



Superintendent

Rex Wertz
324-2001

Business Director

Sam Holman
324-2040

Board of Trustees Meeting

Lincoln Center
1325 Poplar St., Helena, MT 59601
and Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, August 11, 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
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
Jenny Jarvis, Student Health Services & Special Education Director
Kaitlyn Hess, State and Federal Programs Director
Erin Hunt, Data and Assessment 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

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 there were no suggested revisions.

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**

Dr. Justine Alberts, Assistant Superintendent PreK-5, introduced the incoming 2026–2027 Board of Trustees Student Representatives, Ella McCullough (Capital High School) and Tyson Schulte (Helena High School). Ms. Sam Holman, Business Director, formally swore in the Student Board Representatives and administered the Oath of Office.

IV. 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

- Facilities and Maintenance-Summer Work
- Sam Holman & Business Office-Close-Out 2025-26 and Start-Up of 2026-27 Budgets
- Successful Summer Services for Students
 - Our nine-week Summer SACC program served 176 students, providing a safe, enriching environment where children engaged in hands-on STEM activities, creative arts, outdoor adventures, literacy enrichment, cooperative games, and community-based experiences. Weekly themed programming encouraged exploration, creativity, and relationship-building while supporting students' social, emotional, and academic development during the summer months.
 - Our Quest Summer School program provided targeted reading and math support for approximately 150 students entering kindergarten through third grade. Seven teachers and nine dedicated paraeducators delivered engaging instruction designed to strengthen essential academic skills. Students also benefited from enrichment opportunities provided by Cohesion, READ Dogs, and their volunteer handlers, LEGO Robotics, and world language guest instructors. Students demonstrated academic growth throughout the program while building confidence and enthusiasm for learning.
- Thank you to the Helena Education Foundation and the Helena Education Association for sponsoring the upcoming 2026 New Educator Orientation.
 - Welcome to 44 new educators for the 2026-2027 school year
- Teacher and Paraeducator of the Year
 - Cassie Koch

- Molly Meyer
- Other

New Business

- AA Summer Summit Conference – Helena, MT
 - Montana High School Association – New Facility
 - Superintendents
 - Assistant Superintendents
 - Business Managers
 - IT Directors
 - HR Directors
- Administrative Changes 2026-2027
 - Erin Hunt, Data & Assessment Administrator
 - Kaitlyn Hess, State & Federal Programs Director
 - Jenny Jarvis, Student Health Services & Special Education Director
 - Ericka Hutton-Parker, Rossiter Elementary Principal
 - Brittany Rutter, Four Georgians Elementary Principal
 - Kelly Connolly, Broadwater Elementary Principal
 - Kellie Boedecker, Central Elementary Principal
 - Nick Radley, Helena Middle School Principal
 - Cal Boyle, Capital High School Principal
- Leadership Transition Trainings with Diane Groves
 - Broadwater Elementary – Spring 2026
 - Central Elementary – Spring 2026
 - Rossiter Elementary – Fall 2026
 - Capital High School – Fall 2026
 - Four Georgians Elementary – Fall 2026
- 2026-27 SY Staffing & Operations
- Academic Performance Indicators and Targets – Working Document
- Long-Term Planning Update
- Facilities Bond Projects
 - HHS, PAL, District Kitchen, CHS, KESS, Stadium
- Beginning-of-the-Year Activities
 - Getting students and staff into the buildings
 - Jane Shawn, HEA President, and educators Maria Foot, Jake West, and Jill Putnam discussed the upcoming mentorship program.
- Transition to New Website
- Brews & Blueprints Capital High School Groundbreaking Event – 5:30 p.m., September 23, 2026
- Brews & Blueprints Kessler Elementary School Groundbreaking Event – 5:30 p.m., October 7, 2026
- Other

Outreach/Meetings

- AA Summer Summit Conference
- Construction & Facility Meetings

- Owner's Representative
 - HHS Project - Architect Team & Construction Team
 - CHS Project - Architect Team & Construction Team
 - KESS Project - Architect Team & Construction Team
 - Brews & Blueprints Helena High + PAL Campus Groundbreaking Event
 - Bridged Health Alliance/Alliant/Allegiance
 - City of Helena
 - Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Board Leadership
 - HEA
 - HEF
 - HEF Executive Committee
 - Helena Food Share Board of Directors
 - Helena Food Share Finance Committee
 - Board of Health
 - Cabinet & Leadership
 - TV, Print, Radio, and Media
 - Other
-
- Other

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

V. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment.

VI. 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 for the project and provided an update on the design and construction schedule. The project has transitioned from the Design Development phase into the Construction Documents phase, with the site and foundations package targeted for submission to the City on September 1. Construction Documents are anticipated to be completed toward the end of the year, with groundbreaking scheduled for October 7. Golden Eagle/Swank Enterprises provided an update on preconstruction and site activities. Temporary construction fencing has been installed, site preparation and utility work are underway, and water and sewer utilities serving the existing modular school building are being relocated to

accommodate construction of the new school. Excavation and foundation work is anticipated to begin in mid-October. The GCCM team continues to refine the Design Development budget, preconstruction planning, contractor procurement, and preparation of future bid packages. The design team also continues to coordinate with District staff, including Facilities staff, on design, site planning, safety and security, and interior finishes as the project advances through the Construction Documents 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: The project team reviewed the continued development of the building design, including improvements to the main entrance, safety and security, the central gathering area, library, academic spaces, Career and Technical Education (CTE) areas, auxiliary gymnasium, and student learning and gathering spaces. The team also discussed improvements to building connectivity, natural daylight, and renovations to the existing academic areas. Langlas provided an update on construction activities, including the completion of temporary classroom spaces, expansion of the west parking lot, basement demolition, and installation of containment walls in preparation for students returning to the building. The team is also preparing upcoming construction packages for the auxiliary gymnasium and CTE building, while continuing to review design development pricing to ensure the project remains aligned with the design and budget. Upcoming work will include additional demolition, concrete cutting, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing work, site excavation, and continued coordination between Langlas and the design team as the project progresses. 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 Tim Tholt with Dick Anderson Construction provided an update on the Helena High School campus project. Topics discussed included, but were not limited to, the following: The project team provided an update on the District Kitchen, Helena High School, and PAL projects. Construction of the District Kitchen is underway following completion of bidding and contracting, with the City permit received in late July. Site demolition has been completed, utility work is underway, and construction of the building foundations has begun. Mr. Tholt of Dick Anderson Construction provided an update on construction and preconstruction activities for Helena High School and PAL. Early construction packages have included foundation work, earthwork, structural steel, underground plumbing and electrical work, and other site and structural components. The team continues to procure materials and prepare for additional construction as the project progresses. The design team continues to advance the Helena High School and PAL construction documents, with additional drawings anticipated in September and final bidding planned for October. The site and foundation permit is also progressing through

the permitting process. The team has initiated the furniture, fixtures, and equipment design process in coordination with the District, with an emphasis on consistency, flexibility, durability, and functionality across Helena High School, PAL, and Capital High School. 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 2026-27 Out-of-District Attendance Agreements (Non-Resident Students Attending HPS)
4. Acknowledge FY 2026-27 Out-of-District Attendance Agreements (Helena Resident Students Attending Other School Districts)
5. 6/9/26 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 Keller Higbee seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0; motion carried unanimously.

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

C. Items for Action

1. Approval of SACC Rate Increases for the 2026-2027 School Year

Dr. Kaitlyn Hess, State and Federal Programs Director, introduced Ms. Kirstan Roush, SACC Manager, who presented Action Item No. 1: *Approval of SACC Rate Increases for the 2026-2027 School Year*.

Dr. Hess provided an overview of the School Age Child Care (SACC) program and explained that the program is self-supported, with parent fees serving as its primary source of revenue. Dr. Hess and Ms. Roush worked closely with the Business Office to review the program budget and determine the proposed rate adjustments necessary to support continued operations. Ms. Roush provided an update on the SACC program, noting that 176 children participated in the summer program and approximately 300 returning students were anticipated for the upcoming school year. She discussed continued community demand for the program, as well as ongoing staffing needs. The proposed rate increases were attributed to rising costs for goods and services, increased personnel costs, and higher insurance expenses. The proposed rates are intended to support the continued operation and quality of the SACC program. Dr. Hess and Ms. Roush addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh entertained a motion to approve Action Item No. 1: *Approval of SACC Rate Increases for the 2026-2027 School Year.*

Motion: Trustee Lisa Cordingley moved to approve Action Item No. 1: *Approval of SACC Rate Increases for the 2026-2027 School Year.* Trustee Keith Meyer seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0; motion carried unanimously.

2. Authorization for Staff to Complete and Make Adjustments as Allowed by Law to the Trustees' Financial Summary - Elementary FY25-26

Superintendent Rex Weltz and Sam Holman, Business Director, presented Action Item No. 2: *Authorization for Staff to Complete and Make Adjustments as Allowed by Law to the Trustees' Financial Summary - Elementary FY25-26* to the Board of Trustees. Ms. Holman explained that the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) opened the financial reporting system later than in previous years, which delayed completion of the TFS. The TFS serves as a precursor to development of the District's final budget, as prior-year fund balances are used in determining budget amounts for the upcoming fiscal year. Ms. Holman requested authorization to complete and submit the TFS by the required deadline and make any subsequent adjustments permitted by law. The completed TFS will be available for Board review at a future Board meeting.

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh entertained a motion to approve Action Item No. 2: *Authorization for Staff to Complete and Make Adjustments as Allowed by Law to the Trustees' Financial Summary - Elementary FY25-26.*

Motion: Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve Action Item No. 2: *Authorization for Staff to Complete and Make Adjustments as Allowed by Law to the Trustees' Financial Summary - Elementary FY25-26.* Trustee Keller Higbee seconded the motion.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Vote: 7-0; motion carried unanimously. *(Board Chair Jennifer Walsh did not vote because she serves as a high school district trustee, and this action item pertains only to the elementary district.)*

3. Authorization for Staff to Complete and Make Adjustments as Allowed by Law to the Trustees' Financial Summary - High School FY25-26

Sam Holman, Business Director, presented Action Item No. 3: *Authorization for Staff to Complete and Make Adjustments as Allowed by Law to the Trustees' Financial Summary - High School FY25-26* to the Board of Trustees. Ms. Holman explained that the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) opened the financial reporting system later than in previous years, which delayed completion of the TFS. The TFS serves as a precursor to development of the District's final budget, as prior-year fund balances are used in determining budget amounts for the upcoming fiscal year. Ms. Holman requested authorization to complete and submit the TFS by the required deadline and make any subsequent adjustments permitted by law. The completed TFS will be available for Board review at a future Board meeting.

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh entertained a motion to approve Action Item No. 3: *Authorization for Staff to Complete and Make Adjustments as Allowed by Law to the Trustees' Financial Summary-*

High School FY25-26.

Motion: Trustee Lisa Cordingley moved to approve Action Item No. 3: *Authorization for Staff to Complete and Make Adjustments as Allowed by Law to the Trustees' Financial Summary - High School FY25-26.* Trustee Keith Meyer seconded the motion.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Vote: 8-0; motion carried unanimously.

The Board of Trustees moved on to hear the Reports.

D. REPORTS

1. Student Representatives Report

Ella McCullough, Capital High School Student Board Representative, did not have a report for the evening.

Tyson Schulte, Helena High School Student Board Representative, presented his report. Mr. Schulte reported that construction activities are underway and recognized staff members who have adjusted their spaces and routines to accommodate construction. He also recognized the custodial team for its work preparing the building for the new school year. Mr. Schulte noted that Helena High School has welcomed a number of alumni visiting the current building and looks forward to welcoming members of the Class of 1963 for an upcoming visit. Mr. Schulte congratulated Helena High School graduate and former Student Representative Adella Harris on being named Miss Montana and competing for Miss America. He wished the school's fall sports teams and activities well as they begin their seasons and recognized students, coaches, office staff, counselors, and teaching staff for their work throughout the summer. He also welcomed new staff members to Helena High School. Upcoming events include the Bengal Booster Club BBQ on August 22 and Bengal Beginnings Day on August 26 to welcome the Class of 2030 to Helena High School.

2. Helena Education Association Report

Ms. Jane Shawn, Helena Education Association (HEA) President, presented the Helena Education Association report. Ms. Shawn provided an update on HEA activities that took place throughout the summer, including participation in the Health Benefits Committee, union organizing, and member recruitment and retention efforts, the Respect Campaign, and state and national association meetings. She also noted HEA's involvement in the Forward Together program. Ms. Shawn reported that union members had opportunities to provide testimony to the School Funding Interim Commission. She provided an update on proposals being considered by the Commission related to inflationary adjustments, special education and high-cost special education funding, at-risk student funding, English Learner funding, funding for sixth-grade students in middle schools, and American Indian education funding. The Commission was expected to determine which proposals would move forward for consideration during the 2027 Montana Legislative Session.

3. **Facilities & Technology Committee Report**

There was no Facilities & Technology Committee Report for the evening.

4. **Budget & Finance Committee Report**

There was no Budget & Finance Committee Report for the evening.

5. **Teaching & Learning Committee Report**

Ms. Jenny Murnane Butcher presented the Teaching and Learning Committee Report. Ms. Murnane Butcher reported that the Committee reviewed Dr. Justine Alberts' summary of Dr. Jonathan Plucker's recommendations from the Gifted and Talented report, including current District practices that align with the recommendations and goals for continued implementation. The Committee also reviewed and discussed student achievement data from the spring.

6. **Policy Committee Report**

There was no Policy Committee Report for the evening.

7. **Health Benefits Committee Report**

There was no Health Benefits Committee Report for the evening.

8. **Wellness Committee Report**

There was no Wellness Committee Report for the evening.

9. **Montana School Boards Association Report**

Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn encouraged Trustees to consider attending the Montana Conference of Education Leadership (MCEL), scheduled for October 13–16. She noted that the conference includes workshops and informational sessions for Trustees, as well as MTSBA meetings where statewide decisions will be considered. Trustee Hathhorn also noted that the District supports Trustee travel to attend the conference.

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 Walsh reviewed upcoming committee and Board meetings with the Board of Trustees and Superintendent Weltz.

VIII. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

There were no further Board or Superintendent comments.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary

Date