

Hellgate Elementary Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting August 11, 2025

6:00 p.m.

OPENING

The Board of Trustees of Hellgate Elementary School District #4 met in regular session on Monday, August 11th, 2025. The meeting was held in-person. The meeting was called to order by Board Chairman, Tom McLaughlin. Trustees participating were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Beth Herron (virtually), Kallie Gatzemeier, and Scott Rouse (virtually). Trustee Tom Cook was absent. Molly Blakely and District Clerk Justine Reese were present for the meeting. District staff participating included, Erin Ellis (Curriculum Director), Brendan Brown (Special Services Director), Haley Patzner (Building 3 Teacher), Tiffany Hobbs (Principal Building 3), Brent Heist (Principal Building 1), Adelle Donohue (Teacher). There were no community members in attendance. There were up to 14 total guests/participants in the meeting, in-person/virtually.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at the meeting.

HEEA

There was no HEEA update.

RECOGNITION OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

There was no recognition at the meeting.

BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

Trustees reviewed the monthly newsletter from OPI.

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES-REGULAR MEETING 7-14-2025

A motion was made by Kallie Gatzemeier to approve the minutes from the July 14th, 2025 regular meeting. There was no discussion on the topic. The motion was seconded by Rich Thornock. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Kallie Gatzemeier, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Scott Rouse. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF THE WARRANTS-JULY 2025

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the July 2025 claims. There were clarifying questions from the Trustees. The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. Voting in favor of the motion were Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Kallie Gatzemeier, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Scott Rouse. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF BUDGET REPORTS

Trustees reviewed the budget reports for July 2025.

REVIEW OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the July 2025 Student Activities Report. There was no discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier, Beth Herron, and Scott Rouse. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

RETIREMENT OF CLASSIFIED STAFF:

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the retirement of Mr. Brad Rykowsky, custodian, effective August 31, 2025 (letter available in official board packet). There was no discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier, Beth Herron, and Scott Rouse. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

CLASSIFIED STAFF HIRING CONSIDERATIONS:

A motion was made by Scott Rouse to approve the hiring of the following, effective August 25, 2025: Ms. Michelle Hettick, an afternoon bus aide; Ms. Symantha Fredrick, paraprofessional; Ms. Angela Laridon, paraprofessional. There was no discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Beth Herron. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier, Beth Herron, and Scott Rouse. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK 25-26 SCHOOL YEAR:

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the Employee Handbook for the 2025-2026 school year, including any updates or revisions necessary to align with current district policies, employment laws, and best practices for staff conduct, responsibilities, and workplace expectations (available in official board packet). There was brief discussion on the topic including clarification on significant changes. The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier, Beth Herron, and Scott Rouse. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE STUDENT HANDBOOK 25-26 SCHOOL YEAR:

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the Student Handbook for the 2025-2026 school year, including any updates or revisions deemed necessary to ensure compliance with district policy, state law, and best practices for student conduct and safety (available in official board packet). There were clarifying questions addressed. The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier, Beth Herron, and Scott Rouse. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF STUDENT ACTIVITY HANDBOOK 25-26 SCHOOL YEAR:

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the Student Activity Handbook for the 2025-2026 school year, including any updates or revisions necessary to ensure alignment with district policies and expectations for student participation in extracurricular and co-curricular activities. (available in official board packet). There was brief discussion and clarifying questions answered regarding the item. The motion was seconded by Scott Rouse. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier, Beth Herron, and Scott Rouse. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF UPDATED SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES FOR 25-26 SCHOOL YEAR:

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the updates to the Hellgate Elementary School Board policies as presented for the 2025-2026 school year, including the changes highlighted and recommended by our legal counsel. These policy updates reflect changes in state and/or federal law and best practices in school governance. The updates have been reviewed and are recommended for adoption to ensure compliance, clarity, and continued operational effectiveness (available in official board packet). There were clarifying questions addressed. The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier, Beth Herron, and Scott Rouse. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

ADOPTION OF SCHOOL BOARD POLICY 3655:

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the adoption of School Board Policy 3655 (available in official board packet). House Bill 745, passed during the 2025 Legislative Session, mandates that all public-school districts in Montana adopt a student protection policy. There was no discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock,

Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier, Beth Herron, and Scott Rouse. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE 25-26 BUDGET:

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to table the following Hellgate Elementary 2025/2026 annual budget report with the understanding that the Hellgate Elementary Business Manager/District Clerk shall have the ability to slightly adjust the final budget totals once all final financial data has been sent to the school district from state and county financial department sources. Justine Reese provided an overview of the preliminary budget, noting that the final budget numbers were not available due to a delay in receiving final reports from the Missoula County Treasurer Department. The motion was seconded by Scott Rouse. Voting in favor of tabling the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier, Beth Herron, and Scott Rouse. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE 24-25 TRUSTEE FISCAL SUMMARY REPORT:

A motion was made by Scott Rouse to table the Trustees Fiscal Summary Report for the 2024-2025 school year. Justine Reese provided an overview of the 24-25 TFS Report, noting that the final TFS data was not available due to a delay in receiving final reports from the Missoula County Treasurer Department. The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. Voting in favor of tabling the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier, Beth Herron, and Scott Rouse. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Montana Advanced Opportunity Grant, \$22,412.65: Hellgate Elementary was awarded the Advanced Opportunity Grant for the upcoming fiscal year. Adelle Donohue introduced the opportunity to work with Montana AgCorp to incorporate Garden curriculum into the district with the financial assistance from the Advanced Opportunity Grant.

Washington Foundation Challenge Grant, \$5,000.00: Hellgate Elementary as awarded a challenge donation (district will raise \$5,000 and the Washington Foundation will match the amount) for the One Book, One Read Project that will occur later in the school year.

Blain Doyle Foundation Donation, \$2,000.00: Hellgate Elementary received a donation of \$2,000 from The Blaine Doyle Foundation a subsidiary of The Alaska Community Foundation.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no committee reports at the meeting.

PRINCIPALS' REPORTS

Building 1: No report

Building 2: Absent

Building 3: No report

Building 4: Absent

Special Education: No report

Curriculum: No Report

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next regular meeting and annual budget meeting of the Board will be September 8, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Special Meeting will be August 21, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment at this time.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.