



*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 – Board Meeting

Tuesday, September 8, 2020

# MINUTES

### ATTENDEES

Luke Muszkiewicz, Chair	Tyler Ream, Superintendent	Trish Klock, Bryant Principal	Lisa Cordingley
Siobhan Hathhorn, Vice Chair	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent	Rex Weltz, Rossiter Principal	Tammy Hinderman
Terry Beaver, Trustee	Barb Ridgeway, Chief of Staff	Justine Alberts, Hawthorne Principal	Jake West
Libby Goldes, Trustee	Pat Boles, Technology Administrator	John Stilson, Central Principal	Jesse Chaney
John McEwen, Trustee	Kalli Kind, Facilities Director	Lona Carter, Jefferson Principal	Kim Beatty
Jennifer McKee, Trustee	Joslyn Davison, Curriculum Administrator	Brett Zanto, Capital Principal	Deb Jacobsen
Sarah Sullivan, Trustee	Sean Maharg, Special Education Administrator	Tia Wilkins, Warren Principal	Jane Shawn
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee	Sean Morrison, Special Education Administrator		Travis Belcher
	Gary Myers, Education Technology Coordinator		Jamie Bright
			Roger Schruggs
			Jonna Schwartz

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

Board Chair, Luke Muszkiewicz, called the meeting to order at 5:32pm, and the pledge of allegiance was recited.

### II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested to the meeting agenda.

### III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Two parents of student athletes, Kim Beatty and Jamie Bright, spoke against the spectator limit in place at Helena Public Schools' extracurricular activities.

### IV. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. ITEMS FOR CONSENT

Ms. Sullivan moved to approve the items for consent. Ms. Hathhorn seconded the motion. There was neither public comment nor board comment. The items for consent passed unanimously.

## B. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Ms. Ridgway provided trustees with an overview of the changes recommended by the Policy Committee to Policy 3000 and Policy 3005. According to Ms. Ridgway, new laws at the federal level required policy changes specifically related to sexual harassment. No changes were requested to the policies from trustees. Ms. Ridgway concluded that both policies would be returned to the policy committee for a second reading.

## C. REPORTS

Teaching and Learning Committee Report: Ms. Hathhorn provided the board with an overview of the most recent committee meeting, which included an overview of the academic plan for remote learning, a hybrid environment, and in-person instruction. She voiced her appreciation to Joslyn Davidson and Lona Carter for their work setting up the district to be ready for anything this school year. She added future committee discussions would include aligning goals for the year and developing a calendar of topics for this year's meetings.

Budget and Finance Committee Report: Mr. McEwen reported the committee had been presented with the first year to date budget report at the last committee meeting. The committee was working to establish a work plan for the year, which would include discussions on an administrative salary survey, the effectiveness of the mental health programs, continual enrollment monitoring, and periodic review of the multi-year budget projections. Mr. McEwen told the committee the calendar of topics for the school year would be finalized at the next committee meeting.

Health and Benefits Committee Report: Mr. McEwen told the board the committee had voted to extend the COVID-19 related benefits and would make assessments and decisions on retaining or adding other benefits as needed.

Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA) Report: Mr. Muszkiewicz reported the association had developed draft legislation that included a temporary provision to extend ANB averages to five years. If this passed, a district either could use a five-year ANB average for budgeting or this year's actuals. The second piece of legislation intended to change the cost of living adjustments from the CPIU to the cost of employment index. The final piece of legislation stated that if a student qualified for free and reduced lunch, ANB for that student would increase 25%. He encouraged the board to reference the provided spreadsheet of draft legislation. Ms. Sullivan asked if the association had discussed applying the increased ANB theory to SPED students. Mr. Muszkiewicz answered he believed that would be a separate issue since the piece of referenced draft legislation described an economic threshold as the trigger to an increase in ANB. Ms. Hathhorn asked if the 25% increase in ANB was intended to be separate from federal aid. Mr. Muszkiewicz answered it was separate; it would be state funding.

Helena Education Association (HEA) Report: Ms. Shawn reported that elementary teachers returned to school today. The highlight of the last two weeks has been to see students again. She reported teachers were working through the uncertainties and technology issues. Mr. Muszkiewicz noted trustees had had the opportunity to visit schools, and it was a great thing to see teachers and students interacting in schools.

## V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Ream provided the board with a back to school update. He reported it was the third week of the back to school transition and had focused on transitioning back to school and setting a foundation for students. He added the teachers did a fantastic job rallying to meet the needs of students. He voiced his appreciation for First Student, Sodexo, and other district partners for being responsive and flexible. Dr. Ream said though this year was the most complicated model for back to school – only about 11% of districts were using a hybrid model – it provided an alternative to fully in school or completely closed. He recognized Mr. McKay's leadership for finding opportunities within every challenge and providing flexibility in finding solutions. Dr. Ream noted two challenges remaining were increased technology needs and ongoing staffing needs.

Dr. Ream provided trustees with an updated chart from the August board meeting. He recalled health professionals saying four-week-out decisions were extremely difficult to make because what happens four weeks from now depended upon the decisions and exposure two weeks from now. He showed the board the case trends that had been added to the county health department's dashboard, which showed actuals through September 4. He added it was important to see how the opening of schools would affect the case count prior to making any decisions. Dr. Ream said phasing decisions would be metric-based, built on best practices across other states and within the state, adapted to our district, and presented to health professionals for feedback.

Ms. Walsh recommended phasing decisions not be purely science-based and to take into consideration the disruptiveness of shifting between phases. Dr. Ream agreed, adding it was still unknown how the metrics would look this winter and spring, or the affect cold and flu season would have on the virus. He continued that each of the phases had been developed with the plans that they would be used during the year; there needed to be as many options as possible.

Ms. Sullivan asked for clarification that if the beginning of October, things were trending in the right direction, the district would consider moving to Phase II. Dr. Ream confirmed, adding metric assessment would occur the entire year.

Ms. Sullivan asked for a consensus of the staff's feelings on getting back to school. She voiced her appreciation for the teachers' and schools' efforts during the rolling start. Ms. Sullivan added she hoped there would be a discussions post-pandemic on lessons learned and permanent changes to

programs. Dr. Ream confirmed, adding it would be a continual process to record ways to improve throughout the year.

Mr. Muszkiewicz said he felt there was tremendous value in entering the school year in Phase I with a rolling start; it provided families the opportunity to build trust. He voiced his appreciation to principals, teachers, and students for hosting trustees in their school visits. Dr. Ream replied that no one at the schools was bothered by the visits, and they appreciated trustees' time.

Dr. Ream announce the 2020-2021 school year will be his last year with the district, citing personal reasons. He stressed his commitment to the schools and to the community for the duration of the school year and said there were infinite deliverables to be accomplished this year. Trustees voiced their sadness at his resignation and their respect for his decision.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04pm.