

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**  
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
3 **HELD OCTOBER 9, 2023**  
4

5 A duly called Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Great Falls Public  
6 Schools was held at the District Offices Building, 1100 4<sup>th</sup> Street South, on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of  
7 October 2023.

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9 **ROLL CALL:** Brian Patrick took roll call.

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11 **Trustees Present:** Gordon Johnson - Chairperson  
12 Kim Skornogoski – Vice Chairperson  
13 Bill Bronson  
14 Mark Finnicum  
15 Marlee Sunchild  
16 Amie Thompson  
17 Paige Turoski  
18

19 **Others Present:** Tom Moore, Superintendent; Brian Patrick, Director of Business  
20 Operations; Lance Boyd, Heather Hoyer and Jackie Mainwaring, Executive Directors for  
21 Student Achievement; Stephanie Becker, Director of the Great Falls Public Schools  
22 Foundation; and Tom Hering, Director of Information Technology.  
23

24 Also present was Tom Cabbage, Great Falls Education Association (GFEA) President.  
25

26 At 5:30 pm, Chairperson Johnson called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of  
27 Trustees and asked everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.  
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30 **ADOPT AGENDA**

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32 Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to adopt the  
33 agenda as presented.  
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36 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

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38 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to  
39 approve the Consent Agenda as presented.  
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41 **A. Minutes of the September 25, 2023, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board  
42 approved the minutes of the September 25, 2023, Regular Board Meeting as presented.  
43

44 **B. Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.  
45

46 **C. Good Apple Awards** – The Board approved the nominations for Good Apple  
47 Awards to Nicole Gilbert and Whitney Graczyk, Riverview Elementary School  
48 Paraprofessionals, Rae Funston, Riverview Elementary School Satellite Kitchen Lead,

1 Renee Mullins and Karla Brown, Riverview Elementary School Food Service  
2 Employees, Riverview PTA Riverview, Riverview Elementary School, and Heather  
3 Spurzem, Great Falls Public Schools Benefits Analyst.

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5 **D. TR-1 Bus Route Reimbursement Claims** - The Board approved the TR-1 Bus  
6 Route Reimbursement Claims for the bus routes of the high school and elementary  
7 districts.

8  
9 **E. Transitional Kindergarten Student Attendance Agreements at the Early**  
10 **Learning Family Center for the 2023-2024 School Year** – The Board approved the  
11 Early Learning Family Center Transitional Kindergarten Student Attendance  
12 Agreements listed in the agenda for the 2023-2024 school year.

13  
14 **F. Kindergarten Early Entrance for the 2023-2024 School Year** – The Board  
15 approved the student listed in the agenda for the 2023-2024 school year based upon  
16 the requirements outlined in Board Policy 3110R.

17  
18 **G. Great Falls High School “Class of 2027” Student Activity Account** – The Board  
19 approved Great Falls High School to open *Class of 2027* Student Activity Account.

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21 **H. Great Falls High School “Rocketry Club” Student Activity Account** – The Board  
22 approved Great Falls High School to open *Rocketry Club* Student Activity Account.

23  
24 **I. C. M. Russell High School Chamber Orchestra Travel Request** – The Board  
25 approved C. M. Russell High School Chamber Orchestra students’ travel request to  
26 Calgary, Alberta, March 15-17, 2024.

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29 **COMMUNICATION**

30  
31 **A. Report of the Student Representatives**

32 Great Falls High School (GFHS) student representatives Brooklyn Griffin and Seth  
33 Royer reported several GFHS Seniors enjoyed watching *Shrek* in Memorial Stadium for  
34 Senior Movie Night prior to the school year starting. Annual events, Big Blue Day and  
35 Great Falls High School Crosstown Clash night at the Voyagers baseball game, were  
36 enjoyed by all. The Chromebook checkout for all student body went smoothly and  
37 students believe the implementation of chromebooks in the classrooms has been a  
38 great success. On the first day of school, Student Council members helped new  
39 students and teachers get acquainted with GFHS and its traditions with tours and a  
40 school-wide pep assembly. A change this year has been the implementation of one  
41 lunch period for all students. New lunch kiosk locations provide more places for  
42 students to eat. Updates were given for fall sports, with three students qualifying for  
43 State Golf. Hannah Boyd brought home sixth place honors. The students reported on  
44 Homecoming week and congratulated King Jamie Green and Queen Mariyah Hicks.  
45 The first drama production, *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, is set for the first two weekends  
46 in November. Honors English students are reading *The Crucible* and are enjoying  
47 acting out the play in class. Sophomores enjoyed exploring future career opportunities  
48 at the World of Work Career Expo. Students shared updates from Mrs. Lloyd, who is

1 currently in Nepal with 18 other science teachers who were awarded educational grants.  
2 Governor Greg Gianforte toured classrooms and participated in the groundbreaking for  
3 the High School House. High School House instructor Pete Pace was congratulated for  
4 receiving the Spirit of Montana award. Students reported on several classes they are  
5 enjoying and encouraged everyone to visit their social media pages for excellent  
6 coverage of Great Falls High School happenings.

7  
8 C.M. Russell (CMR) High School student representatives Emerson Hamma, Lilli Skaer,  
9 and Caroline Hermiller reported that the start of the school year focused on Rustler  
10 Values. Motivational speaker Kevin Atlas shared his story and reminded students to  
11 show up for each other. Students are enjoying classes, including a biology class where  
12 they are learning about molecular bonds and a forensics class where they are learning  
13 how to fingerprint. Juniors were interviewed and selected for the 2023-2024 Great Falls  
14 Leadership High School Class. Business Professionals of America (BPA) students  
15 attended their fall leadership event and also celebrated the High School House  
16 groundbreaking with Governor Gianforte and instructor Pete Pace. Updates were given  
17 for fall sports with five students qualifying for State Golf. CMR HOSA students provided  
18 community service by helping the Cascade County Health Department with their annual  
19 flu shot clinic. Sophomores enjoyed the World of Work experience. Performing arts  
20 classes are preparing for concerts and 32 musicians qualified for the All State Music  
21 Festival in Missoula. The drama department is preparing for their winter musical “Little  
22 Shop of Horrors” and art students currently have works on display in the OC Seltzer  
23 gallery. Students reported on an assembly featuring guest speaker Josh Huestis. A  
24 fundraiser is being planned for Oliver Greigier, son of CMR teacher and Cross Country  
25 coach Nathan Gregier, who has been diagnosed with a rare genetic disorder.

26  
27 Paris Gibson Education Center (PGEC) student representatives Karsynn Kidrick, Mona  
28 Marceau, and Morgan Williams reported they have fourteen new students to PGEC this  
29 year, bringing their total to 210 students. They are excited to take new classes being  
30 offered at PGEC, including English Wellness, Fashion Textiles, Media Arts, and  
31 Creative Writing. A 3D printer has been added to further the math curriculum. Students  
32 reported on various schoolwide events and field trips, including a Friday Feed during  
33 September where the entire student body enjoyed traditional American Indian dishes  
34 and learned more about their culture. PGEC has implemented an automatic locking  
35 door system, which students report has proven to be very effective. A schoolwide  
36 check-in system has also been added to schedules, meaning students report to their  
37 advisors four times per day. Students said they do not have football or volleyball teams  
38 but their Archery team is working hard to hold on to their number one position.

### 39 **B. Superintendent Report**

40 Superintendent Moore thanked the student representatives for their reports and  
41 introduced Great Falls City Mayor Bob Kelly and Great Falls City Manager Greg Doyon.  
42 Manager Doyon presented information on the upcoming Great Falls Public Safety Levy.  
43 Manager Doyon stated the purpose of his presentation is to educate voters about the  
44 Levy, not advocate for it. Funds would be used for the operational needs of various  
45 departments including the Fire Department, Police Department, Municipal Court, and  
46 Legal Department. Requests within the Police Department funding include two  
47 additional School Resource Officers for the Great Falls Public Schools District. City  
48

1 Manager Doyon introduced Mayor Kelly, who encouraged everyone to take the  
2 information given to them and aggressively talk to friends and neighbors. Whether pro  
3 or con, just become educated and informed and vote.

4 Superintendent Moore introduced Stephanie Becker and Joel Owen from the Great  
5 Falls Public Schools Foundation. Mr. Owen stated there are 77 new teachers at Great  
6 Falls Public Schools this year. The Double Barrel Coffee House, owned and operated  
7 by Lucas and Melissa Cyr, provided sweet biscuits to all new teachers. This is the  
8 second year the Double Barrel Coffee House has provided snacks to new faculty at the  
9 start of the school year. Mr. Owen took the biscuits to various schools and thanked the  
10 new teachers for choosing Great Falls Public Schools. He provided them with  
11 information on the generosity of the Double Barrel Coffee House as well as information  
12 on grants and other help that is available through the Great Falls Public Schools  
13 Foundation. Mr. Owen introduced and thanked Lucas and Melissa Cyr for their  
14 incredibly giving hearts on behalf of the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation.

15 Superintendent Moore presented both Lucas and Melissa with “You Are A Difference  
16 Maker” coins, the first coins given to public recipients.

17 Superintendent Moore recognized and thanked Admiral Beverage Corporation and  
18 representative Zach Mendenhall for providing gift cards to school principals in the Great  
19 Falls Public Schools system. Each school has a specified week when Mr. Mendenhall  
20 will give the principal a gift card to a local restaurant. Each school chooses a family from  
21 his/her school to be the recipient of the gift card for a special family night out.

22 Indigenous Peoples Day was celebrated October 9, 2023. Although most activities had  
23 concluded by Board Meeting time, Superintendent Moore said a lot of fun was had  
24 during a host of activities throughout the day. Dugan Coburn, Director of Indian  
25 Education with Great Falls Public Schools, will attend the board meeting in November to  
26 report. Superintendent Moore stated there was an outstanding article in the *Big Sky*  
27 *Journal* featuring Mr. Coburn. He commented on the importance of culture and diversity  
28 in our school system and said Mr. Coburn exemplifies those philosophies through his  
29 teachings.

30 New and second year teachers to Great Falls Public Schools were extended an  
31 invitation to a special night of dining at the Celtic Cowboy restaurant followed by a  
32 performance of the Great Falls Symphony on Oct 7<sup>th</sup>. The event gives new teachers a  
33 chance to meet each other as well as be introduced to local venues of the Great Falls  
34 community. Superintendent Moore thanked Board Chairperson Gordon Johnson,  
35 Community Connections/Development Manager for Great Falls Public Schools Becky  
36 Nelson, Director of Music and Art Education for Great Falls Public Schools Dusty  
37 Molyneaux, and the Jennings family for hosting and coordinating the evening of events.  
38 Students from Great Falls High School Art Club, Great Falls High School Honor Society,  
39 and C.M. Russell High School HOSA Club served dinners at various events throughout  
40 the Great Falls community. Superintendent Moore thanked Becky Nelson for lining up  
41 the students with the community events and sent thanks to the teachers who support  
42 the efforts and encourage their students to volunteer for such events.

43 The Great Falls Public Schools’ Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC)  
44 marched in their uniforms fourteen miles along the River’s Edge Trail on Saturday,  
45 October 7, 2023, to commemorate the Bataan Death March of World War II.  
46 Superintendent Moore thanked instructors Brian Holbein and Mike Wonch and all who  
47 supported them.

1 Superintendent Moore reminded all of the *Connections* networking luncheon taking  
2 place on October 12<sup>th</sup>, and the Great Falls Public Schools Job Fair on October 17<sup>th</sup>. He  
3 echoed the Paris Gibson Education Center’s Student Representatives’ plea for people  
4 to apply for job openings.

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6 **C. Audience Communication**

7 Community member Sharon Patton-Griffin had submitted a request to speak but  
8 declined the invitation by Chairperson Johnson when called upon.

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11 **ACTION ITEMS**

12 There were no Action Items on the agenda.

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15 **ACTION: OTHER**

16 There were no items pulled from the Consent Agenda to discuss.

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19 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

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21 **A. Summer School Data**

22 Executive Directors Heather Hoyer, Jackie Mainwaring, and Lance Boyd presented data  
23 on extended summer learning opportunities that are directly tied to the Strategic Plan.  
24 Five math camps were available at the elementary level and two at the middle school  
25 level. 76% of students who registered attended the camps and attendance varied from  
26 71%-82% based on grade level. At the secondary level, 186 high school students  
27 participated. There were 366 half-credits earned; which was an increase of 88 half  
28 credits from last summer. Seventy-nine visits to home school students were made  
29 throughout the summer. The purpose was to work on relationships, help with trauma,  
30 anxiety, and proper support to reengage those students and families. Saturday school  
31 has started at both high schools and middle schools. The extended school year for  
32 Special Education students resulted in 183 students being offered services, an increase  
33 of 65 students over last year. There were 106 students who attended 90% or more of  
34 the twenty-day program.

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36 **B. Great Falls Public Schools CORE School**

37 Elementary Coordinator of Curriculum, Rachel Cutler, and Elementary Teacher on  
38 Special Assignment, Marni Napierala, presented information on an innovative solution  
39 for dealing with the challenges Great Falls Public Schools (GFPS) faces in hiring and  
40 retaining staff. The proposal would create a GFPS CORE magnet lab school that would  
41 gain Charter status by partnering with the University of Montana Western to fast-track  
42 teaching degrees. The presenters discussed anticipated impacts and projected  
43 timelines for the project. A question-and-answer session from Board Trustees and  
44 audience members followed the presentation. The presenters, Executive Directors, and  
45 Dr. Aiken, who participated via conference call from the University of Montana Western,  
46 answered questions in detail. Dr. Aiken announced the grant to fund this endeavor was  
47 fully awarded. Chairperson Johnson stated next steps would be to put an Action item

1 on next Board meeting for vote and that an application for Magnet School status would  
2 have to be completed by October 27, 2023.

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4 **C. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments**

5 Trustee Sunchild thanked Jackie Mainwaring and Tom Cabbage for time spent after  
6 hours answering questions regarding the CORE School report.

7 Trustee Finnicum loved the student presentations. He acknowledged Kim Marzyn as a  
8 nationally recognized teacher.

9 Trustee Skornogoski thanked staff for meeting and answering questions prior to the  
10 Board meeting. She encouraged the public to reach out before the vote at the next  
11 Board meeting. She commented on the Josh Huestis speaking opportunity at  
12 C.M.Russell High School. Students wrote the questions that were asked, making it  
13 more meaningful to the students.

14 Trustee Turoski is enjoying reading “Mathematical Mindsets”. She and her family  
15 enjoyed attending the CMR Homecoming football game. Her children are happy at  
16 Valleyview Elementary School and she reported that it has been one year since her son  
17 was flown to Seattle with a medical condition and he is now doing well.

18 Trustee Bronson stated the vote on the CORE School at the next Board meeting will be  
19 one of the most important decisions the Board has made. He is looking forward to  
20 visiting more with staff and the public regarding the decision. He had the opportunity to  
21 attend World of Work and is glad Great Falls Public Schools signed on with the event.  
22 He stated C.M. Russell Homecoming was incredibly fun because everybody in the  
23 school is included.

24 Trustee Thompson appreciated the “outside the box” thinking on the CORE school  
25 presentation. She appreciated everyone who came to listen to the presentation and  
26 encouraged everyone to reach out with questions.

27 Chairperson Johnson thanked City representatives for their report and encouraged  
28 everyone to vote on the Safety Levy.

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31 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

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33 Chairperson Johnson said a Special Board Meeting – Student Discipline Hearing is  
34 scheduled for Wednesday, October 11, 2023. He stated the next Regular Board  
35 Meetings is scheduled for Monday, October 23, 2023.

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38 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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40 Motion – Chairperson Johnson, Seconded – Vice Chairperson Kim Skornogoski,  
41 passed unanimously to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:52  
42 p.m.

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Gordon Johnson, Chairperson

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Brian Patrick, Clerk  
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