

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, EAST HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 9

Call to Order: Trustees of School District No. 9 held a meeting on April 14, 2025. Chairman Scott Walter called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm.

Attendance and Introduction of Board Members

Trustees Present: Chairman Scott Walter, Vice Chair Tyrel Murfitt, Tristan Ulmer, Marcia Ellermeyer, Martin Balukas, and Mark Diehl

Superintendent Dan Rispens, Clerk Jill Hoogerheide, Athletics Director Shaun Murgel, IT Coordinator Eric Power, and Student Representative Brooke Harris

Building Admin: Michael Kemper, Lynsi Morris, Trish Klock, Gus Somerfeld, Paul Condon and Brandon Crusat.

Visitors: Kate Johnson, Sarah Sandau, Traci Mazanec, Andrew Mazanec, Sam Wigen, J.D. Ferris, Ty Ridgeway, Tiffany Richardson, EHHS BPA, K.D. Jones, Mike Mazanec, Natalie Clark, Jacob Clark, Dakota Smith

Review the Agenda

No comments

Hear the Public

Kate Johnson spoke about the District's spring break dates for next year.

Reports

Student Report

Brooke Harris spoke about the high school's spring sports and their many accomplishments.

The EHHS boys' basketball team was recognized by the Board for their exceptional year. Ty Ridgeway, the coach showed a video and spoke about his team and all their accomplishments. Many from the team attended the meeting to be acknowledged.

Administrator Reports

EG and PPE Principal Brandon Crusat referenced his Board report and wanted to emphasize his excitement that Governor Gianforte came to Prickly Pear Elementary to sign HB15. He also wanted to speak more about his behavior report in the Board Packet. The staff have seen a 56% decrease in behaviors when compared to previous years at this time.

Radley Elementary Principal Gus Somerfeld referenced his Board report and wanted to speak about this year's parent/teacher conferences. On a trial basis, the school scheduled the conferences later on the calendar than in previous years. He has received positive feedback from both parents and teachers regarding the time frame. He felt like this is something the school staff would like to repeat going forward.

EVMS Principal Lynsi Morris reported that EVMS school staff created some base checks to ensure all students who attended the dance had completed all their necessary classwork. There was a 227 Academy survey that went out to the 8th grade students in the charter school asking if they would like to move forward to the high school 227 Academy. They received some mixed responses and the admin believe it may be more beneficial for most to start in the regular school setting and if later deemed necessary, they could move to 227 Academy. There will also be an ongoing conversation with the parents and admin to attempt to make the best decisions for each student.

Michael Kemper wanted to report that after-school suspensions have gone down significantly this year. Most of the admin went to Great Falls for training with the SROs and felt like it was reassuring that the schools were already doing what was recommended for school safety.

EHHS Principal Paul Condon referenced his Board report and also wanted to talk about the Donkey Basketball games coming up on Thursday. Paul also introduced Sam Wigen, EHPS's FFA/AG teacher to speak about a grant she received from OPI for advancing agricultural education. She will use it for curriculum and supplies to supplement the teaching in her AG courses.

Trustee Balukas wanted to express how much he admired Sam for her energy this year and her positive attitude with the students.

EHHS Vice Principal Trish Klock spoke about the new cell phone policy and was very happy that the students seemed to react positively. The students are struggling to stay in class now that the weather is getting nicer. The staff is brainstorming ideas to help increase the class attendance. She feels like the policies with in-school suspension are working and they intend to keep reinforcing the guidelines moving forward.

Vice Chair Murfitt had some clarifying questions regarding the vape behavior numbers showing a decline in the Board reports.

Athletic Director Shaun Murgel spoke about several of the spring sports including baseball, track, and basketball. He also wanted to reiterate how well our athletes are doing across the board. Shaun also gave a shout out to the custodians who come in on weekends to help clean up after activities.

IT Coordinator Eric Power spoke about the new Chromebook order and the timing of ordering ensuring we will save money. He also stated that he is working on a new anti-virus program that he plans to put to the test.

Trustee and Committee Reports of the K-12 Board

Chairman Walter solicited reports from the Trustees and Committees.

Chairman Walter talked about attending the COSSBA conference in Atlanta. He felt like there were many wonderful speakers and a lot of ideas. He looks forward to trying to implement some of the new ideas here in the district.

Chairman Walter also participated in strategic planning with MTSBA and he felt like he received quite a bit of valuable information while learning a lot regarding the legislature process.

No other reports from the Committees and Trustees.

Strategic Planning – Scan for Future Needs

Chairman Walter solicited the Board for any reports about strategic planning.

Superintendent Rispens spoke about the district-wide infrastructure meeting being held on May 1st. He looks forward to meeting with them and reviewing the SMA report from a couple years ago regarding some suggestions about District buildings.

Legislative Status Report

The Board, Superintendent, Admin and the public all had an opportunity to report and discuss pending legislation.

Superintendent Rispens spoke about HB 15. He felt honored and excited to have the Governor sign the bill at Prickly Pear Elementary. Governor Gianforte stayed and read the students a story and he felt like the kids had a great experience. The Superintendent also spoke a bit about the Stars Act that has not yet been passed. This is an important bill for the District to be able to fund some of the positions we were forced to drop when the 2024 levy did not pass.

Chairman Walter spoke a little more about the Stars Act and HB 339 which would affect how the ANB payments would work for 6th graders in the future. The Board Chair also wanted to report that SB 278 passed the House and Senate which would revise education laws to support the Advanced Opportunity program.

Notifications of Retirements and Resignations

The Following Staff Resignations Have Previously Been Accepted:

- Brooklyn Purcell EHHS Cheer Coach
- Darlene Jatkowski EHHS Special Education Teacher

Consent Action Items

Minutes of the Regular Meeting March 10, 2025

Approval of the former and new warrants (Claims #50788 - #50882) and (Payroll #67954 - #68140)

Personnel Actions

Recommendation of Employment:

● Tess Prendergast	EVMS Science Teacher
● Caitlyn Moran	Elementary Teacher for the 25-26 School Year
● Tara Harrington	Elementary Teacher for the 25-26 School Year
● Amber Countryman	Elementary Teacher for the 25-26 School Year
● Monica Foster	Summer Program Paraprofessional
● Kendra Elgen	Summer Program Paraprofessional
● Abby Hogue	Summer Program Paraprofessional
● Kayla Combs	Summer Program Paraprofessional
● Samantha Burke	Summer Program Teacher .5
● Rachel Beveridge	Summer Program Teacher .5
● Tara Harrington	Summer Program Teacher
● Laura Boltz	Summer Program Secretary
● Christa Chiriaco	Substitute
● Stacy York	Substitute
● Kelly Allen	Summer Program Bus Driver
● Sherylle Pellen	Summer Program Bus Driver
● K.D. Jones	Tiger Program Data Entry Clerk
● Angie Cejka	Radley Paraprofessional

East Helena School District Students Requesting Enrollment in Other School Districts for the 2024-2025 School Year

	<u>Helena</u>	<u>Jefferson High</u>	<u>Montana City</u>	<u>Clancy</u>
MM (PreK)				
Kindergarten				
1 st grade				
2 nd grade				
3 rd grade				
4 th grade				
5 th grade				
6 th grade				
7 th grade				
8 th grade				
9 th grade				
10 th grade	1			
11 th grade				

12th grade

Total: 1

Chairman Walter asked to pull the personnel items to add Angela Cejka who was recommended after the Board packet was sent out.

Motion by Trustee Ellermeyer, seconded by Vice Chair Murfitt to approve the consent action items as presented with the personnel items pulled .

Motion by Trustee Ellermeyer, seconded by Vice Chair Murfitt to approve the Personnel Actions as presented with the addition of Angela Cejka.

Unanimous vote for the motions. The motions carry.

Unfinished Business

School Bus Purchase

Superintendent Rispens reported to the Board about the bus purchase that was approved at last month's Board meeting.

Central Office Relocation Proposal

The Infrastructure Committee members reported to the full Board about the meeting that was held in the clinic building. The relocation budget was reviewed and the Board discussed whether or not it made sense to give up on using the clinic for a medical facility.

Motion by Trustee Balukas, seconded by Trustee Diehl to approve the relocation of the Central Office to the old health clinic building with a capped budget of \$20,000. Trustee Ulmer voted no. Trustees Ellermeyer, Balukas, Diehl, Walter, and, Murfitt voted aye.

With 5 ayes and 1 no the motion carries.

New Business

Student Eagle Scout Recognition

Principal Somerfeld introduced Andrew Mazanec, who was recognized by the Board for his Eagle Scout project to create a storage solution for the Radley music room. Andrew spoke a bit about what he accomplished and showed the Board pictures of the process.

Out of State Travel Request, EHHS BPA

Superintendent Rispens introduced some of the members of the EHHS BPA group. They qualified for Nationals and are requesting permission to travel out of state to attend the competition. Teacher Breanna Humphrey and some students spoke about some of the events and all the opportunities

offered to them because of their membership in the BPA. They will be traveling with a group from Helena.

Motion by Trustee Ulmer, seconded by Trustee Ellermeyer to approve out-of-state travel for EHHS BPA to attend the Nationals competition in Orlando. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

Consideration of the Multi District Agreement

The interlocal agreement with Lincoln School District is up for renewal and Superintendent Rispens has asked the Board to approve a new 3-year agreement.

Motion by Trustee Ellermeyer, seconded by Vice Chair Murfitt to approve the Multi-District with Lincoln School District for another 3 years. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

New Student Activity Account – Pretty Cool Claws

The student club at the high school that specializes in creative fingernails needs an account for their fundraising, expenses and deposits. They are requesting a Student Activity account.

Motion by Trustee Ulmer, seconded by Trustee Ellermeyer to approve the Pretty Cool Claws Student Activity account. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

EHPS School Board Letter to the East Helena PTO

Superintendent Rispens presented letter to the East Helena PTO that was discussed previously and is ready for final approval.

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Ellermeyer to approve the Board letter to East Helena PTO. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

Softball Co-Op Consideration

The softball coach and Activity Director shared information regarding extending our agreement with Jefferson High School for the softball co-op.

Dakota Smith, the softball coach spoke a bit about the co-op. She feels like this is a necessity for her to be able to let everyone on the team play. Currently it acts like their JV team and if she had to incorporate the entire team together it would affect all the members' play time.

1st Reading Board Policy 8210

- 8210 – Procurement Policy for School Food Purchases and Use of Federal Funds

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Diehl to approve policy 8210 with the change to lower the threshold to \$10,000 under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

Consideration of New Position – Advanced Opportunity Facilitator Career Coach

Superintendent Rispens requested the Board to authorize a new position created to promote and develop meaningful work-based experiential learning opportunities for students at EHHS.

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Ulmer to approve the new Advanced Opportunity Facility Career Coach position for the 25-26 school year contingent on SB 278 passing through legislature with favorable language that benefits the district. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

ESSA Report Card Review

Superintendent presented the annual ESSA report card that the district received from OPI. He stressed that our data was a little skewed because we had used MAST as part of the pilot program and have not received our results yet. The data from the testing prior to us using MAST was reported (most likely last year). We are still waiting for our MAST data.

Principal Crusat spoke about how Prickly Pear and Eastgate are progress monitoring and making choices to provide additional instruction for the students who would most benefit from the extra repetition.

Principal Somerfeld spoke about the process at Radley and felt like it was very similar to what is happening at PPE and Eastgate. Radley currently uses assessments through I-ready and MAST which our district is part of the pilot program.

Principal Morris reported that EVMS uses the data from the MAST, IXL and classroom-based assessments to inform their teaching.

Principal Condon spoke about EHHS. The only tests that they officially use for assessment is the ACT for Juniors. Next year is a new English curriculum and hoping this helps with achievement scores. I-Ready is used internally as an assessment by some.

FWP Hunter's Education Program Request

Superintendent Rispens presented the annual request for Volunteer FWP Hunters Education Instructors to utilize demonstration firearms on our campuses as part of their safety instruction.

Motion by Trustee Ulmer, seconded by Trustee Diehl to approve the request for Fish, Wildlife and Park's Hunters Education instructors to utilize demonstration firearms on campus as part of their safety instruction.

Consideration of Miller House Lease Agreement with Prickly Pear Cooperative

Superintendent Rispens informed the Board that our lease agreement with Prickly Pear Cooperative is up for renewal. He requested that the Board approve the renewal with all terms of the lease staying the same.

Motion by Trustee Ellermeyer, seconded by Vice Chair Murfitt to approve renewal of the lease agreement with Prickly Pear Co-op for the 2025-2026 school year. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

Appointment of Representative for Prickly Pear Cooperative Board

Superintendent Rispens reported that each year the Board must appoint a representative to serve on the PPC Board. Traditionally the appointment has been the District Superintendent.

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt seconded by Trustee Ellermeyer to approve Superintendent Rispens to serve on the PPC Board to represent the East Helena Public Schools. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Future Meeting Dates and Agenda Items

The next regular meeting will be held on May 12, 2025 @ 5:30 EVMS

Submitted by: Jill Hoogerheide
Board Clerk, Jill Hoogerheide

05/08/25
Date

Approved by: Scott A. Walter
Chairman, Board of Trustees

MAY 12, 2025
Date