

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
School District #9

Call to order: Trustees of the East Helena Public Schools, District #9, held a regular meeting on Monday, June 9th, 2025.

Chairman Scott Walter called the meeting to order at 5:35p.m.

In Attendance: Board Chair Scott Walter, Vice Chair Tyrel Murfitt, Trustees; Mark Diehl, Martin Balukas, Stacy Baird, Tiffany Richardson and Tristan Ulmer. Superintendent Dan Rispens, EHHS Vice-Principal Trish Klock, EVMS Principal Lynsi Morris, Technology Coordinator Eric Power, Principals Gus Somerfeld, Brandon Crusat and District Secretary, Jen Cordell

Visitors: Tana Fetherston, Tim Baird, Karly Olson, Kate Johnson, Michelle Lashway, Jeremy Hernandez, Megan Hernandez, Kylene Ruth, Tyler Christians, Robie Culver, Clint Smith, Juliet Hahn, Valerie Blanchette and Ryan Blanchette.

Chairman Scott Walter apologized for the later start as the venue had to be changed due to problems with the air conditioning at EVMS.

Pledge of Allegiance

Review the Agenda

No Comments

Hear the Public

No Comments

Student Representative Report: None

Administrator Reports:

Eastgate/PPE Principal Crusat referred to his Board report and the school wide goals. He announced that Tana Fetherston, K-5 PE Teacher, has been awarded the Montana PE Teacher of the Year. He elaborated on Tana's ability to bring classroom lessons and intertwine them into her PE lessons.

Radley Principal Gus Somerfeld referred to his Board report and elaborated on the last week of school and the awards given out to students showing how they are focusing and reinforcing the good behavior and progress of the students.

EHHS Vice-Principal Trish Klock referred to her report and elaborated on the attendance issue. She spoke about student issues that are being handled primarily in the classroom by the teachers at the time of an incident. She said the high school is also focusing on positive reinforcement and the Vigilante Star Program has been a huge success. Primarily funded by the Booster Club, students are awarded with gifts cards and small prizes.

Technology Coordinator Eric Power reported on wrapping up the end of the year tickets, inventory and upgrades. Specifically, Infinite Campus will have a few changes going into the 25-26 school year.

Trustee and Committee Reports of the K – 12 Board

Chairman Walter reported on MTSBA working on getting members more actively engaged and attending conferences. He spoke about spending time with MFP and OPI Board of Education and the interesting speakers.

Strategic Planning - Scan for Future Needs

Superintendent Rispens spoke about an article in the “Montana Free Press”, referring to the rising population in Montana. East Helena ranks #2 in the state for population growth. He relayed that at a Long Term Infrastructure Committee meeting in the spring, realtors spoke about change in the dynamics of who is buying homes and property. Instead of the majority of families being from out of state, they are now predominately in state folks looking for a more reasonable, family friendly place to live. Trustee Murfitt asked about other potential School District land acquisitions and holdings.

Notifications of Retirements and Resignations

The Following Staff Resignations Have Previously Been Accepted:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| • Mary Super | -Paraprofessional |
| • Sarah Cranmore | -Paraprofessional |
| • Dennis Briggs | -Custodian |
| • Katie VanderZanden | -EHHS Teacher |
| • Jason Cobb | -EVMS Teacher |
| • Garrett Ulmer | -Bus Driver |

CONSENT ACTION ITEMS

Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting May, 12, 2025 & Special Meeting May 19, 2025

Approval of the former and new warrants (Claims # - #)

Personnel Actions:

Recommended Employment of Staff:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| • Lauren Dotson | -Kitchen Aide |
| • Tara Kelleher | -Kitchen Aide |

• Teri Valvoda	-Paraprofessional
• Kacey Titus	-EHHS English Teacher
• Beth Walsh	-6-8 Summer School Teacher
• Ty Murray	-9-12 Summer School
• Bret Charlton	-9-12 Summer School
• Shelby Holmes	-9-12 Summer School
• Andrew Boedecker	-9-12 Summer School
• Sarah Cobb	-9-12 Summer School
• Jen Hines	-Summer School Secretary
• Paige Clayton	-Summer School Paraprofessional
• Ty Ridgeway	-EHHS Boys Basketball Head Coach
• Sean Thatcher	-EHHS Boys Basketball Asst. Coach
• JD Ferris	-EHHS Boys Basketball Asst. Coach
• Carson Bender	-EHHS Girls Basketball Head Coach
• Shelby Holmes	-EHHS Girls Basketball Asst. Coach
• Troy Arntson	-EHHS Girls Basketball Asst. Coach
• Krystal Smith	-EHHS Girls Basketball Asst. Coach
• John Henneman	-EHHS Swimming Head Coach
• Jon Moore	-EHHS Speech & Debate Head Coach
• Rick Leistiko	-Custodian
• Perry Garner	-Summer Maintenance
• Rylie Schoenfeld	-Summer Lawn Crew
• Rori Schoenfeld	-Summer Lawn Crew
• Lucas Olson	-Summer Lawn Crew
• Janelle Taylor	-Summer Lawn Crew
• Stormi Lucero	-Summer Custodian
• Cole Jones	-Summer Custodian
• Abigail Hauk	-Summer Custodian
• Emily Dearing	-Summer Custodian
• Andrew Mazanec	-Summer Tech Maintenance

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>
4th	1			
Total:	1			

East Helena School District Students Requesting Enrollment in Other School Districts for the **2025**
-2026 School Year:

	<u>Helena</u>	<u>Jefferson High</u>	<u>Montana City</u>	<u>Clancy</u>
1st				1
3rd				1
Total:	2			

Motion by Trustee Balukas to approve the Consent Action Items as presented.
 Seconded by Trustee Murfitt. Unanimous Vote
 Motion Carries.

Unfinished Business

TA Grant Progress Update

Clint Smith and Robie Culver from Stahly Engineering, updated the Board on the TA Grant. They spoke about the location and application progression. Board members had a few questions and suggestions for the project.

Consideration of New Non Resident Applications - Early Literacy and Grade K

Superintendent Rispens explained his recommendation to approve out of district students to round out three sections of the Early Literacy Program at Eastgate. Additionally, he recommended the approval of 6 non resident kindergarten applicants who met priority requirements of 3141 P; having a sibling already in attendance or a parent who is a District employee. He also recommended placing an additional 10 kindergarten applicants on the time and date stamped waitlist for any potential open kindergarten spots in the fall.

Motion by Trustee Balukas to approve the new non-resident applications as presented and waitlist the additional kindergarten applicants as date and time stamped.

Seconded by Trustee Baird. Unanimous Vote

Motion Carries

Consideration of New Non Resident Applications - Newly Hired District Employee

Superintendent Rispens explained his recommendation to approve late out of district student applications for the children of a newly hired district teacher, under Procedure 3141 P.

Motion by Trustee Bulakas to approve the non district applications as presented.

Seconded by Trustee Diehl. Vice Chair Murfitt voted no.

Motion Carries

Consideration of New Non Resident Applications - Current Student Moved out of District.

Superintendent Rispens explained his recommendation to approve a non resident application for a student whose family moved out of the district during the application period and was unaware of the requirements. The student will be a senior at EHHS.

Motion by Trustee Balukas to approve the non resident application as presented.

Seconded by Trustee Richardson. Vice Chair Murfitt voted no.

Motion Carries

New Business

21st Century After School Program Report.

Karly Olsen, TIGER Program Director, shared information about the program's successes and challenges this past year. She reported on the grant money awarded and that the amount will be the same going into the next year in the cycle. She spoke about the number of students attending as well as the staff needs going forward. Karly explained that she might rework the staff schedule for the program in the fall, hoping to recruit and retain employees. She also spoke about some of the grant requirements, specifically the family engagement activities and how those events were well received by the students and their families.

Consideration of Classified Staff MOA

The Superintendent presented a Memorandum of Agreement between the Board and the East Helena Education Support Association (EHESA). The MOA revises compensation language in the current Collective Bargaining Agreement. He explained with the new STARS Act, the District is able to boost wages for the classified personnel. This increase will assist with employee recruitment as well as longevity. The President of the EHESA, Michelle Lashway, stated that she had brought the agreement to the EHESA Executive Members for approval. She added that the agreement would allow the EHESA to avoid negotiations for 3 years.

Motion by Trustee Balukas to approve the Classified Staff MOA on the recommendation of the EHESA Executive Committee. Seconded by Trustee Baird. Unanimous Vote
Motion Carries

Consideration of Natural Gas Supply Contract - Commercial Energy

Superintendent Rispens presented the pricing contract to the Board for review and consideration.

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt to approve the Commercial Energy Contract for one year.
Seconded by Trustee Diehl. Unanimous Vote
Motion Carries

Personnel Action - EHHS Wrestling Coach - Nepotism Rules Apply

Dan presented his recommendation to hire Tim Baird, husband of Trustee Stacy Baird, as the EHPS wrestling coach. He elaborated that Tim has led the program for several successful seasons and this will be the last year we have a combined program under one coach, per upcoming Montana High School Association (MHSA) rules that will take effect in 2027-2028. The Board discussed the issue at length. Community members and parents gave praise to Tim for the Wrestling Program that he has been building while expressing opinions on separating the girls and the boys teams for the 2025-2026 year. The Superintendent reminded everyone that the recommendation at hand was to hire a wrestling coach, not specific to the girls or boys team at this time.

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt to approve the hiring of Tim Baird as the Head Wrestling Coach.
Seconded by Trustee Ulmer.

Vice Chair Murfitt requested to rescind his motion after discussion on parliamentary procedure, to allow for a motion from the Board instead of a substitute motion. The second denied the request so the motion called for a vote. Trustee Baird abstained from the vote.
Motion Carried. The vote was unanimous.

Summer School Program Update

Radley Principal Gus Somerfeld and East Valley Middle School Principal Lynsi Morris updated the Board on the Summer School Program. The K-5th grade students will be housed at Prickly Pear Elementary School. The Program goes through July 23 with field trips planned on Thursdays and swim lessons on Fridays. The City of East Helena has waived the fees for the

swimming lessons. The 6th -12th grade students will be attending at East Helena High School for students who need credit recovery as well as advanced learning opportunities.

25-26 School Year Bus Route Approval

The Transportation Supervisor has submitted proposed routes for 25-26. These will be brought to the County Transportation Committee once the Board has approved them.

Trustee Ulmer pointed out a few misspellings among the routes presented.

Motion by Trustee Richardson to approve the 25-26 school year bus routes.

Seconded by Trustee Diehl. Unanimous Vote

Motion Carries

Setting of Fees for 25-26

Superintendent Rispens presented the adjustments to various fees charged within the District for the upcoming school year. Trustee Baird asked about the field/turf fees and the potential for more interest if the fees were to be lowered. The group discussed the other considerations involved with renting out the field such as the expensive equipment often involved and extra staff needed for clean up. Flag Football Coach Juliet Hahn, expressed her opinion on the fees to rent the field. She stated that her group is unable to fit that expense into their budget while Helena does not charge the team. Juliet elaborated that bringing the games to EHHS would also generate funds for EHPS with concessions as well as community engagement.

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt to approve the 2025-2026 fees as presented.

Seconded by Trustee Richardson. Trustee Baird voted no.

Motion Carries

Final Accreditation Status

Superintendent Rispens spoke about the accreditation status from OPI. He explained to the Board the standards and points in the report.

Consideration of Mental Health (HSS and SBOT) Service Contracts with ICH

The annual renewals of service agreements with Intermountain Children's Home to provide mental health services to students at Radley and EVMS are due. SBOT Means "School Based Outpatient Therapist and HSS means "Home Support Services" These programs are already in place serving students for 24-25 and Board approval is required for continuing service for the 25-26 school year.

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt to approve the contracts for HSS and SBOT services as presented.

Seconded by Trustee Baird. Unanimous Vote

Motion Carries

Consideration of County Election Resolution

Superintendent Rispens asked the Board to consider a resolution to utilize the Lewis and Clark County Election Office for the Spring 2026 School Election. The Board discussed the costs and logistics of utilizing Lewis and Clark County Elections Office vs EHPS Clerk and Central Office

Staff preparing and handling the election. The Superintendent explained that there is a timeline to confirm with the County.

Motion by Trustee Balukas to approve utilizing Lewis and Clark County Election Office for the EHPS Spring 2026 School Election. Seconded by Trustee Richardson. Unanimous Vote
Motion Carries

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Future Meeting Dates

Regular Meeting - Monday, July 14th, 2025 at 5:30 PM - East Valley Middle School Library

Submitted by: J. Cordell

District Secretary, Jen Cordell

7-10-2025

Date

Approved by: Scott A. Walter

EHPS Board Chair, Scott Walter

JULY 10, 2025

Date

