

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
3 **HELD AUGUST 11, 2025**
4

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 11th day
7 of August 2025.
8

9 At 5:30 pm, Chairperson Johnson called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of
10 Trustees and informed the participants and audience that the meeting was being
11 recorded per Board Policy 1420.
12

13 **ROLL CALL:** Brian Patrick took roll call.
14

15 **Trustees Present:** Gordon Johnson, Chairperson
16 Kim Skornogoski, Vice Chairperson
17 Bill Bronson
18 Marlee Sunchild
19 Amie Thompson
20 Paige Turoski
21

22 **Trustees Absent:** Craig Duff, Excused
23

24 **Others Present:** Heather Hoyer, Superintendent; Brian Patrick, Director of Business
25 Operations; Jackie Mainwaring, Executive Director for Student Achievement; Jeff
26 Williams, Director of Information Technology; and Luke Diekhans, Director of Human
27 Resources.
28

29 The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Beckie Frisbee.
30
31

32 **ADOPT AGENDA**
33

34 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to adopt the
35 agenda as presented.
36
37

38 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**
39

40 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to approve
41 the Consent Agenda as presented.
42

43 **A. Minutes of the July 21, 2025, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved the
44 minutes of the July 21, 2025, Regular Board Meeting as presented.
45

46 **B. Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.
47

48 **C. Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) TR-35 School Bus Driver Certificate**

1 The Board approved the Montana OPI TR-35 School Bus Driver Certificate for the
2 individual listed in the agenda.

3
4 **D. Incoming Student Attendance Agreements for the 2025-2026 School Year** – The
5 Board approved the incoming student attendance agreements for the 2025-2026 school
6 year the students listed in the agenda. Tuition will be paid for by the District of
7 Residence.

8
9 **E. Student Activity Monthly Report for June 2025** – The Board approved the Student
10 Activity Accounts for June 2025.

11
12 **F. Request for Records Disposal – Business Office** – The Board approved the
13 request for disposal of the Business Office and Student records listed in the agenda that
14 are in compliance with the approved State, Local Government Records Committee
15 Retention Schedule.

16 17 18 **COMMUNICATION**

19
20 **A. Superintendent Report** – Superintendent Hoyer discussed summer work projects
21 that include a new inclusive playground at Lewis and Clark Elementary, supported by
22 the PTA and a Community Block Development Grant; the relocation of the Sacajawea
23 Elementary School library to create space for a Resource 2 classroom and remodeling
24 of special education classrooms; and a library remodel at Sunnyside Elementary School
25 funded through a donation facilitated by the Great Falls Public Schools (GFPS)
26 Foundation. Congratulations were extended to Barbie Stucker for receiving the National
27 School Transportation Association Golden Merit Award for excellence in service, safety,
28 and community responsibility. The GFPS Job Fair will be held on August 19th, with on-
29 the-spot hiring pending background checks. The C.M. Russell High School Chamber
30 Orchestra has been invited to perform at the Northwest Music Education Association
31 Conference in February 2026. The Back-to-School Blast, offering free school supplies,
32 services, and activities, will take place on August 15th at the Fairgrounds. Indigenous
33 Education for All initiatives continue to promote cultural understanding and inclusivity.
34 Superintendent Hoyer provided a staffing update, stating sixteen (16) positions remain
35 open. The summer lunch program served over 14,000 meals across nine sites, with the
36 last day being August 14th. Special recognition was given to Jessa Youngers and her
37 staff for the success of the summer lunch program.

38
39 **B. Audience Communication** – None

40 41 42 **ACTION ITEMS**

43
44 **A. Financial Report and Check Register for June 2025** – Director of Business
45 Operations, Brian Patrick, reviewed the final Financial Report and Check Register for
46 June 2025. This closes out the 2024-2025 school year. He reviewed revenue line
47 items and confirmed that all funds were in order, noting the District's budget was in a
48 favorable position at the close of the fiscal year.

1
2 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the
3 Financial Report and Check Register for June 2025 and Accounts Payable checks
4 #139743 - #140394 in the amount of \$5,900,319.67 and Payroll checks #84134 -
5 #84405 in the amount of \$1,297,633.77 as presented.
6

7 **B. Request to Access Protested Taxes** – Director of Business Operations, Brian
8 Patrick, explained the Montana Refining Company, also known as Calumet, protested a
9 portion of their 2024-2025 assessed taxes. Montana law, MCA 15-1-402, allows the
10 District to access all or a portion of the amount protested, enabling the District to make
11 the required bond payments in full while leaving the existing cash reserves intact. Mr.
12 Patrick noted a change in the amount listed in the agenda. The adjusted amount, an
13 increase of \$546.48, came after a discussion with a Cascade County Finance
14 employee. The total request changed from \$675,340.18 to \$675,886.66.
15

16 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to approve
17 the request to access the full amount of the Calumet protested taxes, which will
18 maintain District cash reserves in each fund at their current level.
19

20 **C. Coca-Cola Bottling Company Three-Year Agreement** – Trustee Turoski requested
21 that the Coca-Cola Bottling Company Three-Year Agreement be tabled until the next
22 Board meeting due to an inquiry from a community member about the process of
23 awarding the contract that needed to be addressed. Director of Business Operations,
24 Brian Patrick, explained the importance of getting the contract addressed due to the
25 start of the school year approaching.
26

27 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to table the
28 Coca-Cola Bottling Company Three-Year Agreement until the next regular Board
29 meeting on August 25, 2025.
30

31 **D. 2025-26 Secondary Student Class Fees** – Director of Student Achievement, Jackie
32 Mainwaring, explained there are secondary classes that have lab/course fees
33 associated with them in order to provide additional materials that will enhance
34 instruction. Lab fees for the 2025-26 school year will remain fairly consistent; however,
35 some class fees have increased as a result of elevated supply expenses. The addition
36 of a fee for Weightlifting was discussed and music rental fees have a proposed
37 increase.
38

39 Trustee Bronson inquired about resources that were available if families could not afford
40 the fees. Executive Director Mainwaring stated Great Falls Public Schools has received
41 support through the Montana Advanced Opportunities Act to help offset the costs for
42 families needing financial assistance.
43

44 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to approve
45 the secondary student class fees as presented.
46

47 **E. Classified and Hourly Staff Compensation for 2025-26** – Director of Human
48 Resources Luke Diekhans explained the Classified and Hourly staff are non-union

1 employees that include support personnel, paraprofessionals, teachers' aides, hourly
2 classified staff and part-time nurses. There are approximately 350 employees within the
3 five groups. The 2025-26 budget reflects base salaries for the employees of these
4 groups with increases of four (4)% for support personnel, hourly classified staff and
5 part-time nurses and a four (4)% per hour increase for paraprofessionals and teachers'
6 aides. The cost of the base increase is estimated to be approximately \$294,429.

7
8 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to the
9 classified and hourly staff compensation for the 2025-26 school year as presented.

10
11 **F. 2025-2026 Health Insurance, Life Insurance, and Voluntary Insurance Contracts**

12 Director of Human Resources, Luke Diekhans, stated that the District Health Insurance
13 Committee, in collaboration with consultant Mike Bonville of Alliant, reviewed utilization,
14 costs, and renewal rate recommendations for the 2025-26 plan year, resulting in a 13%
15 increase to employer, employee, and Rate Stabilization Reserve premium contributions.
16 Mr. Diekhans discussed that approximately 18 months ago, the insurance industry
17 experienced a disruption in health insurance claims processing, resulting in delayed
18 claim submissions. While last year reflected strong performance for the District,
19 previously delayed claims have now been incurred, resulting in a significant impact to
20 the plan. The Committee approved changing the Third-Party Administrator to First
21 Choice Health Network, which is expected to provide cost savings. The plan maintains
22 two options—a Base Plan and a Catastrophic Plan—with no out-of-pocket costs for
23 preventative care and services through Alluvion Health. Employer-paid life insurance
24 will continue through The Standard, along with voluntary employee-paid benefits. The
25 anticipated total cost for active employee health insurance in 2025-26 is approximately
26 \$12.7 million, with the District's share estimated at \$8.38 million.

27
28 Trustee Skornogoski asked if claims would remain delayed in the future and if it was
29 possible to use a three year average for base rate increases. Mr. Diekhans stated
30 claims processing has caught up but the District still has a few large claims pending.

31
32 Trustee Bronson stated he serves on the District Insurance Committee. He noted there
33 were extensive discussions in committee and they were understanding of the
34 challenges. He expressed support for the recommendation, acknowledged other
35 districts are facing larger increases, and commended those providing guidance.

36
37 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to approve the
38 recommendation of the District Insurance Committee of an overall increase to the
39 employer and employee premium contributions of 13% respectively, along with the
40 increase of the premium buy-down of \$40.43 from the Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund
41 and to continue the Flexible Spending program and voluntary insurances.

42
43 **G. Superintendent Evaluation Process and Instrument** – Trustee Thompson
44 presented a revised Superintendent evaluation process and instrument, which aligns
45 the Superintendent's self-assessment and goals with the District's Strategic Plan. The
46 new process includes a September self-assessment, goal progress updates in October
47 through December, and a January community survey for public input. Each goal will be

1 documented on its own page to allow for year-over-year comparisons, similar to the
2 Strategic Plan format.

3
4 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to adopt
5 the updated Superintendent Evaluation Process and Instrument as presented.

6
7 **H. Second Reading of Revised Board Policies 2158 – *Family Engagement Policy*;**
8 **3122 – *Attendance Policy*; and 3600 – *Student Records*** – Superintendent Hoyer
9 reviewed the policies above and stated that no comments or recommendations for
10 changes were received since the first reading of the policies at the July 21, 2025 Board
11 Meeting.

12
13 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve
14 Revised Board Policies 2158 – *Family Engagement Policy*; 3122 – *Attendance Policy*;
15 and 3600 – *Student Records* as presented.

16
17
18 **ACTION: OTHER**

19
20 There were no items extracted from the Consent Agenda to discuss.

21
22
23 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

24
25 **A. First Reading of the New Industrial Technology Know-Understand-Do (KUD) –**
26 Secondary Curriculum Director Beckie Frisbee reported that Industrial Technology
27 teachers have met over the past two years to update the Industrial Technology standard
28 KUDs due to changes in technology and industry needs. KUDs are posted on the
29 District website and a hard copy is available in the Curriculum Office for review prior to
30 the request for Board approval that will take place at the next regular Board meeting.

31
32 **B. First Reading of New and Revised Board Policies 2165 – *Early Targeted***
33 ***Interventions*; 3110 – *Entrance, Placement, and Transfer*; 3121 – *Enrollment and***
34 ***Attendance Records*; 5123 (New) – *Employer Verification of Employee*; 5252**
35 ***(New) – Notice of Nonrenewal of Nontenured Teacher for Financial Reasons*; and**
36 **8560 (New) – *Display of Flags and Banners on District Property*** – Superintendent
37 Hoyer reviewed the recommended language revisions from the Montana School Boards
38 Association (MTSBA) and the Board Policy Committee to each of the revised Board
39 policies listed. She stated the District currently has policies numbered 5123 and 5252
40 but we will rename them 5124 and 5257, respectively, in order to incorporate the new
41 policies listed above from MTSBA. She asked if anyone had questions or concerns
42 regarding any of the new policies or revisions to contact her prior to the next regular
43 Board meeting.

44
45
46 **C. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments –**
47

1 Trustee Bronson reported attending the Chamber of Commerce Business Advocacy
2 meeting where Superintendent Hoyer and the KEY Director shared insights. He
3 encouraged everyone to read the memorandum from MTSBA regarding the funding
4 formula discussions, highlighting varied rural school needs.
5 Trustee Skornogoski commended Barbie Stucker with Big Sky Bus Lines for her
6 community partnership in “Stuff the Bus,” and thanked the warehouse team for help in
7 organizing donation deliveries. She thanked Jessa Youngers for her active roll in
8 expanding the Summer Meal Program and Park Play activities.
9 Chairperson Johnson asked fellow trustees to review the Legislative resolutions as they
10 will be presented for approval at the next Board meeting.
11 Trustee Turoski praised the lunch program, noted the end of summer and upcoming
12 convocation, and thanked staff for summer preparations. She recognized janitors’ hard
13 work in readying classrooms for the upcoming school year.
14 Trustee Sunchild thanked Superintendent Hoyer for the Indian Education profiles and
15 celebrated the excitement around the new Lewis & Clark playground.
16 Trustee Thompson recognized Jessa Younger’s work on the food program and inquired
17 about states visited by our Indigenous Education staff, Dugan Coburn and Jordan
18 Lankford-Forester.

19
20

21 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

22
23
24
25

Chairperson Johnson stated upcoming events included the Budget Board Work Session, Convocation, and the start of regular Board meetings for the 2025-26 school year.

26
27

28 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

29
30
31
32

With no further comments or items to be discussed, motion by Chairperson Johnson and seconded by Trustee Skornogoski to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 6:29 p.m.

33
34
35
36
37
38

39

Gordon Johnson, Chairperson

40
41

Brian Patrick, Clerk