

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
3 **HELD AUGUST 25, 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 25th 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.

11
12 Chairperson Johnson reported that, per Board Policy 1420, all Board meetings are
13 recorded and posted on the District website for one (1) year.
14

15
16 **ROLL CALL:** Brian Patrick took roll call.
17

18 **Trustees Present:** Gordon Johnson - Chairperson
19 Kim Skornogoski – Vice-Chairperson
20 Bill Bronson
21 Craig Duff
22 Marlee Sunchild
23 Amie Thompson
24 Paige Turoski
25

26 **Others Present:** Heather Hoyer, Superintendent; Brian Patrick, Director of Business
27 Operations; Lance Boyd and Jackie Mainwaring, Executive Directors of Student
28 Achievement; Luke Diekhans, Director of Human Resources; and Jeff Williams, Director
29 of Information Technology. Also present was Tom Cubbage, Great Falls Education
30 Association President.
31

32 Chairperson Johnson asked everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.
33

34
35 **ADOPT AGENDA**
36

37 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to adopt
38 the agenda as presented.
39

40
41 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**
42

43 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Marlee Sunchild, passed unanimously to approve
44 the Consent Agenda as presented.
45

46 **A. Minutes of the August 11, 2025, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved
47 the minutes of the August 11, 2025, Regular Board Meeting as presented.
48

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

2
3 **C. Montana School Bus Driver Certificate – OPI TR-35** – The Board approved the
4 Montana Bus Driver Certificate – OPI TR-35 for the individual listed in the agenda.

5
6 **D. Kindergarten Early Entrance for the 2025-2026 School Year** – The Board
7 approved the students listed in the agenda to enroll in kindergarten for the 2025-2026
8 school year by special permission per Board Policy 3110R.

9
10 **E. Incoming Student Attendance Agreements for the 2025-2026 School Year** – The
11 Board approved the incoming student attendance agreements for the 2025-2026 school
12 year for the students listed in the agenda. Tuition will be paid for by the District of
13 Residence.

14
15 **F. Establish a New “Baseball” Student Activity Account for both C.M. Russell**
16 **High School and Great Falls High School** – The Board approved C.M. Russell High
17 School and Great Falls High School’s request to each open a “Baseball” Student
18 Activity account.

19
20
21 **COMMUNICATION**

22
23 **A. Superintendent Report –**

24 Superintendent Hoyer reported on the meetings that have been taking place at the
25 District Offices in preparation for the beginning of the school year. She thanked Grand
26 Canyon University who provided breakfast and Bravera Bank who provided lunch for
27 new staff.

28 Intensive training has taken place for the CORE School at Morningside Elementary
29 School.

30 Executive Director of Student Achievement, Lance Boyd, stated that the first financial
31 goal for Great Falls Public Schools Baseball has been met, and the second financial
32 goal is in process. He thanked the committee for their dedication in fundraising efforts.
33 On August 19, 2025 schools in Montana received the Court decision in the case of
34 Disability Rights Montana vs the State of Montana; soon after, guidance from the Office
35 of Public Instruction was provided stating that under the Individuals with Disabilities in
36 Education Act (IDEA), Montana Local Educational Agency (LEA) must make Free
37 Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) available to students aged nineteen (19) to
38 twenty-two (22). The guidance also stated that a diploma based on the completion of an
39 Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals does not terminate a student’s eligibility under
40 IDEA. Executive Director of Student Achievement, Lance Boyd, met with school leaders
41 on August 21st to plan and train on the new requirements. The District has nine (9)
42 students from the 2024-2025 school year who qualify.

43 Superintendent Hoyer thanked everyone who participated in the *Back 2 School Blast*
44 event that took place on August 15, 2025.

45 Great Falls Public Schools held its largest job fair to date on August 19, 2025. Fifty-five
46 (55) interviews were completed for positions for engineers, custodians, food service,
47 paraprofessionals, and aides. Superintendent Hoyer also updated the Board on current
48 District openings.

1 Superintendent Hoyer presented Math and Reading data from 2020 and 2025. She
2 stated that Norm-referenced assessments are used to compare an individual's
3 performance to a pre-established group, often referred to as a "norm group". This allows
4 educators to understand where a student stands relative to their peers and can help in
5 identifying students who may need additional support or who are excelling. NWEA
6 (Northwest Evaluation Association) updates its MAP (Measures of Academic Progress)
7 Growth norms approximately every 3-5 years to ensure the data used to interpret
8 student performance remains accurate and relevant. The most recent update, released
9 in 2025, was driven by three key factors: (1) Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic: The
10 pandemic caused significant disruptions to education, resulting in shifts in average
11 student achievement and growth, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The new
12 norms account for these changes in typical student performance, allowing for a more
13 accurate comparison of current student data.
14 (2) Evolving US demographics: US demographics are constantly changing, and the
15 norm study needs to reflect those changes to provide a relevant and meaningful context
16 for interpreting student performance. (3) Alignment to enhanced item selection algorithm
17 (EISA): NWEA has been gradually introducing new versions of MAP Growth tests since
18 Summer 2021, which incorporate the EISA. This algorithm improves how MAP Growth
19 selects items for students, leading to more instructionally relevant test experiences and
20 observed increases in student scores, particularly in math. The updated norms ensure
21 these scores are interpreted within the correct national context.
22 In essence, these updates ensure that when educators use MAP Growth norms to
23 understand student performance and progress, they are doing so with the most
24 accurate and up-to-date national frame of reference possible.

25
26 **B. Audience Communication – None**

27
28
29 **ACTION ITEMS**

30
31 **A. 2024-2025 Trustees Financial Summary** - Director of Business Operations, Brian
32 Patrick, explained that the Trustees' Financial Summary (TFS) is the official document
33 that closes the books on the 2024-25 fiscal year and is required by law to be approved
34 by the Board. Mr. Patrick explained that when the District is audited each year, the
35 auditors look very closely at the TFS. He noted that the TFS is located on the District's
36 website.

37
38 **Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson**, passed unanimously to approve the
39 2024-2025 Trustees' Financial Report as presented.

40
41 **B. Budgets for all Budgeted Funds for 2025-26 Fiscal Year** - Director of Business
42 Operations, Brian Patrick, explained that a Board Budget Work Session was held on
43 August 21, 2025, to review each of the budgeted funds in detail. He explained that
44 General Fund Budgets for the Elementary and High School Districts are impacted by
45 successful levies, student enrollment, and legislative actions. He stated that the major
46 impact on the General Fund Budgets was the Student and Teacher Advancement for
47 Results and Success Act (STARS Act) (House Bill 252) which requires Districts to meet
48 a higher salary threshold for beginning teachers. The inflationary adjustment, after the

1 impact of student enrollment changes, added an additional \$1,373,273 to the General
2 Fund Budgets. There were substantial decreases in the taxable valuation for both
3 districts due to legislative changes that lowered property tax rates. The Elementary
4 Taxable Valuation for the 2025-2026 fiscal year is \$158,937,090. In 2024-2025 the
5 Taxable Valuation was \$178,473,349, which mean it decreased by \$19,536,259. The
6 High School Taxable Valuation for the year 2025-2026 is \$161,764,234. The previous
7 year it was \$181,200,378, which represents a decrease of \$19,436,144. Brian stated
8 that the Tuition Fund enables the District to recover excess costs associated with
9 educating in-district special needs students. The District identified excess costs using
10 the Office of Public Instruction calculator. Recent legislative changes now require school
11 districts to pay tuition for resident students placed in group home programs, as well as
12 for students attending schools outside their home district. These required tuition
13 payments are included in this budgeted fund. The Tuition Fund is supported through a
14 permissive levy.

15
16 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to adopt
17 Elementary and High School Budgeted Funds for the 2025-2026 Fiscal year as
18 presented.

19
20 **Great Falls Elementary:**

21	General Fund	\$57,800,673.08
22	Transportation Fund	\$ 3,999,987.00
23	Bus Depreciation Fund	\$ 74,786.07
24	Tuition	\$ 3,535,168.59
25	Retirement	\$ 8,673,165.49
26	Adult Education	\$ 565,880.00
27	Technology	\$ 398,010.33
28	Flexibility	\$ 911,910.67
29	Building Reserve	\$ 4,016,872.92
30	Debt Service	\$ 3,461,643.76

31
32 **Great Falls High School:**

33	General Fund	\$27,759,109.66
34	Transportation Fund	\$ 1,991,939.00
35	Bus Depreciation Fund	\$ 45,715.74
36	Tuition	\$ 936,575.36
37	Retirement	\$ 6,882,947.50
38	Adult Education	\$ 594,845.00
39	Technology	\$ 96,876.45
40	Flexibility	\$ 519,904.82
41	Building Reserve	\$ 1,826,180.06
42	Debt Service	\$ 4,143.181.26

43
44 **C. Second Reading of the New Industrial Technology Know-Understand-Dos**
45 **(KUDs)** – Secondary Curriculum Director Beckie Frisbee reported that she has not
46 received any questions or concerns since the initial report at the August 11, 2025 Board
47 meeting.

1 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to approve
2 the updated standards for Industrial Technology as presented.

3
4 **D. 2025-2026 School Calendar Amendment** – Director of Human Resources, Luke
5 Diekhans, reported that during the 2024-2025 school year, and throughout the summer,
6 the District and the Great Falls Education Association (GFEA) worked through the
7 process of modifying the contact minutes over the course of the year to have non-
8 student contact days at the end of quarters one, two, and three in order to provide time
9 for teachers in their classrooms for record keeping and professional development
10 across all employee groups.

11
12 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to approve
13 the amended 2025-2026 Great Falls Public Schools (GFPS) School Calendar to provide
14 for end of quarter non-student contact days for quarters one, two, and three as
15 presented.

16
17 **E. Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the International Brotherhood of**
18 **Teamsters Local Union #2** - Director of Human Resources, Luke Diekhans, stated that
19 the CBA for this group expired on June 30, 2025. The six (6) members of this
20 bargaining unit have come to a tentative agreement for Board approval. Luke stated that
21 the longevity schedule will match the new Operating Engineer schedule. He also
22 reviewed language changes in the proposed CBA. The approximate salary budget for
23 this group for the 2025-2026 school year will be \$266,718, which is an estimated
24 increase of \$12,584 over the previous year and the approximate salary budget for the
25 2026-2027 school year will be \$276,078, which is an estimated increase of \$9,984.

26
27 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to approve
28 the two-year Collective Bargaining Agreement with the International Brotherhood of
29 Teamsters, Local Union #2 for the school years of 2025-26 and 2026-27 as presented.

30
31 **F. Medically Related Professionals Compensation 2025-2027** - Director of Human
32 Resources, Luke Diekhans, reported that non-union employee compensation, including
33 support personnel, is to be established by the Board under Policy 5140. Montana Code
34 Annotated requires that the Board of Trustees approve the District Budget that includes
35 employee compensation. This budget unit is comprised of an estimated twenty-eight
36 (28) employees. These positions are required under special education law and are
37 necessary to serve students with physical and medical special needs. It includes the
38 position categories of Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech Therapists,
39 and full-time Nurses. An increase to the base salary schedule for the School-Based
40 Medically Related Professionals for the 2025-2026 school year will result in an
41 approximate base salary budget for this group of \$2,047,704. The cost of the 4% base
42 increase is estimated to be approximately \$78,757. The 2026-2027 school year will
43 result in an approximate base salary budget for this group of \$2,129,613. The cost of
44 the 4% base increase is estimated to be approximately \$81,908. Under federal law
45 public schools are eligible to bill for medically necessary services and receive Medicaid
46 reimbursement, which the District will do. Our current service model uses Speech
47 Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and Registered
48 Nurses to provide direct services to eligible students.

1
2 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the
3 Medically Related Personnel Handbook for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school years
4 as presented.

5
6 **G. Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with Teamsters Local No. 2 Food**
7 **Service Employees** - Director of Human Resources, Luke Diekhans, reported that the
8 CBA for this group, consisting of seventy-one (71) members, expired on June 30, 2025.
9 The District bargained with this group throughout the summer and the union members
10 voted in favor of the tentative two-year agreement pending Board approval. Mr.
11 Diekhans reviewed the proposed wage increases and language changes included in the
12 agenda. For the 2025-2026 school year, the approximate salary budget for this group
13 will be \$1,222,838, an estimated increase of \$111,349 over the previous year and for
14 the 2026-2027 school year, the approximate salary budget will be \$1,280,341, an
15 estimated increase of \$57,502.

16
17 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to ratify the
18 two-year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the District and the Teamsters
19 Local No. 2 Food Service Employees as presented.

20
21 **H. Coca Cola Bottling Company Three-Year Agreement** – Director of Business
22 Operations, Brian Patrick, stated that at the August 11, 2025 Board meeting Trustee
23 Turoski made a motion, seconded by Trustee Bronson, that passed unanimously, to
24 postpone approving the Coca Cola Bottling Company Agreement pending additional
25 information. Brian reported that the current five-year District contract with Pepsi and
26 Coke expired on June 30, 2025. He also stated that the District negotiated with both
27 Pepsi and Coke for the opportunity for an exclusive beverage contract. The District
28 limited the proposed contract to three (3) years, which allows the opportunity to know
29 that the arrangement will work before moving into a longer-term agreement. The
30 contract requires a thorough review of the service at the end of the first year of the
31 contract. The beverages are required to meet or exceed all dietary regulations required
32 by Healthy Hungry Free School Kids Act of 2010. Under the terms of the agreement, the
33 contract requires an initial lump sum payment of \$5,000 followed by \$8,500 per year at
34 the end of each contract year. These funds will be deposited in Revenue Enhancement
35 Fund.

36
37 Motion – Bill Bronson, - Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to bring this
38 action item back to the Board for vote.

39
40 Motion amended as follows by action of the Board of Trustees at the September 8, 2025
41 regular Board Meeting.

42 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, to approve the three-year negotiated
43 contract with Coca-Cola Bottling Company High Country as presented. Motion failed
44 with no votes in favor, seven (7) opposed.

45
46 Superintendent Hoyer stated that with Brian Patrick’s retirement, she will reconvene
47 with appropriate vendors and staff to continue discussions regarding a beverage
48 agreement.

1
2 **I. 2025-2027 Legislative Resolutions for Great Falls Public Schools –**

3 Superintendent Hoyer stated that legislative resolutions for the 2025-2027 biennium are
4 critical to advancing the focus and mission of Great Falls Public Schools. These
5 resolutions clearly communicate our District’s priorities to state policymakers, ensuring
6 that legislative actions support high-quality teaching and learning, equitable access to
7 resources, and the local decision-making necessary to meet the unique needs of our
8 community. She stated that the Legislative Committee, as set by the Board, is
9 composed of two (2) Trustees, the Superintendent, and a community member. By
10 formally adopting positions on key issues, the Board affirms its commitment to
11 advocating for policies that strengthen educational opportunities, protect funding for
12 programs that prepare students for college, career, and life, and uphold the values and
13 goals of the Great Falls community.

14
15 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to approve
16 the 2025-2027 Legislative Resolutions for Great Falls Public Schools as outlined by the
17 Legislative Committee.

18
19 **J. Designate Clerk of the District and Board and Oath of Office –** Chairperson
20 Johnson stated that Luke Diekhans has been appointed to replace Brian Patrick as the
21 Clerk of the District. Aly Konecny gave Luke Diekhans the Oath of Office.

22
23 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to appoint
24 Director of Business Operations Justin Luke Diekhans as the Clerk of the District and
25 Board and officially swear him in as the Clerk of the District until the next reorganization
26 meeting of the Board that will be held in May of 2026.

27
28 **K. Second Reading of New and Revised Board Policies 2165 – *Early Targeted***
29 ***Interventions; 3110 – Entrance, Placement, and Transfer; 3121 – Enrollment and***
30 ***Attendance Records; 5123 (New) – Employer Verification of Employee; 5252***
31 ***(New) – Notice of Nonrenewal of Nontenured Teacher for Financial Reasons; and***
32 ***8560 (New) – Display of Flags and Banners on District Property*** - Superintendent
33 Hoyer stated that no comments or recommendations for changes were received since
34 the first reading of the policies at the August 11, 2025 Board meeting.

35
36 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve New
37 and Revised Board Policies 2165 – *Early Targeted Interventions; 3110 – Entrance,*
38 *Placement, and Transfer; 3121 – Enrollment and Attendance Records; 5123 (New) –*
39 *Employer Verification of Employee; 5252 (New) – Notice of Nonrenewal of Nontenured*
40 *Teacher for Financial Reasons; and 8560 (New) – Display of Flags and Banners on*
41 *District Property* as presented.

42
43
44 **ACTION: OTHER**

45
46 There were no items extracted from the Consent Agenda to discuss.

1
2 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**
3

4 **A. First Reading of Deleted, New, and Revised Board Policies 2050 – Student**
5 **Instruction; 2100 – School Year Calendar and Day; 2335 (Delete) – Health**
6 **Enhancement; 2335 (New) – Health Enhancement; 3141 – Nonresident Student**
7 **Enrollment; 3310 – Student Discipline; 3416 – Administering Medicines to**
8 **Students; 3655 (New) – Student Safety; and 5255 – Disciplinary Action-**

9 Superintendent Hoyer reviewed the recommended changes for Board Policies 2050,
10 2100, 2335, 3141, 3310, 3416, 3655, and 5255. She stated that if anyone has questions
11 or concerns about these policies to contact her before the next scheduled Board
12 meeting.
13

14 **B. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments –**

15 All Trustees thanked Brian Patrick for the work he has done in the District during his
16 employment. They also welcomed Luke Diekhans into the position of Director of
17 Business Operations.

18 Trustees Turoski, Sunchild, Duff, Bronson, and Johnson recognized everyone that
19 participated in, and helped organize this year’s convocation. This is an event that they
20 look forward to every year.

21 Trustees Turoski and Duff reported that they have participated in a few Elementary
22 School *Back to School* events and enjoy seeing the excited faces of the students as
23 they meet their teachers and bring in their new school supplies.

24 Trustee Turoski thanked Lance Boyd and the Baseball Committee for their dedication to
25 fundraising efforts.

26 Trustee Thompson reported that she is excited for the continued partnership with
27 Montana State University Northern and Morningside CORE Elementary School.

28 Trustee Bronson thanked Superintendent Hoyer for taking early initiative on the
29 Legislative Resolutions. He stated that having Board approval on these now, Great Falls
30 Public Schools will be ahead of the game.
31
32

33 **UPCOMING EVENTS**
34

35 Chairperson Johnson said the next Regular Board Meetings are scheduled for Monday,
36 September 8, 2025, and Monday, September 22, 2025.
37
38

39 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**
40

41 Chairperson Johnson adjourned the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 6:55
42 p.m.
43
44
45

46 _____
47 Gordon Johnson, Chairperson
48 _____

1 Luke Diekhans, Clerk
2