

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
2 **HELD FEBRUARY 14, 2022**
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4 A duly called Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Great Falls Public
5 Schools was held at the District Offices Building, 1100 4th Street South, on the 14th day
6 of February, 2022.
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8 **ROLL CALL:** Brian Patrick took roll call.
9

10 **Trustees Present:** Jeff Gray, Chairperson
11 Gordon Johnson, Vice Chairperson
12 Bill Bronson
13 Mark Finnicum
14 Kim Skornogoski
15 Marlee Sunchild
16 Nathan Reiff
17

18 **Others Present:** Tom Moore, Superintendent; Tom Hering, Director of Information
19 Technology; Heather Hoyer, Assistant Superintendent 7-12; Kerry Dattilo, Director of
20 Human Resources; Lance Boyd, Director of Student Services; Stephanie Schnider,
21 GFPS Foundation Director; and Becky Nelson, Community Connections Manager.
22 Also present were Lisa Sapp, Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB) Child and Youth
23 Education Services-School Liaison and Tom Cubbage, Great Falls Education
24 Association (GFEA) President.
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26 At 5:30 pm, Chairperson Gray 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 – Gordon Johnson, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to adopt
33 the agenda as presented.
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36 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**
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38 Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the
39 Consent Agenda as presented
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41 **A. Minutes of the January 24, 2022, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved
42 the minutes of the January 24, 2022, Regular Board Meeting as presented.
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44 **B. Minutes of the January 24, 2022, Closed Session Meeting** – The Board approved
45 the minutes of the January 24, 2022, Closed Session Meeting as presented.
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47 **C. Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.
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1 **D. Good Apple Awards** - The Board approved nominations for Good Apple Awards:
2 Lee Haynes, 1st Engineer at East Middle School, Terry Litostansky, District Electrician
3 Foreman, Brent Cutler, District Interim Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, Suzie
4 Bedwell, Production Kitchen Manager, NaDel LaQue and Jean Mansfield, both Cooks,
5 Ashley Parish, Food Service Employee and Candace Amestoy, Satellite Kitchen Lead,
6 all at Paris Gibson Education Center and Jessa Youngers, District Food Service
7 Director.

8
9 **E. Montana School Bus Driver Certificates, OPI TR-35** – The Board approved the
10 Montana School Bus Driver Certificates listed in the agenda.

11
12 **F. Transitional Kindergarten Student Attendance at the Early Learning Center for**
13 **the 2021-2022 School Year** – The Board approved students W.L., L.C., C.B., I.P. and
14 C.S. to attend the Early Learning Center for the 2021-2022 school year due to
15 exceptional circumstances per Board Policy 3100.

16
17 **G. Incoming 2021-2022 Student Attendance Agreements** – The Board approved the
18 four incoming student attendance agreements listed in the agenda for the 2021-2022
19 school year with the tuition to be paid for by the parents, district of residence and/or
20 state.

21
22 **H. C.M. Russell (CMR) High School and Great Falls High (GFH) School**
23 **Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) Students to Travel to the**
24 **National DECA Convention** – The Board approved travel and time away from school
25 for CMR and GFH DECA students to travel to Atlanta, GA, April 22-27, 2022 to attend
26 the national DECA Conference.

27
28 **I. Donation of \$200 Cash** – The Board approved the gift of \$200 cash from Paul Willis
29 to Great Falls Public Schools with thanks.

30
31 **J. Lowest Qualified Bidder – Valley View Elementary School Ventilation and**
32 **Window Project Upgrade** – The Board approved WVH Enterprises LLC as the lowest
33 qualified bidder for the ventilation and window replacement project at Valley View
34 Elementary School in the amount of \$1,193,000 for the Base Bid and \$110,200 for
35 Alternative Bid #1 and \$30,400 for Alternative Bid #2. The total project approval is
36 \$1,333,600.

37
38 **K. Lowest Qualified Bidder – C.M. Russell High School Ventilation Project** – The
39 Board approved Wadsworth Builders Company Inc. as the lowest qualified bidder for
40 the ventilation project at C.M. Russell High School in the amount of \$1,174,000 for the
41 Base Bid, \$62,600 for Alternative Bid #1, \$38,700 for Alternative Bid #2 and \$7,100 for
42 Alternative Bid #3. The total project approval is \$1,282,400.

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45 **COMMUNICATION**

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47 **A. Student Representatives' Reports** –
48 C.M. Russell (CMR) High School Student Representatives Luke Banks and Paige

1 LePard reported on the High School Art Show last week at the Dark Horse and said the
2 CMR students' art work is on display at the OC Seltzer Gallery through March 16. The
3 students gave updates on orchestra, choir, band concerts and drama events along with
4 the Student Government MORP dance. Luke and Paige gave results of the State
5 Wrestling Tournament, and the Boys' and Girls' Crosstown Basketball games. The
6 Speech and Debate Team attended the East Montana National Qualifier event in
7 Billings and three students qualified to represent Montana at the National Convention in
8 Louisville, KY.

9 The students announced that February is Career Technical Education (CTE) Month.
10 Many of the student CTE groups are preparing for State Competitions. Rustler students
11 donated over \$200.00 to support GFH student Emma Pachek who is going through
12 treatment for aplastic anemia. The donation was collected during a miracle minute at
13 the Winter Pep Assembly.

14
15 Paris Gibson Education Center (PGEC) Student Representatives Kendal Mickealson
16 and Kaylee Stremcha reported that thirty-eight students have completed their high
17 school requirements to date. Most of these students will participate in the Graduation
18 Ceremony in May, however, one student chose to participate in the Winter Graduation
19 on February 9. Congratulations was given to Mrs. Yenta Jaques who has been chosen
20 to be the next Principal at PGEC. Current Principal Uecker will retire in June and Mrs.
21 Jaques will start on July 1. The students explained that Mrs. Jaques is a former PGEC
22 teacher and is currently the Principal at Loy Elementary School. Jobs for Montana
23 Graduates (JMG) students helped with a recent blood drive, are searching and applying
24 for scholarships and are preparing for the IGNITE State JMG Leadership Conference.
25 Kendal and Kaylee said PGEC welding students are constructing a large iron star as
26 part of a JMG/Loy Elementary collaboration project and Consumer Mechanics students
27 have finished a flatbed trailer for the Indigenous Education Department. The students
28 reported that Art is a popular class at PGEC and encouraged everyone to be watching
29 for displayed student art projects.

30
31 Great Falls High (GFH) School Student Representatives Valon Haslem and Ryan
32 Harrington gave updates on State competitions for the Speech and Debate Team,
33 Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) students along with results from the
34 State Wrestling and State Swimming meet. The GFH boys' swim team took 3rd place
35 and the girls' swim team were the State Champions. They announced that the GFH
36 Theatre Department will be performing "Charlotte's Web" February 17, 18, 19, 24, 25
37 and 26, 2022. Valon and Ryan reported that GFH hosted the AA Orchestra Festival at
38 which orchestra and band students from GFH, CMR and Helena practiced and
39 performed together under the direction of two guest conductors. Business Professionals
40 of America (BPA) students recently competed at the District 3 Regional BPA
41 competition. The team will be participating in the State Competition in March. The
42 students explained that a new student group named IMBison has been formed with the
43 intention to unite the Herd; to bring unity to the students and staff at GFH through
44 positive messaging and encouragement. Student Council members have been
45 volunteering at Chief Joseph and Sunnyside Elementary Schools through the Bison
46 Buddies Program. The high school students are excited to offer support to younger
47 students who may need extra help.

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1 **B. Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB) Communication** - Lisa Sapp, Malmstrom Air
2 Force Base (MAFB) Child and Youth Education Services-School Liaison said she did
3 not have anything to report at this time.

4
5 **C. Superintendent's Report –**

6 Prior to the Student Representatives' Report, Superintendent Moore congratulated
7 Swim Coach Ed McNamee and the CMR and GFH Swim Team for a successful State
8 tournament at which the GFH girls placed 1st, the CMR girls placed 2nd and the GFH
9 Boys placed 3rd.

10 Superintendent Moore reported on the Healthy Native Hearts event hosted by the
11 Indigenous Education Department at PGEC. This is a women's health fair that offered
12 information on health opportunities, interactive booths, games and prizes. He said the
13 event was started by former Superintendent Cheryl Crawley and has since become an
14 annual event.

15 Superintendent Moore introduced GFH DECA Advisor Scott Donisthorpe and a few of
16 the DECA students from GFH and CMR who placed in the recent State Competition.
17 Mr. Donisthorpe thanked the Board for their support and said that five students from
18 GFH and seven students from CMR will be competing in the National Competition in
19 April. The students and Mr. Donisthorpe were congratulated by Superintendent Moore
20 and the Board.

21 Superintendent Moore reported that last week State Superintendent Elsie Arntzen and
22 her staff met with GFPS staff, GFC-MSU staff and Great Falls Chamber of Commerce
23 representatives regarding Career and Technical Education (CTE). Superintendent
24 Arntzen and staff later met with GFPS Counselors and Behavioral Therapists over the
25 lunch hour to discuss student health and wellness.

26 Superintendent Moore thanked Community Connections Manager Becky Nelson and
27 the high school art teachers and students for the High School Art Show that was held
28 last weekend and the Dark Horse. He recognized the art students for their amazing art
29 work. He reported on the High Voltage Weekend in the Electric City at which college
30 education seniors were invited to spend a weekend in Great Falls to learn about with
31 the city has to offer and to learn about GFPS. Weekend events included meals with
32 guest speakers, activities throughout Great Falls and all candidates who attended
33 received a job interview. Superintendent Moore thanked Becky Nelson and Director of
34 Human Resources Kerry Dattilo for their hard work in preparing the event. Becky
35 thanked the many community sponsors of the event. Registration bags were filled with
36 items donated from community partners for the students along with financial support for
37 the event from many sponsors. She said the High Voltage Weekend could not have
38 happened without the generous support from the community partners.

39 Superintendent Moore reported that the 2nd Citizens Academy Meeting will be held on
40 February 17, 2022 and will focus on Music, Business Operations, Human Resources,
41 Transportation, and Technology. A tour of the Annex building and Warehouse will be
42 given at the end of the meeting.

43 Superintendent Moore gave an update on the COVID-19 cases for students and staff
44 and said the numbers for both have tapered off as predicted. He thanked the GFPS
45 nursing staff and engineers for their continued hard work during this time.

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48 **D. Audience Communication – None**

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ACTION ITEMS

A. Financial Report and Check Register for December 2021 – Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Gordon Johnson passed unanimously to approve the December 2021 Financial Report and Accounts Payable checks #119141 - #119650 in the amount of \$1,965,167.24 and Payroll checks #72891 - #73139 in the amount of \$587,426.37 as presented.

B. Student Activity Report for December 2021 – Motion – Gordon Johnson, Seconded – Nathan Reiff, passed unanimously to approve the Student Activity Monthly Report for December 2021 as presented.

C. Second Reading of Revised Board Policies 3225 and 3225P - Superintendent Moore explained the recommendation is to delete existing Great Falls Public Schools' Board Policies 3225 and 3225P and adopt Montana School Board Association's recommended model Board Policies 3225 and 3225P. He said he has not received any comments or concerns since the first reading on January 24, 2022.

Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Gordon Johnson, passed unanimously to approve revised Board Policies 3225 and 3225P as presented.

D. Declare Reduction in Force (RIF) Process and Criteria to be Used in the Event RIF Becomes Necessary – Director of Human Resources Kerry Dattilo explained the Budget Committee will be developing budget recommendations for the next school year. It is necessary to have the Reduction in Force Process in place should reductions in programs, non-essential activities, and/or staff be necessary.

Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Nathan Reiff, passed unanimously to declare the possibility of a Reduction in Force and to adopt the process and criteria as presented.

E. Non-Renew Temporary, Non-Tenured Teachers with Positions Expiring June 3, 2022 – Director of Human Resources Kerry Dattilo explained the non-renewal of the non-tenured teachers listed in the agenda is required because the teachers were hired, for a variety of reasons, for positions on a temporary basis with contracts that expire on June 3, 2022. She explained the teachers have the opportunity to apply for jobs next year for which they are qualified to teach.

Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to approve the non-renewal of the teachers listed in the agenda as their positions are temporary and will expire June 3, 2022.

ACTION: OTHER

1 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

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3 **A. First Reading of Revised Board Policies 5223 and 5314 and New Board Policy**
4 **8211** - Superintendent Moore reviewed, in detail, the changes to existing Board Policies
5 5223 and 5314 and new Board Policy 8211 and asked if anyone has comments,
6 concerns or questions to contact him before the next Board meeting.

7 A community member asked about the new language added to Board Policy 5223 and
8 the reason for it added to the section of *Conflict of Interest*. Trustee Bronson said the
9 addition is to clarify that materials created during the course of an employee's duties of
10 the District using District resources are considered to be District property. The
11 additional wording to Board Policy 5223 is a recommendation from the Montana School
12 Boards Association.

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14 **B. First Reading of New English Language Arts (ELA) Resources K-12 –**
15 K-6 Curriculum Coordinator Rachel Cutler and 7-12 Curriculum Coordinator Beckie
16 Frisbee explained that in the Fall of the 2021-2022 school year, a K-12 English
17 Language Arts (ELA) committee was formed for the purpose of selecting new ELA
18 textbooks and materials. They said evaluating the current ELA standards and
19 curriculum was part of the 2021-2022 Strategic Plan. They listened to teacher concerns
20 about the current curriculum and looked at the data that showed students were not
21 meeting the achievement targets set for them. Research states that by switching from a
22 low-quality to a high-quality textbook, can boost student achievement more than other
23 more popular interventions. The Committee was comprised of twenty-nine elementary
24 teachers, ten middle school teachers, fourteen high school English teachers,
25 Instructional Coaches, Special Education teachers, Intervention teachers, community
26 members, parents and school board members. The Committee met to expand their
27 knowledge of best practice in research in ELA and evaluate high quality choices using
28 specific tools aligned to the purpose. Once perspective resources were chosen, the
29 intent was to invite staff and community members to preview the materials and provide
30 feedback to assist the committee in making an informed decision based on evaluation
31 and feedback. To date, more than 110 staff members and 25 community members
32 have previewed the materials and given their feedback. Rachel explained what the
33 elementary committee learned was that students need word recognition and language
34 comprehension. Amplify, the selection of the elementary committee, provides explicit,
35 systematic instruction of phonics, strong knowledge building component and aligned
36 intervention. She reviewed some of the teacher and community feedback that supported
37 the committee's selection. Beckie explained that the high school committee selected
38 McGraw Hill Study-Sync. These resources provide explicit reading, writing, grammar
39 and speaking lessons, has data-driven assessments, built-in scaffolding with five
40 reading levels, supports ten languages, includes fiction and non-fiction reading,
41 provides writing peer review and spiral assessments to help students master the
42 standards. She reviewed feedback from teachers and community members who
43 supported the committee's selection. Folders that contained information on both
44 programs were given to all Board members for their review. Rachel and Beckie said the
45 ELA materials are on display in the Evergreen Conference Room at the District Office
46 Building until February 25, 2022 for anyone who would like to preview them. They said
47 they are available to answer any questions people may have while previewing the
48 materials. As with any new program, it may take up to three years for the data to show

1 improvements. Student progress will hopefully be tracked sooner as these programs
2 provide individual support tools built into the curriculum. Rachel and Beckie explained
3 there will be extensive professional training for teachers prior to the start of school next
4 year and additional training will be provided throughout the year.

5 Trustee Skornogoski thanked Rachel and Beckie for their countless hours working on
6 the new curriculum. She said she has been tracking the 3rd grade data and that it has
7 been flat over the years. She asked how can this be improved. Rachel said the
8 science of reading has changed. Students need to be taught to read in a different way.
9 Superintendent Moore said the State requires districts to review each of the curriculum
10 areas as outlined in Board Policy 2120. He said if any community member is interested
11 or has concerns about curriculum, they are encouraged to contact the Curriculum
12 Coordinators and to serve on a Curriculum Committee to better understand the process.
13 Trustee Bronson said he appreciated being a part of the ELA Curriculum Committee. He
14 said all students learn to read and comprehend differently and it is good to have the
15 extra support early on.

16
17 **C. GFPS 2021 Graduation and Drop-Out Data** – Assistant Superintendent Heather
18 Hoyer explained there are three types of diplomas students can earn; Comprehensive,
19 Concentration and Honors. Students can earn one diploma or a Comprehensive
20 diploma and a Concentration or Honors diploma. Heather reviewed a graph that showed
21 State and GFPS Graduation Rates from 2011 – 2021, and reported the GFPS
22 graduation rate for 2021 is 81.71%. She explained that the Office of Public Instruction
23 (OPI) has updated the way they track Dropout data. Students who get their “certificate
24 of completion” (5th year Senior or more) is no longer counted against a district. She
25 showed Dropout data from 2011-2021 and reported that there were 108 students who
26 dropped out of school in 2021. Heather reviewed data on Cohort Graduation Rate by
27 Race/Ethnicity and Student Group. Student group categories include free and reduced
28 lunch, English learners, homeless, and special education. She explained GFPS has
29 staff that focuses on helping the homeless population that includes home visits,
30 transportation, and food. She said Alliance for Youth and United Way are just two of the
31 amazing community partners who also provide support for the homeless students.
32 Other options to reduce barriers for students include the Career and College Readiness
33 Center, Secondary Life Skills, Montana Youth Challenge, Licensed addiction and
34 behavioral therapists, and Paris Gibson Education Center. Tammie Hickey, Program
35 Coordinator for the Great Falls Career and College Readiness Center (CCRC) reported
36 that CCRC serves between 300 and 500 individuals every year and is a year-round
37 program. All individuals served through CCRC take a no-cost pre-assessment, Test of
38 Adult Basic Education (TABE) that gives them an academic starting point as they guide
39 them in their goals. Available paths for students are high school equivalency, higher
40 education, citizenship and employment. Tammie said the success of CCRC is because
41 of the collaborative partnerships within the community. An example is Connections 101
42 that is a program between the Department of Labor Great Falls Job Service, Great Falls
43 College-Montana State University and the CCRC. At the completion of the Connections
44 101, students will be confident to transition or continue in higher education,
45 apprenticeship or short-term training, or immediate job placement.
46 Trustee Skornogoski thanked teachers and staff for not giving up on students who may
47 need extra help. They look at data and when something doesn't work, they try
48 something else. She said we have great partnerships with the community to help the

1 students find their passions. Issues, such as homelessness, that prevent students from
2 succeeding don't start in school. Kim said the community can help by volunteering and
3 be involved in activities to help students.

4 Trustee Bronson said he is enlightened by hearing from Director Indigenous Education
5 Dugan Coburn on how the District can change achievement rates for Indigenous
6 students. Dugan and his staff realize this is an area of special attention and work with
7 the students to be successful.

8
9 **D. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments –**

10 Trustee Sunchild thanked the ELA Committee for their time and effort in selecting the
11 new ELA curriculum. She said others may not understand how hard it is to teach
12 reading and she is excited for the educators to have a new curriculum to work with.

13 Trustee Reiff said he attended the High School Art Show and Paris Gibson Graduation
14 last week. He recognized Superintendent Moore and the Cabinet members for their
15 presentations at the first Citizens Academy Meeting on February 3.

16 Trustee Finnicum said the Board Budget Committee continues to meet and said he will
17 be attending a State Board meeting in-person next month. He said he is proud of Paris
18 Gibson Education Center and all the staff does to help the students get to the finish line.

19 Trustee Bronson said he attended the recent High School Art Show and congratulated
20 the students and teachers on a successful event. He said he attends the Chamber's
21 Business Advocacy meetings and said it is a great forum to advocate for what GFPS is
22 doing. Trustee Bronson said he is appreciative of the legislators' interest in the school
23 budget.

24 Trustee Skornogoski thanked those that gave report this evening.

25 Vice Chairperson Johnson reported that AA Orchestra Festivals were held in Great
26 Falls, Billings and Bozeman. He said it was wonderful to see how the students came
27 together to perform after practicing for two days. These types of activities are so
28 important to the students.

29 Chairperson Gray thanked the community members, Board members and staff that
30 attended the Board meeting and recognized that it had been a long day for many.

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33 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

34
35 Chairperson Gray said the next Regular Board Meetings are scheduled for February 28,
36 2022 and March 14, 2022. A Townhall Community Budget Meeting is scheduled for
37 March 16, 2022.

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39 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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41 Motion – Gordon Johnson, Seconded – Marlee Sunchild, passed unanimously to
42 adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 8:18 p.m.

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46 _____
47 Jeff Gray, Chairperson

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49 Brian Patrick, Clerk