

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 July 14, 2025. Chairman Scott Walter called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Attendance and Introduction of Board Members

Trustees Present: Chairman Scott Walter, Vice Chair Tyrel Murfitt, Tristan Ulmer, Tiffany Richardson, Martin Balukas, Stacy Baird, and Mark Diehl (@ 5:35)

Superintendent Dan Rispens, Clerk Jill Hoogerheide, Athletics Director Shaun Murgel, and IT Help Desk Technician Oliver Atkinson.

Visitors: Kate Johnson, Juliet Hahn, Jill Hayter, Tim Baird, Beth Dighans, Kevin Dighans, Cooper Dighans, Zerick Richerson, Whitney Richerson, Jennifer Erdahl, Newly Potter, Jeremy Hernandez, Carrie Clement, Bonnie Jones, Kylene Ruth, Travis Kirchdoerfer

Review the Agenda

No comments from the Board.

Chairman Walter reported that item #3 under New Business on the agenda will be tabled until a future date.

Hear the Public

No comments

Reports

Athletic Director Report

Shaun Murgel asked the Board if they needed anything clarified from the athletics expenditure report he provided in his Board documents. He pointed out that EHPS spent out over \$130,000 on activities.

Trustee Baird had a question regarding student fundraising and if that was also included in his figure.

Shaun explained that the amount of money he quoted was solely from the EHPS activities fund.

Superintendent Rispens stated that he has asked the Athletic Director to start tracking expenditures on an ongoing basis throughout the year. He also felt like the amount we have spent was consistent with the number of students participating.

Chairman Walter stated that he appreciated the report and felt like it was a valuable tool to track expenditures. He wondered if there was a way to compare student participation in other similar sized districts.

Trustee and Committee Reports of the K-12 Board

Chairman Walter solicited reports from the Trustees and Committees.

Chairman Walter reported about the COSSBA Board of Directors meeting June 24th through June 26th in St. Lewis. A new Executive Director was hired to replace Tom Bernard who just retired. He felt like the previous Director, Tom Bernard, had done an excellent job and the organization looks forward to working with Kathy McFarland who was previously the Ohio Executive Director.

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 city's Raise grant being back on track. They are anticipating approval this year. He also had the opportunity to comment on the Prickly Pear subdivision and feels like we need to encourage the subdivision to build schools or keep property for building a school.

Chairman Walter stated that he and the Superintendent attended the city meeting a couple weeks ago. One of the topics was the new library being built near the swimming pool. He feels like this is a great opportunity for our students to get more access to the library.

Trustee Baird had some questions regarding the components of funding, payment and extracurricular activities for students from private schools within the district lines who want services.

Notifications of Retirements and Resignations

The Following Staff Resignations Have Previously Been Accepted:

- Patti McLean Special Education Teacher
- Jacqueline Meeker Paraprofessional

Consent Action Items

Minutes of the Regular Meeting June 9, 2025 and the Special Meeting June 30, 2025.

Approval of the former and new warrants (Claims #51140 - 51186) and (Payroll #68924-69016)

Personnel Actions

- Lindsay McGill Permanent Substitute
- Jill Hayter Advanced Opportunity Facilitator – Career Coach

- Amanda Fairbaim Girls Soccer Assistant Coach
- Karley Snarr Tiger Robotics Coach

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>
MM (PreK)				
Kindergarten	5			
1 st grade	1			
2 nd grade	1			
3 rd grade				
4 th grade				
5 th grade				
6 th grade	1			
7 th grade				
8 th grade	1			
9 th grade	6			
10 th grade	1			
11 th grade	4			
12 th grade	8			

Total: 28

Trustee Baird asked to pull the June 9th minutes off of the consent agenda.

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Diehl to approve the consent action items as presented with the exclusion of the June 9th minutes.

Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

Superintendent Rispens introduced Jill Hayter the new Advanced Opportunity Career Coach.

Motion by Trustee Diehl seconded by Vice Chair Murfitt to accept the June 9th minutes with the suggested change.

Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

Unfinished Business

TA Grant Progress Update

A representative from Stahly Engineering discussed the progress on the TA Grant submission regarding the possible sidewalk and crosswalk construction on Kalispell and Main Street.

Vice Chair Murfitt had some clarifying questions and some comments regarding some of the wording in the grant language.

Trustee Ulmer had some questions about changes in the main project match.

Consideration of Late Non-resident Applications

Superintendent Rispens reported that a newly hired paraprofessional is requesting non-resident approval for an 8th grade student.

Motion by Trustee Balukas, seconded by Trustee Baird to accept the non-resident application as presented.

Vice Chair Murfitt voted no; Trustees Balukas, Ulmer, Baird, Richardson and Diehl voted aye. With one no and five ayes the motion carries.

Consideration to Changes to the Boys/Girls Wrestling Teams and Staff

The Board discussed separating the boys and girls wrestling program for the current school year (2025-2026) instead of waiting for the next school year.

Superintendent Rispens wanted to state that the discussion wasn't whether or not we would split the program, it was a matter of when we decide to split the program.

Chairman Walter wanted to explain that MHSAA will possibly require in the 2028-29 school year that this will be a requirement for practices. When he spoke to a representative from MTSBA they stated that it is not exactly a guarantee that it becomes a mandate.

Coach Baird wanted to let the Board and public know that the program is already split regarding practices.

Superintendent Rispens stated that he wanted to honor the current coach's request to continue to coach the combined team for one more year.

Motion by Trustee Balukas, seconded by Trustee Richardson to separate the boys and girls wrestling program for the 2025-2026 school year.

Jeremy Hernandez spoke in favor of splitting the boys and girls wrestling program.

Tim Baird, the current head wrestling coach, spoke about the need to take some time to hire the right person for the head coach position and plan.

Newly Potter spoke in favor of keeping the program combined for at least this year.

Jennifer Erdahl spoke in favor of taking the time to plan and prepare for the split.

Trustee Diehl asked some clarifying questions about the reasons for a possible split.

Trustee Baird spoke about taking the time to plan and prepare with the understanding that the number of girls may not be a large percentage next year.

Trustee Balukas had some questions regarding the logistics for splitting the teams.

Athletic Director Murgel spoke about some of the reasons why we are considering splitting the program.

Travis Kirchdoerfer spoke in favor of splitting the team this year.

Trustee Richardson asked Coach Baird some questions regarding the plan going forward to split the team.

Substituted motion by Trustee Balukas, seconded by Trustee Richardson to approve separating the boys and girls wrestling program for the 2026-27 school year.

Juliet Hahn asked for the group to consider what is best for the students.

Jeremy Hernandez stated that Capital and Helena High have separate teams.

Kylee LaRue had some questions regarding how the coach stipends would work with a split schedule.

Travis Kirchdoefer wanted to express his concerns regarding mat time for the members.

Kevin Dighans, EHHS Assistant Wrestling coach spoke in favor of taking the time to plan.

Vice Chair Murfitt asked some questions regarding the time line for splitting the team for the 2026-27 school year. He wanted to stress that we need to have the appropriate time to plan for splitting the program.

Chairman Walter called for the vote on the Substituted motion. Trustees Balukas, Diehl, and Richardson voted aye. Trustees Ulmer, Baird, Murfitt and Walter all voted no.

Motion does not carry with 3 ayes and 4 nos.

FY26 Budget Update

Superintendent Rispens and Business Manager Hoogerheide updated the Board regarding the actual new budget under the STARS act and the potential impacts if the Federal Title grants are withheld.

Chairman Walter called for a recess at 7:25.

The meeting reconvened at 7:30

New Business

First Reading – Policy Revision and Update Considerations

- **New Policy 3665 Student Safety**

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Baird to approve policy 3665 with the proposed changes under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- **New Policy 5122 Fingerprints and Background Checks**

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Ulmer to approve policy 5122 with the proposed changes under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- **Revised Policy 2335 Enhancement Human Sexuality Instruction and Identity Instruction**

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Richardson to approve policy 2335 with revisions under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- **New Policy 8560 Display of Flags and Banners on District Property**

The Board made the decision to pull the policy until we get more information from MTSBA.

- **Revised Policy 3110 Entrance, Placement, and Transfer**

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Baird to approve policy 3110 with revisions under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- **Revised Policy 5255 Disciplinary Action**

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Baird to approve policy 5255 with revisions under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- **Revised Policy 3416 Administering Medicine to Students**

Motion by Trustee Balukas, seconded by Trustee Murfitt to approve policy 3416 with the proposed changes under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- **Revised Policy 2158 Parent and Family Engagement and Educational Involvement**

Motion by Trustee Balukas, seconded by Vice Chair Murfitt to approve policy 2158 with revisions under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- **Revised Policy 2165 Early Targeted Intervention**

Motion by Trustee Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Baird to approve policy 2165 with revisions under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- **Revised Policy 3121 Enrollment and Attendance Records**

Motion by Trustee Balukas, seconded by Trustee Murfitt to approve policy 3121 as amended under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- Revised Policy 3650 Montana Pupil Online Personal Information Protection Act

Motion by Trustee Balukas, seconded by Trustee Murfitt to approve policy 3560 as written under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- New Policy 5123 Employer Verification of Employee

Motion by Trustee Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Balukas to approve policy 5123 under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- Revised Policy 2050 Innovative Student Instruction

Motion by Trustee Balukas, seconded by Trustee Baird to approve policy 2050 with revisions under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- Revised Policy 3141 Nonresident Student Enrollment

Motion by Trustee Baird, seconded by Trustee Richardson to table the policy. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- New Policy 5252 Notice of Nonrenewal of Nontenured Teacher for Financial Reasons

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Ulmer to approve policy 5252 under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- Revised Policy 8301 School Safety

Motion by Trustee Balukas, seconded by Trustee Ulmer to approve policy 8301 with revisions to change “will” to “may” under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- New Policy 2334 Release Time for Religious Instruction

Motion by Trustee Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Ulmer to approve policy 2334 with 4 hours a week and not include the option for credit under first reading.

Substitute Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Ulmer to approve policy 2334 with 1 to 4 hours a week without the option for credit under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- Revised Policy 2600 Work Based Learning

Motion by Trustee Baird, seconded by Trustee Ulmer to approve policy 2600 as edited under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- Revised Policy 2100 School Calendar and Day

Motion by Trustee Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Richardson to approve policy 2100 as presented under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- Revised Policy 2450 Indian Education for All

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Ulmer to approve policy 2450 with revisions under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- Revised Policy 2150 Suicide Awareness and Prevention

Motion by Trustee Ulmer, seconded by Trustee Baird to approve policy 2150 with revisions on first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

Consideration of HSS Service Agreement with AWARE

Superintendent Rispens presented the renewal for the agreement the District has with AWARE for Home Support Services at Eastgate, PPE and EHHS.

Motion by Trustee Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Diehl to approve the AWARE Home Support Services agreement for the 2025-2026 school year. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

MTSBA Bylaws, Resolutions and Officers Review and Consideration

Superintendent Rispens reported that MTSBA did not have a quorum at their annual business meeting in June. Each member district will need to review the documents and vote on them.

Board Chairman Walter stated that this will be tabled until August Meeting because the information has not been made available.

Head Start Lease Consideration

Superintendent Rispens reported that our 1-year agreement with Head Start needs to be extended another year.

Motion by Trustee Ulmer, seconded by Vice Chair Murfitt to approve the Head Start lease agreement for the 2025-2026 school year. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

Consideration of Pay Adjustment for the IT Staff

Superintendent Rispens presented a proposal to increase the pay for our current IT staff in order to stay competitive with the area.

Motion by Trustee Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Diehl to approve a \$2 per hour pay increases for the IT staff for the 2025-2026 school year.

Substituted Motion by Trustee Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Diehl to approve a \$2 per hour pay increase retroactive to July 1st for the IT staff for the 2025-2026 school year.

Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

Consideration of the Superintendent's Contract

The Board was asked to approve the contract for Superintendent Rispens to increase compensation 3% for the 2025-26 school year and make an adjustment to bring the health insurance benefit in line with ACA requirements and also increase the annuity contribution.

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Balukas to increase the Superintendent's compensation by 3%, and increase in monthly annuity from \$400 to \$1177 per month, and adjust the health insurance package from Employee + Family to Employee + Spouse retroactive to July 1st, 2025.

Kate Johnson had some concerns about the 3% compensation increase.

Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

MCEL Planning

Superintendent Rispens stated that this year's Montana Conference for Educational Leadership will be held in Helena on October 15 – 17th. Jen Cordell will be handling registration for Trustees who can attend.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Future Meeting Dates and Agenda Items

The next regular meeting will be held on Monday August 11th, 2025 @ 5:30 EVMS

Submitted by: _____
Board Clerk, Jill Hoogerheide Date _____

Approved by: _____
Chairman, Board of Trustees Date _____