives will be formally sworn in and take their Oath of Office at a future Board of Trustees meeting.

IV. RECOGNITIONS

A. Special Olympics State Track Meet Awards

The Board of Trustees is proud to recognize and congratulate the following students for their outstanding achievements at the Special Olympics State Track Meet:

David Peterson – Gold Medalist in Jumping and Throwing

Zoe Guinyard – Gold Medalist in Jumping, the 100m, and the 50m

These remarkable accomplishments reflect the students' hard work, determination, sportsmanship, and commitment to excellence. Their success serves as an inspiration to their peers and our entire school community. The Board also extends its sincere appreciation to Coaches Christine Findley and Shiloh Corcoran for their dedication, encouragement, and unwavering support of these student-athletes. Their leadership and commitment help create opportunities for students to grow, achieve, and shine both in competition and beyond.

Congratulations to David, Zoe, and their coaches on these outstanding achievements. We are proud to celebrate their success and the positive example they set for our schools and community.

B. State Champions in Track & Field – Capital High School

The Board of Trustees is proud to recognize and congratulate the following Capital High School student-athletes for earning State Championship titles during the 2026 Track & Field season:

Brayden Brisko – State Champion in the 100 Meter Dash and Pole Vault
Jameson Canney – State Champion in the 300 Meter Hurdles
Kaelyn Saari – State Champion in Javelin

These outstanding accomplishments are a testament to the athletes' dedication, perseverance, and commitment to excellence both on and off the field. The Board also extends its sincere appreciation to Boys Track Head Coach Lon Carter and Girls Track Head Coach Jared Hunt for their leadership, mentorship, and commitment to developing student-athletes. Their guidance and dedication have played an important role in the success of these championship performances.

Congratulations to these student-athletes and coaches on an exceptional season and for representing Capital High School with pride and distinction.

C. WyoTech Hall of Fame Induction

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere congratulations to Capital High School educator Eric Croft on his induction into the WyoTech Hall of Fame. A 1988 graduate of WyoTech's Automotive Program, Eric built a successful career in the automotive industry before returning to WyoTech as an instructor, where he spent more than a decade teaching and helping develop future technicians. Since joining Capital High School in 2008 as the Automotive Technology Instructor, he has built a highly respected program that equips students with valuable technical skills, industry certifications, and meaningful career pathways. Eric's induction into the WyoTech Hall of Fame reflects his outstanding accomplishments as an educator, mentor, and industry professional. His commitment to student success and lasting contributions to career and technical education have positively impacted countless students and families throughout our community. Congratulations, Eric, on this well-deserved and prestigious honor. We are proud to celebrate this remarkable achievement.

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, the following:

Recognitions

- Welcome and congratulations to Trustee Lisa Cordingley, Trustee Keller Higbee, Capital High School Board of Trustees Student Representative Ella McCullough, and Helena High School Board of Trustees Student Representative Tyson Schulte
- Graduations-Seniors/Admin/Staff/Special Guests/Parents/Community
 - PAL - Senior Speeches
 - Mount Ascension
 - Capital High School
 - Helena High School
- End - of -Year Celebrations
 - Staff Who Make the End of Year So Special
- Congratulations to educator Cassie Koch, who was selected as the Helena Education Association

2026 Educator of the Year

- Congratulations to districtwide paraeducator Molly Meyer, who was selected as the Helena Education Association 2026 Paraeducator of the Year
- Thank you to Callie Aschim and the Chamber of Commerce for hosting Community Outreach: Brews & Blueprints
- Congratulations to the following 105.3 KMTX Teacher of the Month recipient:
 - Kevin Flatow, Helena Middle School - April
- Thank you to the Helena ScareLadies, who presented Helena Public Schools with a \$15,000 check to be put toward the currently enrolled senior meal debit total
- Congratulations to the 2026 Helena Public Schools Retirees
 - Thank you to Mrs. Shawn and Mrs. Delvaux for organizing the 2026 Retirement Celebration
- Thank you to the generous sponsors of the 2026 Retirement Celebration, including Robert Worthy, General Manager of Sodexo, and his team; Jocelyn Doyle, Store Manager of Helena Walmart; Costco; Albertsons; Town and Country Foods; and Forget Me Not Flowers
- Other

New Business

- Special Education Director Position
- Facilities Bond Projects
 - HHS/PAL
 - CHS
 - KESS
- Bond/Construction/Facility Meetings
 - HHS Project-HHS, PAL, District Kitchen, Stadium
 - CHS Project
 - KESS Project
- District Academic Focus Work – 2026-2027
 - Academic Performance Indicators and Targets
 - Data Dashboard
- Budget Staffing and Budget Planning and Preparation for the 2026–2027 School Year
 - Administrative & Director Positions
 - Teachers
 - Support Services
- Planning for the 2026 Summer Conference is underway, with AA Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, and Business Managers in attendance
- Brews & Blueprints Helena High + PAL Campus Groundbreaking Event, North Side of Helena High Campus, June 16, 2026, 5:30 p.m.
- Administration Staff Changes for 2026–2027
- Ongoing Review of Contracts for the 2026–2027 School Year
- End-of-Year Activities
- Bridged Health Alliance
- Other

Outreach/Meetings

- Mann Gulch Field Trip
- AA Superintendents Weekly Meeting

- Bond/Construction/Facility Meetings
 - Owner’s Representative
 - HHS Project - Architect Team & Construction Team
 - CHS Project - Architect Team & Construction Team
 - KESS Project - Architect Team & Construction Team
 - KESS Community Meeting
- Bridged Health Alliance
- City of Helena
- Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
- Community Outreach – Brews and Blueprints
- Grow Our Own
- Board Leadership
- HEA
- HEF
- HEF Executive Committee
- Parent Advisory Committee
- Teacher Advisory Committee
- Helena Food Share Board of Directors
- Helena Food Share Finance Committee
- Board of Public Health
- Cabinet & Leadership
- TV, Print, Radio, and Media
- Other

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

VI. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Emily Hellyer gave general public comment. Ms. Hellyer is a student at Capital High School. Ms. Hellyer’s general public comment addressed several key topics, including but not limited to the following: She expressed appreciation to the Board of Trustees for supporting the addition of girls’ football. Ms. Hellyer shared that she had not previously participated in a fall sport and noted that more than 55 girls at Capital High School have expressed interest in the program. She commented that the opportunity provides increased athletic participation and helps empower young women by offering additional opportunities comparable to those available to male students. She concluded by thanking the Board for its support.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Items for Information - Facilities Bond Projects Updates

1. Kessler Elementary School Update

Representatives from Mosaic, Cushing Terrell, and Golden Eagle/Swank Enterprises provided an update on the Kessler Elementary School design process. Topics discussed included, but were not limited to the following: The project team reviewed the guiding principles that continue to inform

the school's design, including belonging, inclusion, joyful learning, whole-child wellness and safety, community partnerships, and connections to nature. An update was provided on the project's progress, noting that schematic design has been completed and the project has advanced into the design development phase, with the 50% Design Development package recently submitted for district and contractor review. Representatives also reviewed the overall project schedule, including upcoming permitting milestones, utility relocation work, site preparation activities, and the planned groundbreaking in October. The construction team reported that preparations are underway to relocate utilities, complete early site work, and maintain the existing modular classrooms during construction. An update was also provided on the selection of the project's HVAC and plumbing contractor through a competitive procurement process. The presentation concluded with a review of upcoming milestones, including submission of infrastructure plans to the City, continued design development, and progression toward the 100% Design Development phase. The Board of Trustees asked questions regarding the information presented, which were addressed by the presenters.

2. Capital High School Update

Representatives from Slate/RTA Architecture and Langlas provided an update on the Capital High School design process. Topics discussed included, but were not limited to the following: An update was provided on the project schedule, including the commencement of demolition activities, site preparation, installation of construction fencing and trailers, and the phased relocation of school materials in preparation for construction. The project team recognized the collaborative efforts of Capital High School administration, staff, and district personnel in coordinating the transition and preparing the building for construction. Representatives reviewed the design development process, including ongoing cost optimization efforts and value engineering to align the project with the approved budget while maintaining the project's established guiding principles. Design updates included the retention and renovation of several existing instructional and support spaces, planned improvements to mechanical, electrical, and interior building systems, proposed modifications to athletic and music program spaces, and continued site enhancements, including improvements to athletic facilities. The presentation also included an overview of the project's interior design concepts and finish selections, which are intended to reflect Helena's natural landscape and create engaging learning environments. The project team concluded by reviewing upcoming design and construction milestones. The Board of Trustees asked questions regarding the information presented, which were addressed by the presenters.

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 a representative from Dick Anderson Construction provided an update on the Helena High School campus project. Topics discussed included, but were not limited to the successful completion of the first bid phase and the upcoming second bid phase for site and foundation work, progress toward obtaining foundation permits, and continued favorable interest from contractors bidding on the project. Construction activities were reviewed, including

installation of site fencing, utility work by Northwestern Energy, site clearing and grubbing, and the District Kitchen bid process. An update was also provided on project scheduling, budget monitoring, material procurement challenges, and current market conditions affecting construction timelines. Additional discussion included progress on 50% construction documents, interior and exterior material selections, campus wayfinding and signage, building branding concepts, interior graphics, and preparations for the upcoming groundbreaking ceremony. The Board of Trustees asked questions regarding the information presented, which were addressed by the presenters.

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

B. 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. 5/12/26 Board of Trustees Full Board Meeting Minutes

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh 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 Siobhan Hathhorn seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0; motion carries unanimously.

That concluded the approval of the Consent Action Items. The Board of Trustees took a brief recess and then moved on to review the Items for Action.

C. Items for Action

1. Approval of Health Benefit Committee’s Recommendation for the Plan Year 2026 – 2027 Premium Rates

Mr. Rich Franco, Human Resource Benefits Manager, presented Action Item No. 1, *Approval of Health Benefit Committee’s Recommendation for the Plan Year 2026 - 2027 Premium Rates* to the Board of Trustees. Topics discussed included, but were not limited to projected medical, pharmacy, dental, and vision cost trends; the committee's recommendation to increase health insurance premiums by 15.5%, which was approved by a 6 - 4 committee vote; and the impact of joining the Bridged Health Alliance Trust, which reduced anticipated premium increases through stop-loss savings. Additional discussion included factors contributing to healthcare cost increases, including pharmacy trends, primary care shortages, GLP-1 medications, and high-cost claims, as well as claims data demonstrating that a small number of members accounted for a significant portion of overall plan expenditures. Mr. Franco noted that the committee believes the recommended premium increase will help maintain the long-term sustainability of the District's health benefits plan while minimizing the potential for larger premium increases in future years.

Board members engaged in discussion and asked questions regarding, but not limited to, the Health Benefits Committee's recommendation, the projected financial impact of the proposed premium increase on employees and the District, employee enrollment and participation in the District's health insurance plan, comparisons with other school districts' health benefit plans, and potential funding options to offset employee costs. Administration responded to Trustees' questions and indicated that additional information would be provided as needed.

Superintendent Weltz recommended that the Board table the consideration of the Health Benefits Committee's recommendation to allow additional time for Administration, the Health Benefits Committee, the District's consultants, and Bridged Health Alliance to further evaluate the proposed premium increase, explore additional cost-saving opportunities, and determine whether there were options to reduce the financial impact on employees before bringing a recommendation back to the Board for consideration.

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh entertained a motion to table Action Item No. 1: *Approval of Health Benefit Committee's Recommendation for the Plan Year 2026 – 2027 Premium Rates*.

Motion: Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn moved to table Action Item No. 1: *Approval of Health Benefits Committee's Recommendation for the Plan Year 2026 - 2027 Premium Rates*, to allow additional time for the Health Benefits Committee, Administration, and partners to further evaluate options and come to a decision on a recommendation no later than July 9, 2026. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

Public Comment: Ms. Aliah Brown provided public comment. Ms. Brown is a paraeducator in the District. Ms. Brown's public comment addressed several key topics, including but not limited to the following: concerns regarding the impact of the proposed health insurance premium increase on paraeducators and other lower-wage employees; the financial challenges employees may experience as a result of increased healthcare costs; the importance of recognizing the responsibilities and contributions of paraeducators in supporting student learning; concerns regarding employee retention, recruitment, and morale; and the need to consider additional support for employees during future negotiations. Ms. Brown expressed appreciation for the Board's decision to table the health benefits recommendation and encouraged continued consideration of options to mitigate the impact of premium increases on employees.

Ms. Lisa Thompson provided public comment. Ms. Thompson is a paraeducator in the District. Ms. Thompson's public comment addressed several key topics, including but not limited to the following: concerns regarding the proposed increase in employee health insurance premiums and the financial impact on paraeducators; the effect the increased costs would have on employee morale and household budgets; the important roles paraeducators fulfill in supporting students and schools; concerns that paraeducator compensation does not reflect the responsibilities, education, and value of the position; and a request for the District to consider additional support for paraeducators in light of rising insurance costs and other financial obligations.

Ms. Sarah Urban provided public comment. Ms. Urban is an educator in the District. Ms. Urban's public comment addressed several key topics, including but not limited to the following: concerns regarding the rising cost of employee health insurance premiums and the financial impact on

District employees and their families; observations about the increasing employee share of insurance costs over recent years; concerns about changes to health plan benefits and access to primary care services; support for continuing to evaluate alternative insurance options before making a final decision; and encouragement for the District to continue exploring additional solutions and asking critical questions to better support employees while addressing the broader challenges associated with health care costs.

Ms. Emma Schmidt provided public comment. Ms. Schmidt is an educator in the District. Ms. Schmidt's public comment addressed several key topics, including but not limited to the following: concerns regarding the proposed health insurance premium increases and their disproportionate financial impact on 10-month employees, particularly paraeducators; the importance of considering the effect of rising insurance costs on employees with lower wages; the essential role paraeducators play in supporting students and schools; concerns that increased costs could contribute to employee turnover and recruitment challenges; and a request for the District to consider the impact of premium increases on all employees, especially those most significantly affected.

Ms. Madelyn Thomas provided public comment. Ms. Thomas is a paraeducator in the District. Ms. Thomas's public comment addressed several key topics, including but not limited to the following: her 20 years of service as a paraeducator and her commitment to supporting students; concerns regarding the proposed health insurance premium increases and the significant financial impact on paraeducators; appreciation for the Board and Superintendent Weltz's decision to postpone action and explore additional options; the essential and multifaceted role paraeducators play in meeting students' academic, social, and emotional needs; concerns about the long-term affordability of remaining in the profession; and a request that the District continue to recognize and value the contributions of paraeducators.

Vote: 8-0; motion carries unanimously to table Action Item No. 1: *Approval of the Health Benefits Committee's Recommendation for the Plan Year 2026–2027 Premium Rates* to allow additional time for the Health Benefits Committee, Administration, and partners to further evaluate options and develop a recommendation no later than July 9, 2026.

2. Approval of Helena Public Schools Baseball Program for the 2026-27 School Year

Superintendent Rex Weltz and Activities Director Eric Peterson presented Action Item No. 2: *Approval of the Helena Public Schools Baseball Program for the 2026-27 School Year* to the Board of Trustees. Superintendent Weltz recommended approval, emphasizing that the proposal aligns with the District's commitment to expanding student opportunities, increasing school engagement, and fostering a stronger sense of connection and belonging through activities and athletics. He highlighted strong community and business support, including private funding commitments to offset startup costs, the projected ongoing fiscal impact, and partnerships with the City of Helena for facility use. Mr. Peterson provided additional information regarding projected program costs, implementation timelines, scheduling, and operational details. Throughout the presentation, Superintendent Weltz and Mr. Peterson addressed Trustees' questions regarding funding, coaching stipends, implementation, scheduling, facilities, and the program's anticipated timeline for the spring 2027 season.

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh entertained a motion to approve Action Item No. 2: *Approval of Helena Public Schools Baseball Program for the 2026-27 School Year*.

Motion: Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn moved to approve *Action Item No. 2: Approval of the Helena Public Schools Baseball Program for the 2026 - 27 School Year*, with the contingency that all first-year program costs be covered by donations from the Helena baseball community. Trustee Lisa Cordingley seconded the motion.

Public Comment: Mr. Tyler Emmert provided public comment. Mr. Emmert is a former Board member, and his parents are retired schoolteachers. Mr. Emmert's public comment addressed several key topics, including but not limited to the following: he expressed support for the proposed high school baseball program, highlighting strong community interest and successful fundraising efforts to support the program's implementation. He commented on the program's long-term sustainability, noting that fundraising is a common component of school activity programs, and spoke to the value of baseball in providing opportunities for student engagement, personal growth, and community involvement. He concluded by expressing support for equitable coaching compensation.

Ms. Kristen Cetraro provided public comment. Ms. Cetraro is the Capital High School Office Manager and has two children who are Legion Baseball players. Ms. Cetraro's public comment addressed several key topics, including but not limited to the following: she shared her family's experiences with youth and Legion Baseball and spoke to the positive impact the sport has on students. Ms. Cetraro recounted a story of a local student who had left school but expressed a desire to re-enroll if high school baseball became available, emphasizing the role that extracurricular activities can play in fostering student engagement, connection, and academic success.

Mr. Brian Solan provided public comment. Mr. Solan is a community member who has previously collaborated with Helena Public Schools on district energy and deferred maintenance projects. Mr. Solan's public comment addressed several key topics, including but not limited to the following: he thanked the Board for considering the proposed high school baseball program and noted that interest in the program extends beyond the Helena community, with other Montana communities recognizing its significance. Mr. Solan also acknowledged the financial considerations associated with the proposal, expressed support for continued discussions regarding school funding at the state level, and offered his assistance with future legislative advocacy efforts.

Ms. Ashten Broadhead provided public comment. Ms. Broadhead is a Capital High School teacher with 13 years of service in the District and the Head Softball Coach. Ms. Broadhead's public comment addressed several key topics, including but not limited to the following: she expressed her support for the proposed high school baseball program, sharing examples of students who have demonstrated a strong interest in the sport, including one student who transferred to another district to participate. Ms. Broadhead also spoke to the positive impact that school athletics have on student engagement, well-being, and school connection, and encouraged the Board to approve the program.

Vote: 8-0; motion carries unanimously.

3. Approval of Market Adjustment for Targeted Independent Positions

Mr. Jim Kerins, with Communication and Management Services, presented Action Item No. 3: *Approval of Market Adjustment for Targeted Independent Positions*. Mr. Kerins discussed topics including but not limited to the following: the proposed market-based adjustments for six identified independent positions that were determined to be below market through the District's compensation review process; the methodology used to evaluate positions, including market data, job responsibilities, qualifications, and internal equity considerations; and the proposed reclassification process to align identified positions with the District's compensation philosophy and pay plan structure. Throughout the presentation, Mr. Kerins and Administration addressed questions from the Trustees regarding the market review process, classification methodology, and efforts to establish consistent and equitable compensation practices across the District.

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh entertained a motion to approve Action Item No. 3: *Approval of Market Adjustment for Targeted Independent Positions*.

Motion: Trustee Jenny Murnane Butcher moved to approve the *Market Adjustment for Targeted Independent Positions* as presented. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0; motion carries unanimously.

4. Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Independent Salary Matrix for 2026-2027

Mr. Jim Kerins with Communication and Management Services (CMS) presented Action Item No. 4: *Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Independent Salary Matrix for 2026–2027*. Mr. Kerins discussed topics including but not limited to the following: the proposed 2.5% general wage increase for employees on the independent salary matrix, alignment with the District's compensation philosophy and previously negotiated wage increases, support for employee recruitment and retention, and the anticipated fiscal impact of the proposed adjustment. Throughout the presentation, Mr. Kerins and Administration addressed questions from the Trustees regarding the implementation of the wage increase, pay plan consistency, and the District's continued work toward maintaining competitive and equitable compensation practices.

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh entertained a motion to approve Action Item No. 4: *Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Independent Salary Matrix for 2026 - 2027*.

Motion: Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve the *General Wage Increase to the Independent Salary Matrix for 2026-2027* as presented. Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0; motion carries unanimously.

5. Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Administrator Salary Schedule for 2026-2027

Mr. Jim Kerins with Communication and Management Services (CMS) presented Action Item No. 5: *Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Administrator Salary Schedule for 2026-2027*. Mr. Kerins discussed topics including but not limited to the following: the proposed 2.5% general wage increase for administrators; alignment of the recommendation with the District's compensation philosophy and previously negotiated wage increases for other employee groups; ongoing

development of a structured administrator salary matrix to support consistent progression, recruitment, retention, and budget predictability; and anticipated future recommendations related to the administrator salary matrix. Throughout the presentation, Mr. Kerins and Administration addressed questions from the Trustees regarding the distinction between the proposed wage increase and the future salary matrix adjustments, implementation timelines, fiscal impacts, and the District's continued commitment to equitable and competitive compensation practices.

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh entertained a motion to approve Action Item No. 5, *Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Administrator Salary Schedule for 2026-2027*.

Motion: Trustee Jenny Murnane Butcher moved to approve the *General Wage Increase to the Administrator Salary Schedule for 2026-2027* as presented. Trustee Lisa Cordingley seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0; motion carries unanimously.

The Board of Trustees moved on to hear the Reports.

D. REPORTS

1. Student Representatives Report

Ella McCullough, the new Capital High School Student Board Representative, introduced herself and shared that she is looking forward to serving as a liaison between the Board, students, and the school community while providing student perspectives throughout the upcoming school year, including during the Capital High School construction project. Tyson Schulte, the new Helena High School Student Board Representative, introduced himself and expressed his enthusiasm for strengthening communication between students and the Board, ensuring student voices are heard in Board discussions and decisions, and encouraging greater student engagement in district and community initiatives.

2. Helena Education Association Report

Ms. Jane Shawn, Helena Education Association (HEA) President, presented the Helena Education Association report. Ms. Shawn discussed topics including, but not limited to the following: recognition of the 2026 Educator of the Year, Cassie Koch of Helena High School, and 2026 Paraeducator of the Year, Molly Meyer of District Special Education; ongoing efforts of the Forward Together Mentoring Committee to match new teachers with mentors and prepare for new teacher orientation; and appreciation for the Board's decision to table the proposed health insurance premium increase while continuing to explore solutions. Ms. Shawn also expressed her commitment to collaborating with district leadership and the Health Benefits Committee to identify sustainable solutions that support employees and the long-term stability of the health insurance plan. Ms. Shawn addressed questions from the Trustees regarding the information presented.

3. **Facilities & Technology Committee Report**

There was no Facilities & Technology Committee Report this evening.

4. **Budget & Finance Committee Report**

There was no Budget & Finance Committee Report this evening.

5. **Teaching & Learning Committee Report**

There was no Teaching & Learning Committee Report this evening.

6. **Policy Committee Report**

There was no Policy Committee Report this evening.

7. **Health Benefits Committee Report**

Trustee Kay Satre presented the Health Benefits Committee report. Trustee Satre discussed topics including, but not limited to the following: the committee's recommendation regarding the proposed health insurance premium increase; the committee's extensive and collaborative review process, including multiple meetings and opportunities for employee communication and feedback; appreciation for the dedication and commitment of the committee members; and recognition of the personal impact health insurance decisions have on employees while emphasizing the committee's responsibility to maintain a financially sustainable health benefits plan. Trustee Satre also noted the committee's willingness to continue working with Administration to explore additional solutions and anticipated future committee meetings as needed. Trustee Kay Satre addressed questions from the Trustees regarding the information presented.

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 discussed topics including, but not limited to the following: highlights from the MTSBA Board Leadership and Administrative Leadership meeting, including guidance regarding agenda management and maintaining published meeting agendas to ensure public participation; the importance of developing and maintaining a district strategic plan to guide Board priorities and decision-making; and the value of establishing a formal onboarding process for newly elected Trustees. Trustees also discussed current Board practices related to consent agenda voting and inquired about upcoming opportunities to submit resolutions through the Montana School Boards Association.

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.

VIII. UPCOMING MEETINGS

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh reviewed upcoming committee and Board meetings with the Board of Trustees and Superintendent Wertz.

IX. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Superintendent Rex Wertz recognized the service and contributions of departing District staff members Dr. Randall, Mr. Zanto, Ms. Carter, and Mr. Franco, thanking them for their dedication and commitment to Helena Public Schools and wishing them well in their future endeavors. A Trustee recognized the collective efforts of district staff in making the graduation ceremonies successful, including administrators, teachers, staff, and the maintenance department. The Trustee commended the teamwork involved in planning and executing the events and expressed appreciation for the meaningful experiences provided to students and their families.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh adjourned the meeting at 10:25 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary

Date