

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
3 **HELD MAY 8, 2023**
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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 4th Street South, on the 8th day of
7 May 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
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19 **Others Present:** Brian Patrick, Director of Business Operations; Heather Hoyer, Jackie
20 Mainwaring and Lance Boyd, Executive Directors for Student Achievement; Tom
21 Hering, Director of Information Technology; Luke Diekhans, Director of Human
22 Resources; and Stephanie Schnider, Director of the Great Falls Public Schools
23 Foundation.
24

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

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27 At 5:30 pm, Chairperson Johnson called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of
28 Trustees and asked everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.
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31 **ADOPT AGENDA**
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33 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded - Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to adopt the
34 agenda as presented.
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37 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**
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39 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to approve
40 the Consent Agenda as presented. Special thanks was given to the Riverview
41 Elementary School PTA for their donation of \$188.61 to paint the teachers' work room.
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43 **A. Minutes of the April 24, 2023, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved the
44 minutes of the April 24, 2023, Regular Board Meeting as presented.
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46 **B. Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.
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48 **C. Good Apple Awards** – The Board approved the nominations for Good Apple

1 Awards: Erin Bucher, Student Services Specialist at Great Falls High School, Holly
2 Molyneaux, Elementary Instrumental Teacher, Quinton Schauer, Substitute Teacher,
3 Jennifer Cloutier, Resource 1 Teacher at Longfellow Elementary School, Irina Mills, and
4 Lori Edwards, both English Language (EL) Teachers at Great Falls High School,
5 Tammie Hickey, Distance Learning/Pathway Coordinator, Veronica Griffith, Workforce
6 Data Management Specialist, Jodi Hicks, Counselor, Michelle Brown, Brittany Light,
7 both Adult Basic Education (ABE) Teachers, Melissa VanSickle, English Teacher,
8 Reanna Jenkins, Pathway Advisor/Test Examiner, Willis Janson Lovec, High School
9 Equivalency Teast (HISSET) / Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) Test Examiner and
10 Angi Orsua, Office Assistant, all at Great Falls College, Montana State University (GFC,
11 MSU).

12
13 **D. Montana School Bus Driver’s Certificate – OPI TR-35** – The Board approved the
14 Montana Bus Driver’s Certificate – OPI TR-35’s for the individual listed in the agenda.

15
16 **E. Transitional Kindergarten Students Attendance Agreements at the Early**
17 **Learning Center for the 2022-2023 School Year** – The Board approved the students
18 listed in the agenda to attend the Early Learning Center for the 2022-2023 school year
19 due to exceptional circumstances per Board Policy 3100.

20
21 **F. Student Activity Monthly Report for February 2023** – The Board approved the
22 Student Activity Accounts for February 2023.

23
24 **G. Instructional and Office Paper Supply Order Bids** – The Board approved the
25 following bids for the instructional and office paper supply for 2023-2024: Warden
26 Paper - \$124,599.15, Pyramid Products - \$13,430.81, Cascade School Supplies -
27 \$2,174.20 and Amazon - \$433.95.

28
29 **H. Montana High School Association (MHSA) Annual Dues, Liability Catastrophe**
30 **Insurance and Concussion Insurance for 2023-2024** – The Board approved the
31 MHSA annual dues of \$250.00 per activity, per school for a total of \$5,750 per school,
32 the Liability Catastrophe Insurance Plan coverage cost of \$1,339 per school and the
33 Concussion Insurance premium of \$226.00 per school.

34
35 **I. Donation of \$188.61 to Paint the Teachers’ Lounge at Riverview Elementary**
36 **School** – The Board approved the donation of \$188.61 from the Riverview Elementary
37 School PTA to paint the teachers’ work room at Riverview Elementary School.

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40 **COMMUNICATION**

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42 **A. Sacajawea Students Reporting on Character Strong** –
43 Sacajawea Elementary School Counselor Theresa Busch explained that students have
44 been working on projects for the Character trait of *Creativity*. She introduced students
45 in grades K-6 and each student shared their project which demonstrated what *Creativity*
46 means to them. The students were thanked by the Board members.

1 **B. Report of Student Representatives –**

2 Paris Gibson Education Center (PGEC) Student Representatives Stratton Kiser, Miah
3 LeDeau and Taelar Severson said that in honor of Teacher Appreciation Week and the
4 end of the school year, they decided to take the time and thank those that have made a
5 difference in their lives. The students each talked about a life-experience and
6 expressed their gratitude and appreciation to staff members, and the Board for all they
7 have done and continue to do for the students in Great Falls Public Schools. A special
8 thank you was given to PGEC Principal Yenta Jaques for always believing in the
9 students.

10
11 C.M. Russell (CMR) High School Student Representatives Luke Banks, Caroline
12 Hermiller and Allison Marr reported on the Great Falls Community Pow Wow that was
13 held at the CMR Fieldhouse on May 6, 2023. It was a wonderful day filled with dancing,
14 drumming and celebrating culture. CMR staff and students cheered the Special
15 Olympics athletes at the regional track games held last week. Forensics students went
16 to the police department and had the opportunity to study footprint impressions,
17 fingerprints, ballistic reconstructions, and blood pattern recognition with local officers
18 and evidence technicians.

19 The students gave updates on the spring sports teams, performing arts events, Student
20 Government blood drive and the upcoming Senior activities. *Lessons We Loved*
21 included Introduction to Education students hearing from physician Kathy Wells on
22 adverse childhood experiences, Advanced Government students learned about how the
23 federal Bureaucracy and its agencies work, and Journalism students attended at the
24 University of Montana where they attended three classes in photography, social media,
25 writing, design and ethics. The students congratulated CMR Math Teacher Mr. Skaer
26 for being awarded the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Teacher of the Year at the
27 Excellence in Education event last week.

28
29 Great Falls High (GFH) School Student Representatives Hayley Bouchard, Ryan
30 Harrington and MacKenna Medina reported that last week new, upcoming seniors were
31 inducted into the National Honor Society and the soon-to-be graduates received their
32 honor cords. During the Excellence in Education event last week, fifteen (15) Bison
33 students were celebrated as Distinguished Scholars and fifteen (15) Bison staff were
34 celebrated as Distinguished Educators. The Drama Department concluded their
35 production of the *The Adding Machine* last week. Spring sports are winding down as
36 various teams are working toward state competitions. The students reported that
37 Career Day was held on May 5, 2023. Seniors showed off their future plans by wearing
38 college gear or attire for their dream jobs. As part of Mental Health & Suicide
39 Awareness, GFH's Peer Mental Health Group organized a Suicide Awareness Walk. In
40 honor of School Lunch Hero Day, thanks and appreciation were given to the GFH Food
41 Service staff for their hard work in feeding hundreds of kids every day.

42
43 **C. Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) –**

44 Career Pathways Advisor Mark Yaeger reported that there are six approved Career and
45 Technical Education (CTE) programs that include Business and Marketing, Family and
46 Consumer Sciences, Industrial Technology, Agriculture, Health Sciences and Junior
47 Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC). He then introduced Skills USA advisors
48 Ken Vanlieshout and Pete Pace and students, Health Occupations Students of America

1 (HOSA) advisor Amber Lloyd, Business Professionals of America (BPA) advisor Jessica
2 Goosen and students, Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) students,
3 Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), and JROTC Advisor Lt.
4 Col. Brian Holbein and student. Each advisor and the students spoke about their
5 programs and awards won at state competitions. They were congratulated by the
6 Board.

7
8 **D. Audience Communication -**

9 Great Falls (GF) Public Library Director Susie McIntyre said she is thankful for the great
10 partnership between GFPS and the GF Public Library. The public library is an essential
11 part of the community, keeping community members informed, educated, and thriving.
12 She explained the upcoming Special Election on June 6, 2023, for a Library Mill Levy
13 and said the library is operating at minimal State Library standards and yet continues to
14 be in a financial deficit. While the community values the library, it isn't adequately
15 financially supported to provide the quality library services that the community deserves.
16 The library is currently funded at \$19 per capita, which is below the Montana average of
17 \$31 per capita. Ms. McIntyre said the library spent months working with consultants
18 and community partners to develop a Master Plan. The plan provides information to
19 guide decisions on facility maintenance and upgrades, library space configurations,
20 library services, community outreach, staffing and funding. The Master Plan and
21 information on the impact of the levy passing or not passing can be found on the GF
22 Public Library website. If the levy passes, the property tax increase on a \$100,000
23 home would be \$20.25. Ballots for the election are scheduled to be mailed on May 17,
24 2023.

25
26 Community member Clark Fee explained that he has reviewed the 8th and 11th grade
27 Social Studies proposed textbooks and voiced his concerns of information included in
28 the textbooks. He gave examples from the 11th grade textbook that he felt may be
29 biased in his opinion.

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32 **ACTION ITEMS**

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34 **A. Financial Report and Check Register for February 2023 -**

35 Director of Business Operations reported on the financial report and check register for
36 February 2023.

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38 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve
39 the February 2023 Financial Report and Accounts Payable checks #1264289 - #126876
40 in the amount of \$1,996,306.89 and Payroll checks #77579 - #77912 in the amount of
41 \$826,440.54 as presented.

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43 **B. Second Reading of the Elementary Social Studies Materials** – Elementary
44 Curriculum Coordinator Rachel Cutler explained that since the first reading of the
45 proposed elementary Social Studies curriculum, she has received favorable community,
46 teacher, and student feedback. Videos were shown of students explaining what they
47 are learning. The materials have been available for public input at the District Office
48 since April 25, 2023. Mrs. Cutler said the cost projection is estimated at \$76,812 which

1 is about \$250.00 per classroom.
2 Trustee Bronson said he appreciates the work of the Social Studies Curriculum
3 Committee. He asked about the kindergarten curriculum that includes Indigenous tribes
4 not native to the area. Mrs. Cutler said the Indigenous Coaches are working to
5 incorporate information on Montana tribes in each of the grade level curriculum.
6 Trustee Bronson asked how the district is approaching the sensitivity of the subject of
7 slavery that is included in the 2nd grade materials. Mrs. Cutler explained parent letters
8 will be sent home informing parents of upcoming topics. Teacher guides include
9 language focus elements for sensitivity. Trustee Bronson said the Montana Historical
10 Society Directors are pleased that 4th grade students will be learning from a new
11 textbook released by the Montana Historical Society that addresses all 4th grade
12 standards.

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14 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve
15 the Elementary Social Studies materials as presented.

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17 **C. Second Reading of Revised Board Policies 3222, Distribution and Posting of**
18 **Materials and 8131, Indoor Air Quality** – Director of Business Operations, Brian
19 Patrick reviewed the proposed changes to Board policies 3222, Distribution and Posting
20 of Materials and 8131, Indoor Air Quality that were presented as first readings at the
21 April 24, 2023 Board meeting. Two other policies, 2221, School Emergencies and
22 Closures and 5223, Personal Conduct were also presented as first readings on April 24,
23 2023, but will be reviewed further by the Board Policy Committee after receiving
24 community input on the policies.

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26 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve
27 revised Board policies 3222, Distribution and Posting of Materials and 8131, Indoor Air
28 Quality as presented.

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30 **D. 2023-2024 School Calendar Amendment** – Director of the Human Resources Luke
31 Diekhans explained that during the 2022-2023 school year, contact minutes were
32 modified over the course of the year to have nonstudent contact days at the end of
33 quarters 1, 2, and 3 in order to provide time for teachers in their classrooms for record
34 keeping and professional development across the District for all employee groups. Staff
35 provided input on the nonstudent contact days during the 2022-2023 school year and
36 the District believes it will be beneficial moving forward to continue with the three end of
37 quarter days as nonstudent contact days in the format of three hours of record keeping,
38 three hours of professional development and one hour for lunch.

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40 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to approve
41 the amended 2023-2024 GFPS school calendar to provide for end of quarter
42 nonstudent contact days for quarters one, two and three.

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45 **ACTION: OTHER**

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48 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

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A. Update on Raising Readers with Cascade County – Student Services Coordinator Carol Paul explained that Great Falls Public Schools (GFPS) has been a partner with Raising Readers of Cascade County for the last ten years. This local committee works to build literacy opportunities by sharing books with young children and their families. Mrs. Paul announced that Raising Readers of Cascade County is partnering with the Great Falls Public Library Foundation and First Lady Gianforte to enroll every child under the age of 5 within the county in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. This program delivers one free book each month to children’s homes until their fifth birthday. It’s mission is to promote the joy of reading by sharing books with young children and their families. GFPS will partner with community agencies who work with families with young children to boost enrollment. The program officially launches May 10, 2023, but many children have already enrolled. Community member Judy Mortensen asked if the school district can participate and encourage enrollment in areas of the most need. Mrs. Paul said she has been attending school functions to promote the program and encourage families with younger children to enroll.

B. Achieve & Actively Learn Pilot Course - Secondary Curriculum Coordinator Beckie Frisbee explained that Great Falls High School will implement the Achieve & Actively Learn pilot course as an alternative curriculum and intervention program for Resource (special education) English 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, and 7-8 classes. Approximately eighty (80) students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in reading and/or writing will participate. Teachers will utilize Achieve 3000 to support reading comprehension skills through weekly lessons and students will access the online platform to answer comprehension questions. The online Actively Learn platform will be implemented throughout the week to support the application of reading skills through novel studies. Step-Up to Writing will be implemented to provide direct instruction in the writing process and used in conjunction with novel studies.

C. Happiness Tool Kit: Everyday Skills for Thriving in the 21st Century Pilot Course – Secondary Curriculum Coordinator Beckie Frisbee explained that during this semester-long elective course, C.M. Russell High School students will learn a variety of healthy habits designed to help them navigate what can often seem like an anxiety-ridden, stressful world. Class activities, discussion and homework topics will include social connections, screen time, nutrition, sleep, physical activity and time management. The course will be designed for 14–19-year-old students and was created at Yale University. Students will be assessed on the course objective and earn a letter grade. A survey will be provided at the end of the course to evaluate its effectiveness.

D. First Reading of the 2023-2024 Board Meeting Calendar – Director of Business Operations Brian Patrick presented the draft 2023-2024 Board meeting calendar and explained that it must follow Board policy 1400, Board of Trustees – Board Meetings and state statute. Mr. Patrick asked if anyone had concerns or comments about the calendar, to contact him before the next Board meeting.

E. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments – Trustee Finnicum said the students did a great job for their last presentation of the year and said he is looking forward to all the “Mayhem” activities this month.

1 Trustee Sunchild said the school district has a great partnership with the Great Falls
2 Public Library and that the library offers so many more services than most people
3 realize.
4 Trustee Skornogoski said the Library Board’s goal is the same as the school district’s
5 community goal. She said she is excited about the implementation of the Imagination
6 Library.
7 Trustee Thompson said she enjoyed the Sacajawea Character Strong students’
8 presentation and that she was moved during the Paris Gibson Education student
9 reports.
10 Trustee Bronson said he attended the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation
11 Excellence in Education event and the Celebration of the Completion of the Bond
12 Projects. He recognized and appreciated the communities’ support to build two new
13 elementary schools in lower income areas of town. He said now that the legislative
14 session is completed, there will be opportunities to implement new laws. Trustee
15 Bronson thanked Trustee Finnicum for serving as the District’s Municipal Director for the
16 Montana School Boards Association.
17 Trustee Turoski said she recently attended a Math Task Force meeting and was
18 pleased with the innovative ideas from the math teachers. She said she enjoyed the
19 student reports and wishes the graduates all the best of luck in their futures.
20 Chairperson Johnson spoke of his time subbing for a 2nd grade teacher at Riverview
21 Elementary School last Friday and said he enjoyed his time with the students.

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24 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

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26 Chairperson Johnson said upcoming events include a Board Policy Committee Meeting
27 scheduled for May 16, 2023, the Retirement/Longevity Reception on May 17, 2023, the
28 High School House Ribbon Cutting on May 18, 2023 and the Board of Trustees
29 Reorganization Meeting on May 22, 2023.

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32 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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34 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to
35 adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 8:00 p.m.

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Gordon Johnson, Chairperson
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Brian Patrick, Clerk
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