

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
3 **HELD NOVEMBER 10, 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 10th Day
7 of November 2025.

8
9 At 5:30 pm, Vice Chairperson Skornogoski called to order the Regular Meeting of the
10 Board of Trustees and informed the participants and audience that the meeting was
11 being recorded per Board Policy 1420.

12
13 **ROLL CALL:** Luke Diekhans took roll call.

14
15 **Trustees Present:** Kim Skornogoski, Vice Chairperson
16 Bill Bronson
17 Marlee Sunchild
18 Amie Thompson
19 Paige Turoski
20

21 **Trustee Absent:** Gordon Johnson, Excused
22 Craig Duff, Excused
23

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

28
29 Also present was Tom Cabbage, Great Falls Education Association President.

30
31 The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Student Representative Seth Royer.
32

33
34 **ADOPT AGENDA**

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36 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to adopt the
37 agenda as presented.
38

39
40 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

41
42 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the
43 Consent Agenda as presented.
44

45 **A. Minutes of the October 27, 2025 Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved
46 the minutes of the October 27, 2025 Regular Board Meeting as presented.
47

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

2
3 **C. Good Apple Awards** - The Board approved the nominations of Good Apple Awards
4 for Lacey Lewis, Principal, West Elementary School; and Joshua Mueller and Kirsten
5 Dige, Teachers, Lincoln Elementary School.

6
7 **D. Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) TR-35 School Bus Driver Certificates**
8 The Board approved the Montana OPI TR-35 School Bus Driver Certificates for the
9 individuals listed in the agenda.

10
11 **E. Great Falls High School Cross Country Running Club Travel Request to**
12 **Spokane, Washington** – The Board approved the Great Falls High School Cross
13 Country Running Club’s travel to Spokane, Washington on November 14-16, 2025.

14
15 **F. Great Falls High School Skills USA Fall Leadership Conference Travel Request**
16 **to Butte, Montana** – The Board approved the Great Falls High School Skills USA
17 leadership students to travel with State Director Roberta Tillman to the Skills USA
18 Leadership Conference in Butte, Montana from November 8-12, 2025.

19
20 **G. Approval of Charles M. Russell High School History Students’ Travel Request**
21 **to Washington, DC** – The Board approved Charles M. Russell High School history
22 students to travel to the Close-Up High School Program in Washington DC from March
23 8-13, 2026.

24
25 **H. Charles M. Russell High School Cross Country Travel Request to Logandale,**
26 **Nevada** – The Board approved the Charles M. Russell High School Cross Country
27 travel request to Logandale, Nevada from November 21-25, 2025.

28
29
30 **COMMUNICATION**

31
32 **A. Report of the Student Representatives**

33 Great Falls High School (GFHS) student representatives Seth Royer and Kaitlynn
34 Fulbright shared that the choirs had outstanding performances this month, and the
35 speech and debate team achieved multiple top placements at their recent competition in
36 Helena. Winter Prom planning is underway with a “Once Upon a Dream” theme.
37 Classes have been engaging in creative hands-on learning, including culinary
38 Halloween treats, geology jewelry making, an art and anatomy collaboration lab, and
39 physics experiments on friction. Teachers Mrs. Gundlach, Mrs. Rowe, and Mr. Fulgum
40 were recognized for their positive impacts on Great Falls High School. Students from all
41 local high schools toured the Calumet Refinery to learn about renewable energy. Fall
42 sports have concluded with Football winning their first playoff game in over 4 (four)
43 years. Preseason basketball and swimming have begun. Health Occupation Students
44 of America (HOSA) hosted a successful blood drive. Students concluded the report
45 with a School Board interactive trivia activity.

46
47 Paris Gibson Education Center (PGEC) student representatives Aspen Logan-
48 Schwecke and Kaytlynn McClure reported that students engaged in several diverse

1 hands-on learning experiences this month, including Elk Skin Drum making with
2 American Indian Studies; Fancy Ramen Day, holiday treats, and the harvesting and
3 bottling of “Loki’s Ghost” pepper seasonings in culinary classes; and a post-graduation
4 trades program tour hosted by Montana State University - Northern. Students explored
5 sensory science in a “Flavor Tripping” seminar, had the opportunity to earn CPR/AED
6 certification with training provided by the school nurse, and participated in a Bison
7 Harvest cultural event. *Math in the Trades* connected academics to real-world careers,
8 and English and Science collaborated on a metals recycling project. The Young Parents
9 Education Center hosted a festive Halloween event, and three students earned the “I
10 AM PARIS” award. Jobs for Montana Graduates (JMG) students attended the Fall
11 Leadership Conference in Helena, earning 3rd place in the logo competition and had
12 the opportunity to tour many local businesses.

13
14 Charles M. Russell (CMR) High School student representative Addie Crist reported that
15 students have been busy with community service events. The Key Club, volleyball
16 team, and HOSA participated in service projects, including volunteering at the Salvation
17 Army and writing letters to veterans, while the Drama Department collected food
18 donations for Rustler families. Several student groups remain active—Peer Mentors,
19 now renamed LIFT (Listen, Inspire, Foster, and Trust), continue supporting students’
20 mental health; Business Professionals of America (BPA) and Speech & Debate teams
21 are preparing for competitions; and the Addams Family musical and Advanced
22 Placement (AP) Art exhibit are underway. Students enjoyed a variety of engaging and
23 hands-on learning experiences this month. Music students were inspired by guest
24 conductor Fernanda Lastra, while art students learned from visiting graphic designer
25 Brenda Wolf. Science classes conducted creative labs and celebrated Mole Day, and
26 Advanced Placement (AP) Statistics students applied problem-solving through a fun
27 Barbie experiment. Language students explored culture and history through film and
28 folklore, and students touring Calumet Refinery gained insight into renewable energy
29 and fuel testing. Fall athletics wrapped up successfully with cross country sweeping
30 crosstown, football earning its first playoff win since 2014, and volleyball advancing to
31 the state tournament.

32
33 **B. Superintendent Report**
34 Superintendent Hoyer highlighted National Native American Heritage Month as an
35 opportunity to educate the community about Indigenous cultures, noting recent
36 participation in the Bison Harvest and the upcoming community PowWow open to all.
37 She also shared that the Golden Age Tailgate event continues to grow in popularity
38 among district residents aged sixty-two (62) and older. A districtwide garage sale helped
39 the District reduce unused items, allowing storage space to be utilized for in-use items.
40 All Principals had an opportunity to review items and request those needed in their
41 schools prior to the sale. Proceeds from the sale are deposited into the Loss of Assets
42 revenue account. Superintendent Hoyer reported on the United Way Day of Caring
43 community service event, upcoming visits from Governor Gianforte and the Workforce
44 Development panel, and reviewed data showing a steady decline in historic and
45 projected K–12 enrollment and attendance trends, which directly impacts state funding
46 calculations.

47
48 **C. Audience Communication**

1 Community member Sarah Whitney, representing parents of children in Special
2 Education, addressed the Board and audience. She emphasized the critical role of
3 paraprofessionals who provide essential care and support for students with diverse
4 needs, whom often require 24-hour assistance. She advocated for a tiered pay system
5 to recognize varying skill levels, promote consistency for students, and ensure these
6 valued staff members are fairly compensated.

7
8 Vice Chairperson Skornogoski thanked Ms. Whitney for her advocacy.
9

10 11 **ACTION ITEMS**

12
13 **A. Second Reading of Lynx Grafix Know-Understand-Do (KUD)** – Secondary
14 Curriculum Director Beckie Frisbee stated the proposed KUD standards have been
15 available on the website and in the Curriculum office since the first reading on October
16 27, 2025 at the regular Board meeting. She has received no comments or concerns
17 from staff or community.

18
19 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to approve
20 the new Lynx Grafix KUDs as presented.

21
22 Trustee Thompson thanked the Curriculum department for making the documents
23 available to the public.
24

25 **B. Second Reading of Family and Consumer Science Resources** – Secondary
26 Curriculum Director Beckie Frisbee reported that new textbook resources have been
27 available for review in the Curriculum office since the first reading took place at the
28 October 27, 2025 regular Board meeting. Ms. Frisbee noted that the original quote for
29 the new textbooks expired on October 31, 2025 and shipping may increase from the
30 original quote by seventy-three (73) cents.

31
32 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to approve the
33 purchase of new Family and Consumer Science textbooks as presented.
34

35 **C. Approval of Raiders Course at Paris Gibson Education Center** – Superintendent
36 Hoyer, on behalf of Executive Director Lance Boyd who was unable to attend the Board
37 meeting due to illness, requested Board approval for a new Raiders Course to enhance
38 the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) program. The five-item course will
39 be installed above the PGEC track with the support of the Red Horse Squadron from
40 Malmstrom Air Force Base. Perkins funds will be used for the project. Some
41 equipment will be restricted from public use, and insurance approval has been secured.

42
43 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to approve
44 the installation of the Raiders Course at Paris Gibson Education Center for the Junior
45 Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) program.
46

47 **D. Approval of the Purchase of Servers and Storage for Virtual Environment**
48 Director of Information Technology Jeff Williams is requesting Board approval to

1 purchase new hardware servers and storage devices needed to transition from the
2 current VMWare virtualization environment to a more sustainable platform due to rising
3 licensing and support costs. The total cost of \$141,216.98 includes \$49,339.00 already
4 spent on a one-year VMWare renewal to maintain support during the transition, with the
5 remaining \$91,877.98 (plus 5.94% interest) to be paid over the 2026–2027 and 2027–
6 2028 budgets.

7
8 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Turoski.

9
10 Mr. Williams addressed questions presented by Trustees Thompson and Skornogoski
11 regarding whether other schools were experiencing the same problem and if already
12 purchasing the extended window for support would allow the District more time to get
13 other quote options. Mr. Williams stated that all districts who currently have this product
14 will need to find other virtual environment options.

15
16 Trustee Bronson appreciated the explanation, alluding to the ever-changing
17 technological world we live in, and recommended the Board proceed with this option.

18
19 Motion passed unanimously.

20
21 **E. Second Reading of Revised Board Policies 2150 – *Suicide Awareness and***
22 ***Prevention; 2334 – Release Time for Religious Instruction; 2450 – Recognition of***
23 ***Native American Cultural Heritage; 2600 – Work Experience/Internship Program;***
24 ***and 5124 – Recruitment and Retention*** – Superintendent Hoyer reviewed one
25 recommendation for change to Board Policy 5124 brought forth by Tom Cubbage. On
26 Page 55, Line 17, the language “or more” was added. She stated no other comments
27 or recommendations for changes were received since the first reading of the policies at
28 the October 27, 2025 regular Board meeting.

29
30 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve
31 Revised Board Policies 2150 – *Suicide Awareness and Prevention; 2334 – Release*
32 *Time for Religious Instruction; 2450 – Recognition of Native American Cultural Heritage;*
33 *2600 – Work Experience/Internship Program; and 5124 – Recruitment and Retention* as
34 presented.

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37 **ACTION: OTHER**

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39 There were no items removed from the Consent Agenda to discuss.

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41
42 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

43
44 **A. Fall Student Achievement Data Report** – Executive Director Jackie Mainwaring
45 presented Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) data showing Great Falls Public
46 Schools (GFPS) assessment scores compared to national averages in both Math and
47 ELA (English Language Arts). Growth trends are on track with district expectations.
48 Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST) testing in grades 3–8, now

1 statewide, shows GFPS performing comparably to other Montana schools. In grades 3-
2 8, writing and science remain areas for improvement. ACT scores for juniors rose
3 slightly from 19.1 in 2024 to 19.3 in 2025. Discussion included data availability,
4 statewide baselines, college testing requirements, and rollout of the new kindergarten
5 readiness assessment.
6

7 **B. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments**

8 Trustee Sunchild shared that her son was back in Great Falls and he had the
9 opportunity to speak with second graders about the Core Knowledge Language Arts
10 (CKLA) Ancient Greece unit, democracy, and the marathon in DC, noting strong student
11 engagement.

12 Trustee Thompson enjoyed the combined Art and Biology lesson at Great Falls High
13 School, emphasizing that integrated curriculum benefits all students and connects to
14 real-life learning. She inquired on the meaning of “Snollygoster” (a name captioned in
15 one of the student reports), to which reporter Jenn Rowell clarified was a politician.

16 Trustee Bronson expressed appreciation for the administration’s responsiveness, noting
17 prompt answers to questions about athletic bus expenses that helped address
18 community inquiries.

19 Trustee Turoski commended the community member’s courage to speak, appreciated
20 paraprofessionals’ hard work, and recognized the peer mentors who presented at the
21 Healthy, Safe Schools Board Work Session. She mentioned her fourth grader’s
22 excitement about a museum field trip.

23 Trustee Skornogoski announced the need for more volunteers for an upcoming Speech
24 and Debate meet, thanked administration for Day of Caring participation, shared her
25 experience in her half-day substitute as a paraprofessional, and welcomed parent
26 advocates for students.
27

28 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

29
30
31 Vice Chairperson Skornogoski highlighted upcoming events, including the Indian
32 Education for All Board Work Session on November 18th and the next regular Board
33 meeting on November 24th.
34

35 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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37
38 With no further comments or items to be discussed, motion by Vice Chairperson
39 Skornogoski and seconded by Trustee Thompson to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the
40 Board of Trustees at 6:47 p.m.
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46

Kim Skornogoski, Vice Chairperson

47

Luke Diekhans, Clerk
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