



*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 – Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 02, 2021 – 12:00pm

### MINUTES

#### ATTENDANCE

*Trustees:*

Jennifer McKee, Committee Chair  
Siobhan Hathorn, Committee Member

*Others:*

Rex Weltz, Superintendent  
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent  
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff  
Brian Cummings, Assistant Superintendent  
Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Director  
Kaitlyn Hess, HSD TOSA  
Jane Shawn, HEA President  
Karen Ogden, Communications Officer  
Erik Martini, Guest of the Public

#### I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 12:05pm by Committee Chair, Jennifer McKee.

#### II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Eric Martini, a guest of the public commented. Mr. Martini is a parent of three children in the school district. His understanding was that during the summer board retreat, critical race theory was brought up and he would like to see the district's response to that.

#### III. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested to the agenda.

#### IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Review of 05.05.21 Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting Minutes. The minutes were approved.

#### V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

A. Instructional Framework

Ms. Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Director commented. Last spring, we made the decision to have instructional coaches in all our buildings which is exciting. Their primary goal will be to help support teachers with tier one, tier two, and tier three instruction. In addition to that, with our elementary districts we've decided to stay with our trimesters, this year, and work towards standards-based grading, and that is a multiyear process.

Once we have those in place, then we can have a conversation about standards-based grading, that is consistent across the district. So, when we look at what goes into solid and consistent tier one instruction, one avenue to accomplish that across the board in our schools is to introduce and implement instructional framework. So instructional framework is basically the scaffold for which we deliver instruction at all levels, tier one, tier two, and tier three. We decided for consistency we would train our administrators using the same PowerPoint presentation we did with our instructional coaches and then in turn before school started, all our staff was trained using the same tool. We use the instructional framework to collect data for our schools.

Ms. Kaitlyn Hess, (HSD TOSA Assessment, Federal Programs, and Curriculum), then shared with the committee a Power Point presentation regarding Instructional Framework Training.

Ms. Davidson commented that instructional framework is made up of some components and routines that are consistent throughout classes from pre-K all the way through high school, and the first part is the posting of an agenda on a board. An agenda is an opportunity for students to look at what the instructional goals are for that day and helps establish learning routines for students and to allow students an opportunity to understand what proficiency looks like relative to what's being taught.

The second component is bellringers and then we have the middle of the lesson, and a lot of that focus was on engagement strategies for teachers and then we have exit tickets at the end.

In the district we have school leadership teams made up of teachers, specialists, administrators, and a coach. They, as a group, sit down and look at data, and based on the data decide what goals they need to set for the year to help improve instruction. Then they push that back out to everyone on staff and set the roadmap for how they want to meet those goals.

The committee then watched a video by Professor Hattie on communicating the learning target and the importance of an agenda followed by a slide learning how to create an agenda and reviewed agenda examples. Ms. Davidson discussed example learning approaches seen on walkthrough tool: small group instruction, kinesthetic activity, technology use, independent work, and reading routines for targeted interventions.

Ms. Davidson then commented regarding engagement. The definition of engagement is engaged students are students who are active participants in their learning; they are curious, interested, and invested in their learning. Engagement strategies include: positive praise,

student check ins (cold calls, warm calls), transitions, think-pair-share/elbow partners, scaffolding (“I do, you do, we do).

The committee then watched a video by consultant Carrie Cole. The video is the 5 Techniques for Active Engagement in the Classroom. Ms. Davidson commented. Carrie Cole works a lot with our teachers. Carrie presents on the science of reading and embeds a lot of the engagement strategies into that.

Ms. Davidson then commented about exit ticket. Exit tickets are meant to close the learning loop or lesson. They should be quick, can be a way to informally check for understanding, and can be completed by whole group, small group, partners, or independently.

Mr. Brian Cummings, Assistant Superintendent, commented. We set a foundation and it feels good that we put a model behind it, for principals to support the coaches and support the building and I’ve felt an energy that I haven't felt in a long time, as it relates to instruction.

Mr. Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent, commented. Instructional framework is an amazing tool for us to be able to provide laser point professional development, and then combined with the school leadership team being to self-select where it needs to operate to grow. So, it builds that school pattern of saying I need to identify, or we identify what we want to work on, then us as a district be able to push supports in certain fashions for what that school needs right now. It is a really great opportunity for us, so we're really excited about that.

Superintendent Weltz commented. What my goal had always been, is to provide consistency across the district. We need that commonality across our district in curriculum so that kids get very consistent, best, research-based practices. We want to build systems so that when the coaches, if they do, and when they do move off because we can't fund it, the systems are in place that we can sustain it through the buildings.

Committee member Siobhan Hathhorn commented. I have a concern about longevity. It takes two years to implement and probably another five years to perfect. So just having a longevity plan seems wonderful. My other concern is budget. Have we worked with Janelle to see if this is something we can continue to have after two years?

Committee Chair Jennifer McKee commented. This is awesome and I’m very impressed by all of it.

## **VI. BOARD COMMENTS**

No additional comments were offered.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00pm by Ms. McKee.