

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**  
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
3 **HELD AUGUST 7, 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 7<sup>th</sup> day of  
7 August 2023.

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

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11 **Trustees Present:** Kim Skornogoski, Vice Chairperson  
12 Bill Bronson  
13 Mark Finnicum  
14 Marlee Sunchild  
15 Amie Thompson  
16 Paige Turoski  
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18 **Trustee Absent:** Gordon Johnson, Chairperson - Excused  
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21 **Others Present:** Tom Moore, Superintendent; Brian Patrick, Director of Business  
22 Operations; Executive Directors for Student Achievement Lance Boyd, Heather Hoyer  
23 and Jackie Mainwaring; Luke Diekhans, Human Resources Director and Tom Hering,  
24 Information Technology Director.  
25

26 Also present was Tom Cubbage, Great Falls Education Association (GFEA) President.  
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28 At 5:30 pm, Vice Chairperson Skornogoski called to order the Regular Meeting of the  
29 Board of Trustees and asked everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.  
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32 **ADOPT AGENDA**  
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34 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to adopt the  
35 agenda as presented.  
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38 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**  
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40 Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the  
41 Consent Agenda as presented. Special thanks was given for the Gaga Ball Pits  
42 donation to Mountain View Elementary School.  
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44 **A. Minutes of the July 17, 2023, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved the  
45 minutes of the July 17, 2023, Regular Board Meeting as presented.  
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47 **B. Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.  
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2 **C. Montana School Bus Driver’s Certificates – OPI TR-35** – The Board approved the  
3 Montana Bus Drivers’ Certificates – OPI TR-35’s for the individuals listed in the agenda.  
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5 **D. Student Activity Accounts Monthly Report for June 2023** – The Board approved  
6 the Student Activity Accounts Monthly Report for June 2023 as presented.  
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8 **E. Donation of Gaga Ball Pits to Mountain View Elementary School** – The Board  
9 approved the donation of two (2) Gaga Ball Pits from Mountain View PTA to Mountain  
10 View Elementary School with thanks.  
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12 **F. Incoming Student Attendance Agreements for the 2023-2024 School Year** – The  
13 Board approved the Incoming Student Attendance Agreements for the 2023-2024  
14 school year for the students listed in the agenda. Tuition will be paid for by the parents.  
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17 **COMMUNICATION**  
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19 **A. Superintendent Report -**

20 Superintendent Moore said excitement is in the air leading up to the start of school.  
21 Leaders are back in their buildings preparing to welcome back students and families.  
22 He reported that the annual Great Falls Information Fair will be held at Loy Elementary  
23 School on August 8. This event is for military families of students attending Loy  
24 Elementary School, North Middle School and/or C.M. Russell High School to meet  
25 school staff, enroll students and learn more about the programs and services the  
26 schools offer. Employment opportunity information will also be available.  
27 Superintendent Moore said he attended the Touro University Ribbon Cutting. He was  
28 impressed with the diversity of students from around the globe who will be attending the  
29 university. He reported that 85 students graduated last year with Certified Nursing  
30 degrees. This was a joint effort between Great Falls Public Schools, the College and  
31 Career Readiness Center, and Great Falls College/Montana State University.  
32 Superintendent Moore thanked Community Connections Coordinator Becky Nelson and  
33 Human Resources Director Luke Diekhans for their efforts in coordinating the Back to  
34 School Wellness Splash on August 8, 2023 at the Electric City Waterpark from 6:30 –  
35 8:30 pm. This will be a fun event for all staff and their families. He reported on United  
36 Way’s annual *Stuff the Bus* event taking place on August 10, 2023, at Target and both  
37 Walmarts from 8:00 am – 5:30 pm. The next day, August 11, 2023, the school supplies  
38 collected will be brought to the District Office Building to *Unstuff the Bus* and will be  
39 separated for distribution to all schools. Superintendent Moore said the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual  
40 *Back 2 School Blast* is scheduled for August 18, 2023, in the Mansfield Room at the  
41 Great Falls Civic Center from 12:00 – 4:00 pm. Families were able to pre-register for  
42 backpacks with school supplies for their students. The event offers free haircuts,  
43 immunizations and so much more. He said this event is a collaborative effort with many  
44 community partners including the Great Falls Rescue Mission, United Way, and Alliance  
45 for Youth.  
46 Superintendent Moore announced this is the last week for the Summer Food Service  
47 Program. The program started on June 7 and will end on August 10. He thanked the  
48 Warehouse workers and Food Service staff for their dedication to this program.

1 Superintendent Moore said the District continues in its efforts to hire staff for the school  
2 year. A Job Fair will be held on August 17, 2023 at Paris Gibson Education Center.  
3 Interviews are available on the spot for all positions within the school system. He said  
4 approximately 85 new teachers have been hired this year. Trustee Finnicum asked how  
5 many additional teachers need to be hired. Human Resources Director Luke Diekhans  
6 said if all job offers are accepted, all the basic teaching positions would be filled. If  
7 additional teachers are hired, the District can start backfilling some of the positions that  
8 were put on hold due to the shortage of teachers. Superintendent Moore expressed his  
9 appreciation for the District’s Instructional Coaches who mentor new teachers and  
10 support all teachers with new curriculum.

11 Superintendent Moore and Executive Director Jackie Mainwaring gave an update on the  
12 construction of four (4) new classrooms at Meadow Lark Elementary School. The  
13 project is scheduled to be completed by October 2023. Mrs. Mainwaring said the  
14 exterior finishes will match the existing building.

15 Superintendent Moore reported on the continuation of Leadership Development for the  
16 upcoming year. Last year Cabinet members met with a Professional Coach, and this  
17 year the coaching will include the next tier of leaders. Elementary, Middle School and  
18 High School Principals will work with Cabinet on Leadership Development in the core  
19 areas of relationship building, agile thinking, and strategic plan work.

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22 **B. Audience Communication – None.**

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25 **ACTION ITEMS**

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28 **A. Financial Report and Check Register for June 2023** - Director of Business  
29 Operations reported on the financial report and check register for June 2023 and  
30 directed attention to the balance remaining in both the elementary and high school  
31 General Fund Budgets. He explained that in the past, the District needed to spend or  
32 lose the remaining funds, but now the funds can be transferred to the Interlocal  
33 Agreement Fund.

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36 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to approve the  
37 June 2023 Financial Report and Accounts Payable checks #128515 - #129218 in the  
38 amount of \$5,730,060.41 and Payroll checks #78749 - #79082 in the amount of  
39 \$1,403,210.89 as presented.

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42 **B. Transfer of Budgeted Funds** – Director of Business Operations Brian Patrick  
43 explained the existing Interlocal Fund balance came from General Fund budget  
44 transfers in previous years and can be used for future expenditures. He explained the  
45 year-end balances listed in the June 2023 Financial Report for both the Elementary  
46 (101) and High School (201) General Fund budgets are being requested to be  
47 transferred to the Interlocal Fund (182).

48 Trustee Finnicum thanked Mr. Patrick and his department staff for their hard work.

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51 Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the  
52 Elementary General Fund Budget (101) transfer of \$1,280,649.88 and a High School

1 General Fund Budget (201) transfer of \$2,133,283.00 to the Interlocal Agreement Fund  
2 (182).

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4 **C. Chief Joseph Elementary School Fire Alarm Upgrade** – Director of Business  
5 Operations, Brian Patrick explained the fire alarm system at Chief Joseph Elementary  
6 School is original to the building and needs to be replaced. The upgrade will allow for  
7 external building alarms as well. The estimated cost for the project exceeds \$80,000,  
8 therefore a formal bid process is to be initiated. The work on the fire alarm system  
9 upgrade will begin at the conclusion of the 2023-2024 school year.

10 Vice Chairperson Skornogoski asked if there are any concerns waiting for a year to  
11 upgrade the fire alarm system at Chief Joseph Elementary School. Mr. Patrick said no,  
12 that the current system is in good working order.

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14 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to approve  
15 the request to advertise for the Fire Alarm Bids to upgrade the Chief Joseph Elementary  
16 School fire alarm system.

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18 **D. Second Reading of Revised Board Policies 1005FE and 5123**– Director of  
19 Business Operations Brian Patrick reported that revised Board policies 1005FE-  
20 Proficiency Based ANB and 1523 – Recruitment and Retention were reviewed in detail  
21 at the July 17, 2023 Board meeting. Other than a few minor grammatical errors being  
22 reported by community member Rodney Myers, no comments or concerns have been  
23 received since the first reading of the policies.

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25 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to approve  
26 revised Board policies 1005FE – Proficiency Based ANB and 5123 – Recruitment and  
27 Retention as presented.

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29 **E. 2023-2024 Health Insurance, Life Insurance, and Voluntary Insurance Contracts**

30 – Director of Human Resources Luke Diekhans reported that the District’s Health  
31 Insurance Committee meets several times during the year to analyze usage, benefit  
32 changes and cost increases to retain a quality insurance program. The committee has  
33 continued to work with third-party consultant Mike Bonville with Alliant in setting  
34 insurance premiums for the 2023-2024 plan year. Mr. Diekhans explained the  
35 recommended premiums for the 2023-2024 plan year that reflect an overall increase to  
36 the employer premium contribution of 3.5% and an overall increase to the employee  
37 premium contribution of 2.54%. He said the Rate Stabilization Reserve (RSR) Fund  
38 contribution per employee is recommended to be \$32.53 per employee, which is an  
39 increase of \$5.00 per employee. Mr. Diekhans reported that the District will continue to  
40 offer a Base Plan and a Catastrophic Plan with no changes to the coverage from last  
41 year. He reviewed the paid life insurance benefit to employees through LifeMap and the  
42 voluntary insurances offered to employees at no cost to the District.

43 Mr. Diekhans said the anticipated cost for active employees on the District’s health  
44 insurance for 2023-2024 will be approximately \$11,320,653. The employer portion of  
45 the health plan is approximated at: \$7,029,757 premium expense and \$246,708 RSR  
46 expense for a total of \$7,276,465 for 2023-2024 plan year.

47 Trustee Bronson said he is part of the Insurance Committee and was very impressed by  
48 the information provided in the presentation given by Mr. Bonville and how the

1 insurance plan is being managed.

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3 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to approve the  
4 recommendation of the Insurance Committee for an overall increase to the employer  
5 and employee premium contributions of 3.5% and 2.54% respectively, along with the  
6 increase of the premium buy-down of \$32.53 from the Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund.  
7 The District Board also approved the recommendation to continue the Flexible  
8 Spending program and voluntary insurances.

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11 **ACTION: OTHER**

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14 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

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16 **A. First Reading of New and Revised Board Policies 1400 – Board Meetings, 1770**  
17 **- Uniform Complaint Procedure, 2131 – Student and Family Privacy Rights, 2140 –**  
18 **Guidance and Counseling, 2332 – Religion and Religious Activities, 2410 – High**  
19 **School Graduation Requirements, 2410R – Publication of Graduation**  
20 **Requirements, 3233 – Student Use of Building Equal Access, 3310 – Student**  
21 **Discipline, 3510 – School-Sponsored Student Activities, 3550 – Student Clubs,**  
22 **410 – Relations with Law Enforcement and Child Protective Agencies, and 8301 –**  
23 **District Safety** – Superintendent Moore reviewed the recommended changes to Board  
24 Policies 1400, 1770, 2131, 2140, 2158, 2332, 2410, 2140R, 3233, 3310, 3510, 3550,  
25 4410 and 8301 in detail and asked if anyone has comments or concerns about the  
26 policies to contact him before the next Board meeting. He said that during each  
27 legislative session there are new laws passed that impact district policies. The Montana  
28 School Boards Association (MTSBA) analyzes the laws, determines the policies that are  
29 impacted and provides recommended model language adjustments for Districts to use  
30 as they review, revise, and adopt the mandatory changes to their current  
31 policies. Included in the Board packet was a brief overview of each of the policies that  
32 were on the meeting agenda. Superintendent Moore explained that MTSBA provides  
33 in-depth model policy language for each policy that the Board Policy Committee uses as  
34 the policies are reviewed and discussed individually. He said many of the revised  
35 policies have consistent wording regarding parent/family rights. Superintendent Moore  
36 noted that on page 71, lines 23-25, the wording will be stricken as this was a policy note  
37 from MTSBA as was not intended to be part of the recommended policy.

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39 **B. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments –**

40 Trustee Finnicum reported on the election results from the electronic vote on MTSBA  
41 Business that the Board voted on at the last Board meeting. All seven items on which  
42 the Board voted were approved.

43 Trustee Turoski said she is on the Board Policy Committee and appreciates the  
44 feedback the committee receives from the Executive Directors who have reviewed the  
45 suggested changes with principals and supervisors. She expressed her appreciation of

1 MTSBA for the leadership and direction they give to school districts. She said she has  
2 e-mailed questions to MTSBA and always receives and answer in a short period of time.  
3 Trustee Sunchild said its exciting to hear ideas from teachers who are anxious about  
4 the school year starting.  
5 Trustee Thompson said she is looking forward to the school year beginning and  
6 thanked the District staff for their work during the summer to prepare for the start of  
7 school.  
8 Trustee Bronson said he is on the Board Policy Committee and has noticed that as the  
9 policy changes are reviewed, many times the District is already doing what is being  
10 recommended. He encouraged others to look at the source (House Bill or Senate Bill)  
11 of the recommended changes that MTSBA has provided to gather more information and  
12 background. Trustee Bronson attended the grand opening of the Touro University and  
13 is looking forward to the opportunities it will provide to young people of Great Falls.  
14 Vice Chairperson Skornogoski said the summer may be viewed as a relaxed time in the  
15 District, but there is so much work that continues through the summer to be ready for  
16 the upcoming school year. She said volunteers are still needed for Stuff the Bus,  
17 Unstuff the Bus and the Back 2 School Blast.

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20 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

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22 Vice Chairperson Skornogoski said a Board Work Session is scheduled for August 17,  
23 2023, the next Board meeting will be held on August 21, 2023 and Convocation is  
24 August 28, 2023.

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27 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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29 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to  
30 adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 6:45 p.m.

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Kim Skornogoski, Vice Chairperson

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Brian Patrick, Clerk  
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