

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 September 8, 2025. Vice Chairman Tyrel Murfitt called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Attendance and Introduction of Board Members

Trustees Present: Vice Chair Tyrel Murfitt, Tristan Ulmer, Tiffany Richardson, Martin Balukas, Stacy Baird, Mark Diehl (@5:38)

Superintendent Dan Rispens, Clerk Jill Hoogerheide, Athletics Director Shaun Murgel (@6:30) and IT Coordinator Eric Power.

Visitors: Sonny Tapia, Isaac McGuire, Kate Johnson, Marian Davidson, KD Jones, K. Ravland, Aleigha Tremblay-Drynan, Kendal Walkenhorst, Skyy Wolfe, Anna Shipman, Ezra Harris, Zach Butler

Review the Agenda

No comments from the Board.

Hear the Public

Aleigha Tremblay-Drynan spoke regarding her concerns about a teacher in the district.

Anna Shipman spoke regarding her concerns about a teacher in the district.

Reports

Administrator Reports

EHHS Principal Condon referenced his Board report and asked for any questions. He mentioned that they had an increase in enrollments; 608 students including the 66 students enrolled in the 227 Academy. The admin is anticipating that there may be increased enrollments based on outcome of the bond election in Helena. He also stressed that this year the seniors are required to attend class more and they have seen some push back.

EHHS Vice Principal Klock spoke about reinforcing their positive expectations for students. This includes being more engaged and “being a graduate” or being part of the school. This year the schedules have seven class period options with an advisory every other day and something called “Circle Up.” Circle Up is a time for students to meet with clubs, meet with community members or work on catching up on missing assignments. This helps the students who are missing class due to athletic events. Five of the staff members spent the summer with Trish creating advisor lessons for the entire year. This means zero prep for teachers which allows for more help for the students. The students will also keep the same advisor for the remainder of their high school years which will give them a safe person to

make a connection with for questions or concerns. EHHS has had three office referrals within the first three days of school but other than that it has been a very smooth start to the year.

EVMS Principal Morris reported that they are experiencing an increase in enrollment with a current count of 480 students with more coming every day. The staff are starting to feel the pressure, especially in the counseling office. EVMS currently shares one of their counselors with Prickly Pear and the athletics department.

EVMS Vice Principal Kemper introduced Josh who is filling in as SRO at EVMS for the next couple months. Admin and staff feel lucky to have him and think he is doing a phenomenal job. Vice Principal Kemper was worried about how the kids would respond to the new rules about cell phones, but they have seen a good response. The behaviors are down compared to prior years. The staff feels like the split blocks are making the students and teachers more engaged and productive during the shorter time.

Radly Principal Somerfeld wanted to give another huge shoutout to our PTO. They have been so good to the district, and everyone is loving the new playground. The school is feeling the pressure of extra full classrooms. The current fourth grade class has an average of 27 students per classroom, and the third grade has 26 per classroom. The counseling and special ed departments are feeling the pressure attributed to the high enrollments and are working with parents to determine the best plans for their children.

Eastgate and Prickly Pear Principal Crusat referenced his Board reports. He also wanted to speak about some changes he is trying to implement in the two schools with morning announcements and getting the two schools combined. The two schools are noticing an uptick in enrollment this summer with more students than originally anticipated. Prickly Pear is continuing to feel the pressure and Eastgate is having a unique year since they encountered smaller class sizes in the past. Not only is there a huge stretch of resources inside and outside the classrooms, but they are also feeling the absences of staff having to travel between schools in the district. There are three out-of-district classes housed in three of Eastgate's classrooms which is causing an overloaded parking lot at drop-off and pick-up. He also wanted to introduce some of his new staff. Chelsa Smith, Alyssa Terry and Nicole Burgess are new paraprofessionals, and his new Special Education teacher is Joshua Jones.

IT Coordinator Eric Power referenced his Board report and spoke a little bit about a new enrollment set up at the high school to take pressure off the teachers.

Trustee and Committee Reports of the K-12 Board

Vice Chair Murfitt solicited reports from the Trustees and Committees.

No reports from the Committees and Trustees.

Strategic Planning – Scan for Future Needs

Vice Chair Murfitt solicited the Board for any reports about strategic planning.

Superintendent Rispens stated that he would address the issues with excess enrollment and the overcrowding associated with it in a later agenda item.

Notifications of Retirements and Resignations

The Following Staff Resignations Have Previously Been Accepted:

- Jordan Zoeckler At-Risk Tutor
- Arlee Hutchinson Kitchen Aide
- Andrew Useche Paraprofessional

Consent Action Items

Minutes of the Regular Meeting August 11, 2025

Approval of the former and new warrants (Claims # 51196- #51349) and (Payroll #69199 - 69385)

Personnel Actions

Recommended Employment of Staff

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Chelsa Smith | Substitute Paraprofessional |
| • Rainier Murgel | Custodian |
| • Matthew Shields | Substitute Custodian |
| • Kelli Stuczynski | Substitute |
| • Naomi Wicks | Substitute |
| • Wanda Lambott | 8th Grade Volleyball Coach |
| • Justine Ray | 7th Grade Volleyball Coach |
| • Madaline Rightenour | 7th/8th Assistant Volleyball Coach |
| • Bret Charlton | EHHS Yearbook Advisor |
| • Casey Harris | Skills USA Advisor |
| • Samantha Wigen | FFA Advisor |
| • Kelli Kerpa | Talent Search Coordinator |
| • Ethan Hoffman | Talent Search Coordinator |
| • Tabitha Smail | EHHS Robotics Coach |
| • Marne Bender | Esports Head Coach |
| • Cole Bass | Esports Assistant Coach |
| • Mason Skains | Esports Assistant Coach |
| • Leighla Schultz | ESports Assistant Coach |
| • Rainier Murgel | Esports Assistant Coach |
| • Sarah Cobb | National Honor Society Advisor |
| • Zerich Richerson | Assistant Wrestling Coach |
| • Kevin Dighans | Assistant Wrestling Coach |

● Angela Stinson	JV Cheer Coach
● Tim Roche	Paraprofessional
● Gracie Olds	American Sign Language Interpreter
● Lauren Betz	Student Mentor
● Kylie Shultz	Student Mentor
● Jaci Nickovich	Student Mentor
● Parker Taylor	Student Mentor
● Madalyn Surginer	Student Mentor
● Keeley Hamilton	Student Mentor
● Aimee Peterson	Student Mentor
● Carrie Schwaller	Substitute
● Richard Wells	Substitute
● Sara Dearing	Student Mentor/Student Custodian
● Cody Maness	Substitute
● Naomi Wicks	Substitute
● Kellie Stucynski	Substitute
● Jeff Stoltz	Drivers Ed Instructor

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>MT City</u>	<u>Clancy</u>	<u>Townsend</u>
MM (PreK)	2				
Kindergarten	3				
1 st grade					
2 nd grade	1				
3 rd grade	2				
4 th grade	1				
5 th grade	3				
6 th grade	3				1
7 th grade					
8 th grade					
9 th grade	1				
10 th grade					
11 th grade					
12 th grade					
Total:17					

Motion by Trustee Baird, seconded by Trustee Balukas to approve the consent action items as presented. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

Unfinished Business

Central Office Relocation

Superintendent Rispens reported on the move to the new location and the cost so far. He also spoke a bit about potential uses for the old office.

Second Reading Policies 3141, 3310 and 8560

- Policy 3141 Non-resident Student Enrollment
- Policy 3310 Student Discipline
- Policy 8560 Display of Flags and Banners on District Property

Motion Trustee Richardson, seconded by Trustee Diehl to approve policies 3141, 3310 and 8560 under second reading as presented. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

Enrollment Report and State School Update

Superintendent Rispens and Principal reported about the Fall start up including class sizes and crowding. He and the other admin have noticed an increased enrollment, and he thinks that we need to start the discussion about possible solutions. The principals reported on their schools:

- LittleLantes guideline is 1 adult/9 students
 - Currently: 17 kids in 3 classes with a teacher and paraprofessional in each
- Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade accreditation limit: 20/class
 - Kindergarten at 18-19 per class
 - 1st grade at 18 /class
 - 2nd grade at 16-17/class
- 3rd and 4th grade accreditation limit: 28/class
 - 3rd grade at 26/class
 - 4th grade at 27/class
- 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade accreditation limit: 30/class
 - 5th grade at 25/class
 - 6th grade at 27/class with the core classes at 28
 - 7th grade at 26/class with the core classes at 28
 - 8th grade at 25/class with the core classes at 28
- EHHS – 9th grade had core classes at 180 total –language arts at 28/class, math a little smaller

New Business

Summer Maintenance Update

Superintendent Rispens recapped the summer maintenance projects that were completed for the 2025 season: Radley playground, parts of Radley roof, EVMS flooring, air conditioner repairs, and cleaning some of the gym floors in the schools.

Summer School Report

Gus reported that things were a little different this year. There was more emphasis on Jump Start students who qualified by a composite test ranking. In grades Kindergarten to 6th there were 153 students. A large group compared to last year's program, but they experienced a great attendance record. The group worked on remedial content but also was able to offer many enrichment opportunities. For instance, there were Friday swimming lessons and several field trips including a trip to the First People's Buffalo Jump. Tuesdays were teacher team-ups where one teacher led a STEM activity for the whole group. At the end of the summer, the staff collected data through math and reading assessments. These were compared to Spring assessments and roughly 85% maintained or increased their scores.

Lynsi spoke about the middle school and high school summer program. They did competency-based assessments and had certain standards for the week that they needed to complete. If they met their goals, they were able to take Friday off. They noticed that most students chose to work on the Fridays so they could be done early after passing their assessments. One student chose to come to summer school so they could get proficiency grades and graduate early. Forty-three students did their HPE credits with Mr. Murray and came to agility 80% of the time with their other standards also being met. There was 15 ELA, 6 science, 6 government, and 11 math credits given out. There were 28 middle schoolers in attendance.

Trustee Balukas asked KD Jones to explain the meaning of the T-shirts presented to the trustees at the beginning of the meeting.

Request for Approval of a Shuttle Bus

The Board was asked to consider approving the addition of a shuttle bus to transport K-5 students across town to reduce crowding and traffic in the afternoon and possibly mornings.

Motion by Trustee Baird, seconded by Trustee Richardson to approve addition of a shuttle bus. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

First Reading Policies: 1111, 1210, 1700, 2132, 3410, 3510, 3612, 1310

- **Policy 1111 - Election**

Motion by Trustee Baird, seconded by Trustee Diehl to approve policy 1111 as presented under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries

- **Policy 2132 – Student and Family Privacy Rights**

Motion by Trustee Ulmer, seconded by Trustee Baird to approve policy 2132 as presented under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- **Policy 3410 – Student Health**

Motion by Trustee Baird, seconded by Trustee Ulmer to approve policy 3410 as is under first reading with Superintendent Rispens getting further clarification on the immunization. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- **Policy 3510 – School Sponsored Activities**

Motion by Trustee Ulmer, seconded by Trustee Diehl to approve policy 3510 as amended under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- **Policy 1210 – Qualifications, Terms, Duties of Board Officers**

Motion by Trustee Baird, seconded by Trustee Ulmer to approve policy 1210 under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- **Policy 1310 – District Policy and Procedures**

Motion by Trustee Baird, seconded by Trustee Ulmer to approve policy 1310 with option 2 under first reading. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- **Policy 1700 – Uniform Complaint Procedure**

Motion by Trustee Balukas, seconded by Trustee Diehl to approve policy 1700 under first reading as amended. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

- **Policy 3612 – School Provided Access to Electronic Information, Services**

Motion by Trustee Richardson, seconded by Trustee Ulmer to approve policy 3612 under first reading as amended. Unanimous vote for the motion. The motion carries.

Superintendent Request for Out of State Travel – AASA National Conference February 2026

Superintendent Rispen asked permission to travel out of state in February of 2026 to attend the AASA National Conference in Tennessee.

Motion by Trustee Ulmer, seconded by Trustee Richardson to approve Superintendent Rispen's travel out of state to Nashville in February 2026 for the AASA National Conference. Unanimous vote the motion. The motion carries.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Future Meeting Dates and Agenda Items

The next regular meeting will be held on Monday October 13, 2025 @ 5:30 EVMS

Submitted by:

Jill Hoogerheide
Board Clerk, Jill Hoogerheide

10/13/25
Date

Approved by:

Scott A. Walter
Chairman, Board of Trustees

OCT. 13, 2025
Date

