TO: **Trustees, East Helena Schools**

FROM: **Dan Rispens, Superintendent**

BOARD MEETING: **January 12, 2026**

RE: **Student Enrollment (January 6, 2026)**

School	Grade Level	To Date	Month Ago	Year Ago
Eastgate	Age-K	47	47	50
	K	143	144	115
EG Total		**[190]**	**[191]**	**[165]**
Prickly Pear	1	127	127	129
	2	132	133	147
Prickly Pear Total		**[259]**	**[260]**	**[276]**
Radley Elementary	3	157	157	145
	4	157	158	146
	5	148	149	136
Radley Total		**[462]**	**[464]**	**[427]**
East Valley	6	148	149	152
Middle School	7	143	144	151
	8	149	151	167
EVMS Total		**[440]**	**[444]**	**[470]**
East Helena High	9	172	172	147
	10	130	130	148
	11	124	126	135
	12	118	119	122
EHHS Total		**[544]**	**[547]**	**[552]**
EVMS 227	6	2	1	10
	7	16	15	9
	8	10	10	8
EVMS 227 Total		**[28]**	**[26]**	**[27]**
EHHS 227	9	5	5	8
	10	16	17	18
	11	25	24	18
	12	19	18	16
EHHS 227 Total		**[65]**	**[64]**	**[60]**
TOTALS		**1988**	**1998**	**1977**

School Board Report
January 12th, 2026

Chairman Walter and Trustees,
Here are some monthly items to share with you.

Kindergarten and LittleLante Registratioin
The registration window opened on January 1st. We will hold a parent informational meeting for our LittleLante program in March and will continue to monitor incoming kindergarten enrollment numbers from now until August. I will continue to update the board on the status of enrollment and how this compares to previous years. I attended a webinar that reviewed HB 352 (Early Literacy Targeted Interventions) and HB 338 (Early Targeted Interventions). I was primarily interested in seeing what, if any, changes we may need to make to our program and practices. Thankfully, we are on par with what was shared and if there are any new developments, we will communicate those with the board.

Benchmarks
Our annual practice is to administer benchmarks in both reading and math to all of our students. This will take place during the month of January. We anticipate that we will finish and will be able to conduct our data digs with each grade level in order to restart our Focus Interventions before the end of the month.

School Leadership Team Meetings
Our School Leadership Team continues to meet bi-weekly and focus on items that would be considered tactical and strategical. During December, we discussed concerns on unfilled absences and strategies/practices we implement in efforts to decrease the amount of disruption for students and had an open discussion on the calendar for next year. Our most recent discussions were centered around implementing a screen free week and all of the implications that are related to the event.

Character Strong
We celebrated our students of the month who displayed our character trait, empathy, for the month of December on December 18th. Our student of the month assembly will be held this month on January 30th and our focus will be perseverance.

Upcoming Events
- January 19th - No School
- January 22nd - End of Quarter 2
- January 26th - Early Release

Thank you!
Brandon Crusat, Eastgate and Prickly Pear Elementary Principal

Month	Gen. Insap./Defiance	Playground	Fighting/Physical Contact	Bus	Weapons	Vandalism	Threat	Bullying	Harassment	Profanity	Total
September											0
October	15	1	5								21
November	2	1	1								4
December	7	6									13
January	3										3
February											0
March											0
April											0
May											0
June											0
Total	27	8	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41

Month	Warning	Time Out	Conference	Parent Call	Bus Sus.	Alt. Recess	OSS	ISS	CSCT	Total
September										0
October			21	21		14	3	3	1	63
November			4	4		4				12
December		1	13	13		11		1		39
January			3	3		3				9
February										0
March										0
April										0
May										0
June										0
Total	9	1	41	41	5	32	3	4	1	123

Eastgate Elementary

Month	Gen. Innap./Defiance	Playground	Fighting/Physical Contact	Bus	Weapons	Vandalism	Threat	Bullying	Harassment	Profanity	Total
September											0
October	7	4	7							2	20
November	1	1	7	2	1					2	14
December	4	4	4	1							13
January	3	1	3								7
February											0
March											0
April											0
May											0
June											0
Total	15	10	21	3	1	0	0	0	0	4	54

Month	Warning	Time Out	Conference	Parent Call	Bus Sus.	Alt. Recess	OSS	ISS	CSCT Referral	Total
September										0
October		3	20	20		13		4		60
November			14	14	2	7	3	2		42
December		1	13	13	1	8	1	2		39
January			7	7		4		3		21
February										0
March										0
April										0
May										0
June										0
Total	0	4	54	54	3	32	4	11	0	162

Prickly Pear Elementary

EAST HELENA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School District No. 9 • PO Box 1280 • East Helena • Montana • 59635

Superintendent/Administration Office (406) 227-7700
Eastgate Elementary (406) 227-7770, grades pre & K
Prickly Pear Elementary (406) 227-7720, grades 1-2
Radley Elementary (406) 227-7710, grades 3-5
East Valley Middle School (406) 227-7740, grades 6-8
East Helena High School (406) 227-7730, grades 9-12

SUCCESS FOR ALL

January 12, 2026 Radley Elementary Board Report Gus Somerfeld

- Starting January 5, students will be participating in our winter benchmark assessments. This allows us to gauge students' academic progress since the beginning of the school year. Once all the data is collected, teachers will take time to analyze it, change instructional groupings during targeted time, and adjust overall instruction accordingly. Additionally, our interventionalists will work with building leadership and homeroom teachers to shuffle intervention needs based on the changing data. I'm eager to share our results once ready.

- January also marks mid-year evaluation season. I will be meeting with ALL staff to review their progress toward their two professional goals, strengths, areas of growth, reviewing student performance data, discuss their individual work toward school wide goals, and any other pertinent information. Although it can be time consuming to meet with all forty-five staff members, I always look forward to some one on one time with everyone.

- Parent/Teacher Conferences were held November 11 and 13. We had an amazing turn out with 96% (452 of 463) attendance from parents/guardians on those nights. After sitting in on numerous conferences, our Radley staff were well prepared to share academic, behavior, and work habit progress as we continue to strive to develop the whole child.

- We are experimenting with a new master schedule this year, which rotated specialty classes every trimester. It allows for teachers to have common prep times with teaching partners and the same prep time each day. It has been well received and has transitioned smoothly between our first rotation.

- Upcoming Events:
  - Jan. 5 - Jan. 9 Rubio-Pratt to STARBASE
  - Jan. 12 - Jan. 16 Cathcart to STARBASE
  - Jan. 20 - Jan. 23, 27 A. Countryman to STARBASE
  - Jan. 22 5th Grade Ski Trip & End of 2nd Quarter
  - Jan. 29 Grades Due, Report Cards Printed @ 3:00
  - Jan. 30 5th Grade Ski Trip
  - Feb. 2 School Family Assembly (Empathy), 2:35-3:05

- Discipline Report

November & December Resolution Data

Total Resolutions	Total Students	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
87	35	38	40	9
Before Class	**After Class**	**During Passing**	**During Lunch/Recess**	**During Class**
2	1	4	23	29
Classroom	**Cafeteria**	**Hallway/Stairs/Gym**	**Restroom**	**Playground**
30	7	10	2	21

Year to Date Resolutions

Total Resolutions	Total Students	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
207	67	85	96	21
Before Class	**After Class**	**During Passing**	**During Lunch/Recess**	**During Class**
8	4	6	56	79
Classroom	**Cafeteria**	**Hallway/Stairs/Gym**	**Restroom**	**Playground**
80	11	14	6	59

2025-2026 --- Radley Discipline Report

TYPE of REFERRAL

	General Misbehavior	Open Defiance	Fighting or Intent to Harm	Bullying	Bus Discipline	Chronic Minor Behavior	Weapons or Substances	Vandalism	Threat or Intimidation	Theft	Harrassment	Profanity	monthly totals
September	15	13	7	1		5		2	5		6	1	55
October	8	20	15	2	1	7			7		5		65
November	8	10	7			2			8	1	2	1	39
December	3	18	5	2		5			3	1	7	1	45
January													0
February													0
March													0
April													0
May/June													0
total	34	61	34	5	1	19	0	2	23	2	20	3	204

CONSEQUENCES

	Warning	Time out	Work Detail	Conference	Parent Meeting	Bus Suspension	Recess Det.	Lunch Detention	Detention	**ISS	***OSS	Alternative	monthly totals
September	3	5	1	1	1	1	16	4		9	3	11	55
October	2	4		1	3	1	15	2		23	9	5	65
November		1	1		2		7			10	8	10	39
December	1	2		3	2		21	4		3	9		45
January													0
February													0
March													0
April													0
May/June													0
total	6	12	2	5	8	2	59	10	0	45	29	26	204

* Every office discipline referral results in a parent phone call, at a minimum.
** In-School Suspension
*** Out of School Suspension

East Valley Middle School

Success for All Students

EVMS January Board Report

The holiday festivities have kept us very busy here at EVMS. Our choirs and bands were in full swing with concerts and the community Christmas Stroll. Ms. Davis took EVMS art students to community businesses to do some holiday window painting. In all, about 20 businesses had their windows painted for Christmas.

Sports

Boys Basketball is now in the books and it is now time for the girls basketball season. Tryouts happened the week of January 5th with games to follow soon.

Math Adoption Update:

Materials have been vetted. Our next steps are to make sure our standards are vertically aligned K-12.

Behavior: We stayed pretty consistent in the number of referrals this month compared to last month. Keeping in mind the added anxieties of the holidays consuming many of our students, I was anticipating a higher number of referrals. That being said, we are working diligently to continue to improve behaviors by re-teaching the schoolwide procedures and expectations.

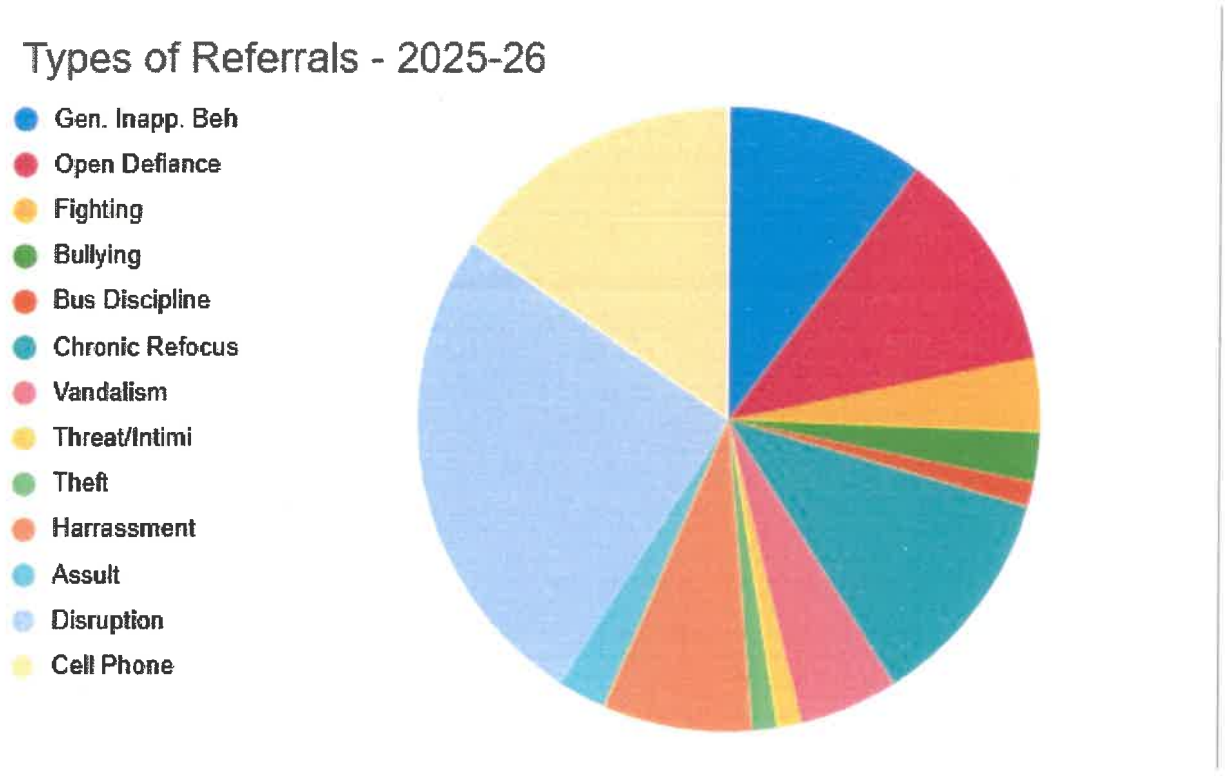
2025-26 EVMS Discipline Report

	Gen. Inapp. Beh	Open Defiance	Fighting	Bullying	Bus Discipline	Chronic Refocus	Weapons	Vandalism
August								
September	11	4	2	2	2	22	1	
October	20	8	8	3	2	14	2	1
November	12	11		2		8	1	
December	9	8	3	2	1	9		4

	Threat/Intimi	Theft	Harassment	Assult	Disruption	Drugs/Tobacco/A	Cell Phone
ugust			1		1		
eptember	2		8		19	3	14
ctober	3	1	6	3	19	4	7
ovember	2		3	2	24		8
ecember	1	1	6	2	20		12

y Grade	Aug.	Sept.	Oct	Nov.	Dec
th Grade		13	15	10	23
th Grade		14	31	31	11
th Grade	2	75	70	44	53

ocation	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
lassroom	1	68	65	58	60
allway	1	8	17	5	6
layground		5	5	3	6
afeteria					1
athroom		2	4	2	
ther Outside		3	6	4	4
us		2	2	1	1



Consequences

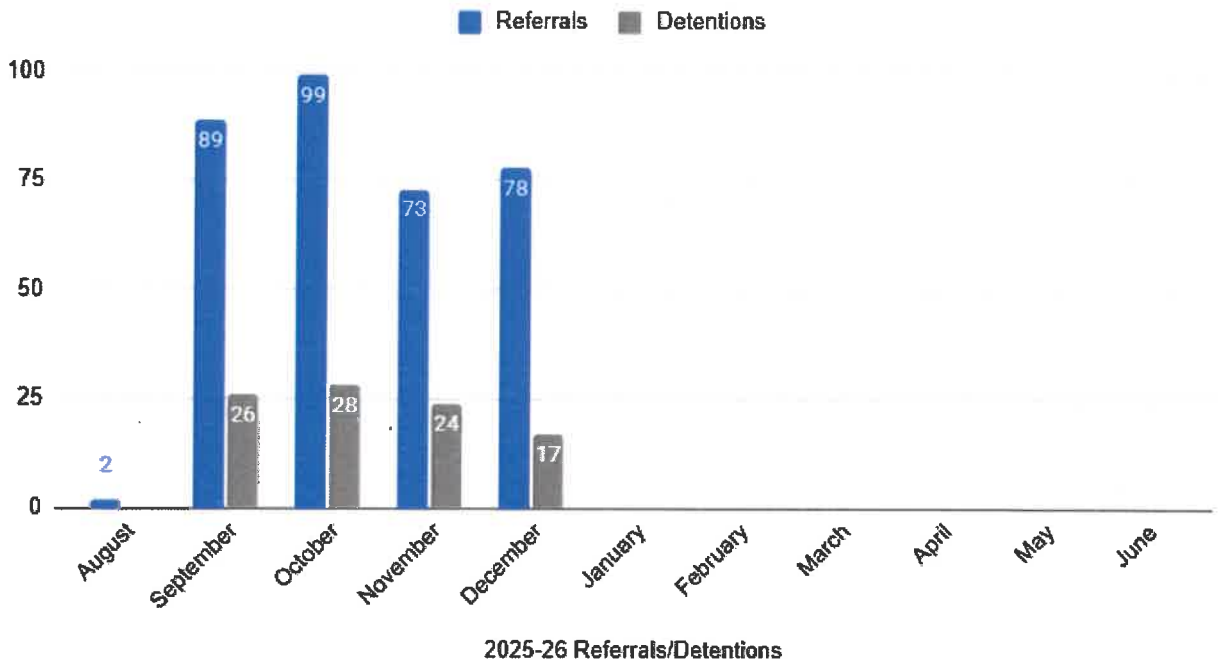
	Warning	Intervention	Work Detail	Other	Parent Meeting	Bus Susp	Lunch Det.
ugust				1			
eptember	20	1		9	2		19
ctober	9	4		12			21
ovember	2	2		19			19
ecember	2	3		13	1		33

	Detention	**ISS	Parent Call	***OSS
ugust			1	
eptember	26		6	17
ctober	28		4	37
ovember	24		3	12
ecember	17		3	14

History

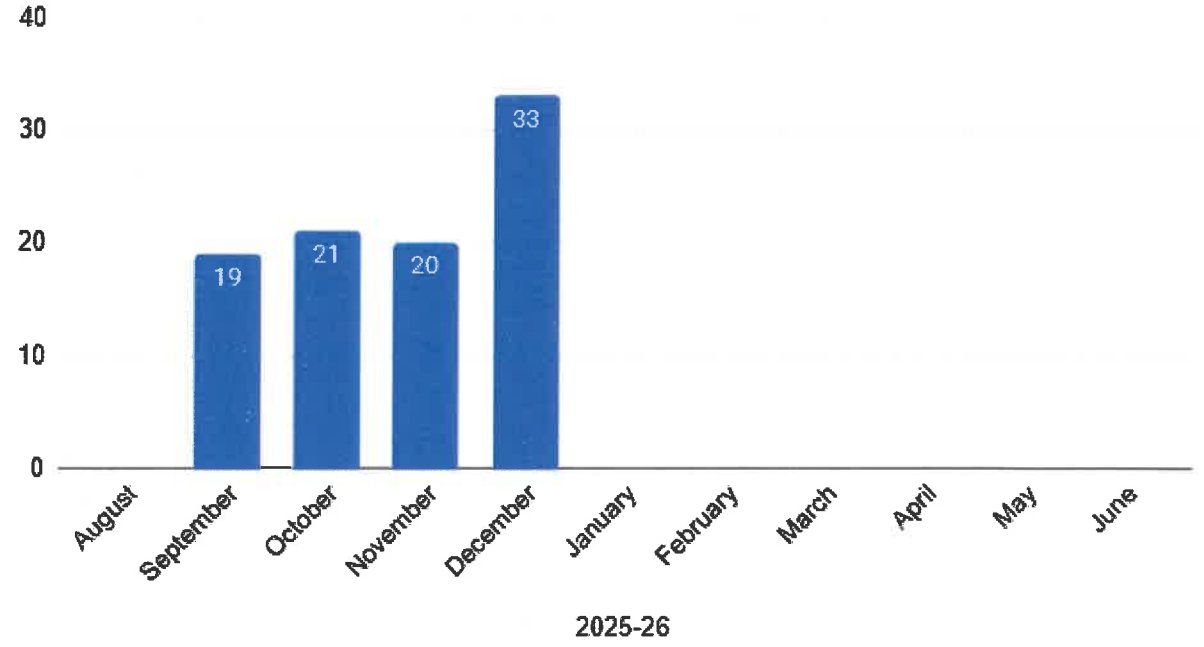
2025-26 Referrals	Referrals	Detentions	2024-2025 Referrals
August	2		
September	89	26	46
October	99	28	89
November	73	24	49
December	78	17	53

2025-26 Referrals

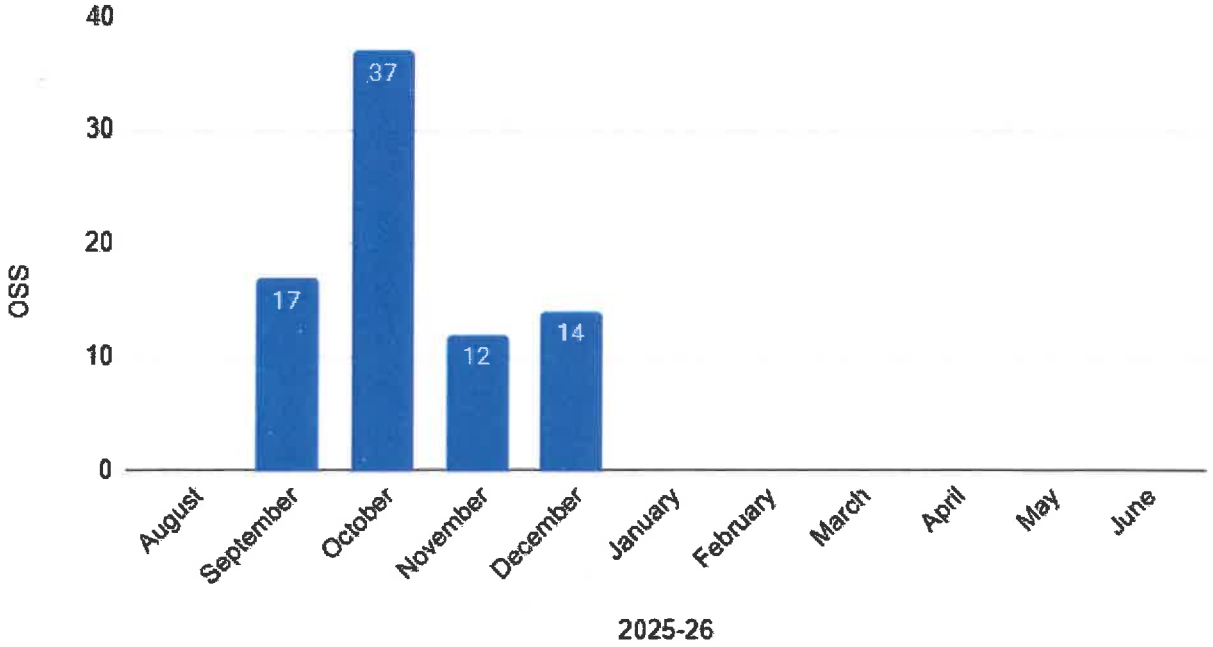


2025-26 Referrals/Detentions

2025-26 Lunch Detention



2025-26 OSS



East Helena High School
"Home of the Vigilantes"
2760 Valley Drive, East Helena, MT 59635
(406) 227-7730 - Phone ■ (406) 227-3520 - Fax

EHHS Principal Report

January 2026

Ms. Smail, Spanish teacher, is now 'National Board Certified'

This means a teacher has proven, through a demanding national evaluation, that they teach at an advanced, highly effective level. It's considered the "gold standard" of teacher professionalism in the U.S.

Speech, Drama, and Debate Meet

In December we hosted over 20 schools for our Meet. We also called on community members to judge the 16 different events. Our team prepares for the State Meet in Corvallis on January 30-31, and next year in January 2027 we will host the Class A State Championships.

Employment Related

Kylie Shults (12) and Hailey Crawford (12) have completed and passed their Certified Nurse Assistant certification.

YAM

Youth Aware of Mental Health Program will happen for our Freshman and Sophomores throughout January and February. It is a Mental Wellness Program aimed specifically at Freshman and Sophomores.

Graduation Day

On the HS Field at 730pm Friday June 5th, 2026. If the weather is not good, it will be in the EHHS Gym.

Calendar Committee

The Committee will meet this month to recommend three options for a Calendar for 2026-27. Staff will vote with the recommended Calendar in front of the Board in February. The 4 Day Calendar Sub Committee will meet to work on a survey for the community, and Admin in the K-8 buildings will look at how it would affect them.

Forensics Class

Using Forensic evidence, the Grinch was convicted of his Christmas crimes in Ms. Holmes Forensics class. I believe he was fined and did not receive any time in the joint. The previous week they visited Montana's only crime lab located in Missoula.

Art

Valley Bank in East Helena put our students Artwork on display in their lobby for the last few weeks. Thanks to Ms. Curtiss and Ms. Bergman for putting this together for our students.

Football

The following students have signed a letter of intent to play Football in College next year.
Cooper Dighans - Montana Tech
Hagen Paddock - Carroll College
Kaden Cohn - Ave Maria

Our team was also voted Sportsmanship team of the Year in Class A by MHSA, sponsored by the Stockman Bank.

Kerpa's Closet

A massive thanks to the Wrestling Program who held a Food Drive at their home meet in December. The food will go to students during the school day who require it.

Shout Outs

To the Custodial Staff and Para's who worked to have the buildings clean for our return.

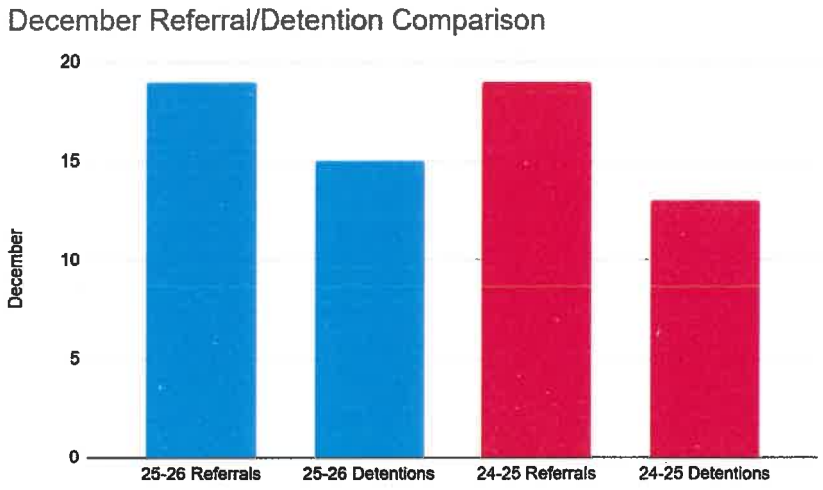
To all our coaches who worked with our students after school finished and before school began.

School Board Report- January 2026
East Helena High School

PBIS Program:

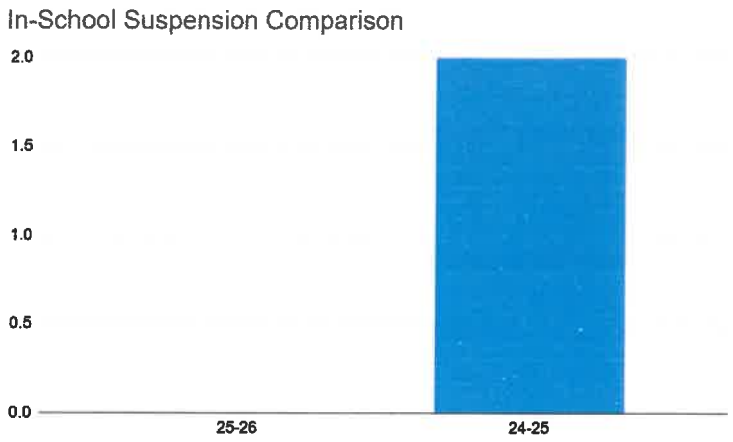
The EHHS discipline report is below which includes a comparison of referrals and detentions from December 2024 to December 2025. There continues to be a large number of our students who are following expectations and showing what it truly means to be a Vigilante! Not only is our discipline data continuing to improve, but our students are representing us well in so many other ways out in the community. We are constantly being complimented about the behavior of our students at job shadows, activities, out in the work force. It is truly a great time to be a Vigilante!

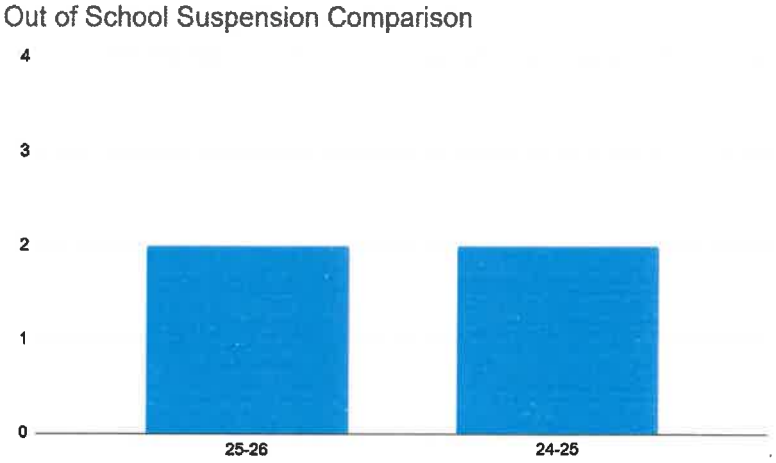
PBIS Tiers	Students	Percentage
Tier 1	655	97.23%
Tier 2	18	2.7%
Tier 3	1	.01%



Discipline Report:

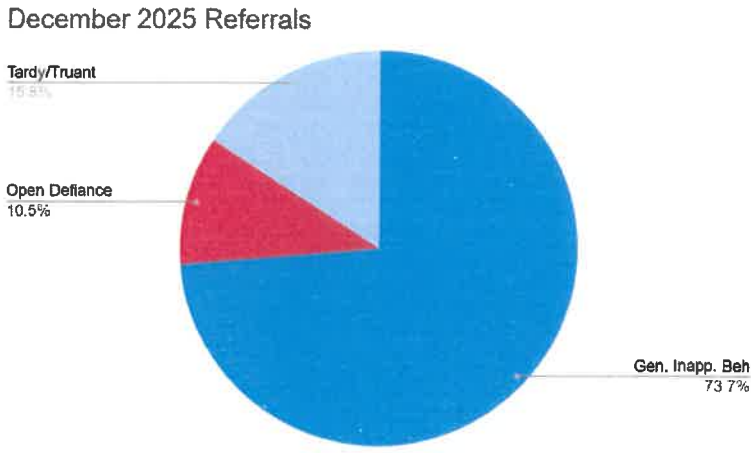
In December, EHHS saw a total of 19 office referrals and 15 detentions. Out of the total office referrals there were 2 Out-Of School Suspensions and 0 In-School Suspensions. The 2024-25 suspension numbers for December were 2 In-School Suspensions and 2 Out-Of School Suspensions.





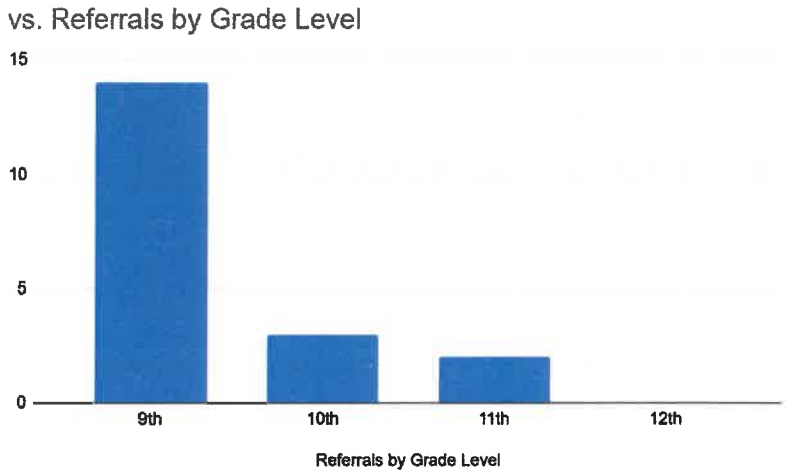
Office Referrals by Category:

Below are the categories for office referrals in the month of December. Very few issues and referrals. Most were in class disruptions and tardies that were handled in the classroom with a detention assigned.



Office Referrals by Grade Level:

Office referrals in December by grade level are shown below. The majority of the referrals are from our freshmen class. As we near the end of the holiday season and the start of a new semester, we will continue to teach and reteach our expectations in our classrooms so all students are on the same page with those expectations.



Driver's Ed Update:

Thanks to some hard work by the district, we have been able to increase the number of offerings we have for Driver's Ed in the East Helena Public Schools. We as a district went from having over 120+ on a waitlist to take a class to below 20 on our list. This is outstanding and something we have been working to offer to our students. As we progress through the summer and into the start of next school year, we will be able to hopefully move all students off a waitlist and have more options for our students. Special shout out to: Mr. Murgel, Mr. Harris, Mr. Pritchard and Deputy Stoltz for their hard work and dedication to this program!

Mrs. Klock
EHHS Vice Principal

East Helena High School

School District No. 9 * P.O. Box 1280 * East Helena, MT. 59635

District Office (406) 227-7700 * EHH School Office (406) 227-7730

"Success For All"

To: East Helena School Board

From: Shaun Murgel

Subject: 101/12/26

Activities:Happy New Year, we have made another year in life and about a half a year in school terms. The year is flying by. We are moving through the winter sports and they are going by quickly. Our boys basketball team has picked up where they left off on a winning note. They are doing very well and currently undefeated. Our girls basketball got a couple of wins during the break and are very young. Wrestling is making moves and really hitting their stride in both boys and girls wrestling. Swimming though small we have some very talented swimmers. Our Speech and Debate team will be the first group to finish their season at the end of this month.

I would also like to let the board know how beneficial it is for me to be able to attend the National Athletic Directors Conference. I was able to go to Tampa December 12-17 and attend some really good sessions. There are so many great sessions and I can't get to them all but I get to as many as I can, Here are a few that I did attend. How to deal with challenging personalities, Stretching every dollar, Rigors of being an AD, Developing and leading a championship coaching staff, Leadership development for student athletes, Communication in a digital age, Best Practices for ongoing evaluations, and Sports Law Year in Review. These are just some that I was able to attend.

Transportation: I would like to say thanks for all that Nick Turner has done for our transportation these last 7 years as our Transportation Supervisor. He has done a great job of getting drivers and keeping those drivers. He has decided it was time to step away from that role and move into a route driver role. I want to welcome Kirk Hedrick as our new Transportation Supervisor. We are very excited to have him fill this role.

Kirk Hedrick khedrick@ehps.k12.mt.us Transportation Supervisor Contact

https://ehhs.ehpsmt.gov/ehhs-athletics-activities/athletics-updates/sports

District Website link:

https://www.ehpsmt.gov/

AD Newsletter link:

https://ehhs.ehpsmt.gov/ehhs-athletics-activities/athletics-updates

Facilities: Not much new we are just extremely busy and our buildings are getting used regularly by a lot of different groups.

Facility Use Schedule Link and my email:

https://www.ehpsmt.gov/district-facilities/district-facility-use/facility-reservation-instructions

smurgel@ehps.k12.mt.us.

Thanks

Shaun Murgel

EHPS Technology Report

Jan. 12th, 2026

To the EHPS Chairman and Board of Trustees,

This month has been generally quiet with the holiday break allowing me to catch up on tickets. Some other items in motion are:

1) Interviewing applicants for the vacant IT Help Desk position. There should be a decision soon.

2) Testing Chromebooks and the network to ensure they are ready for NAEP testing. Each device that will be used for testing was checked per the guidelines I received and passed.

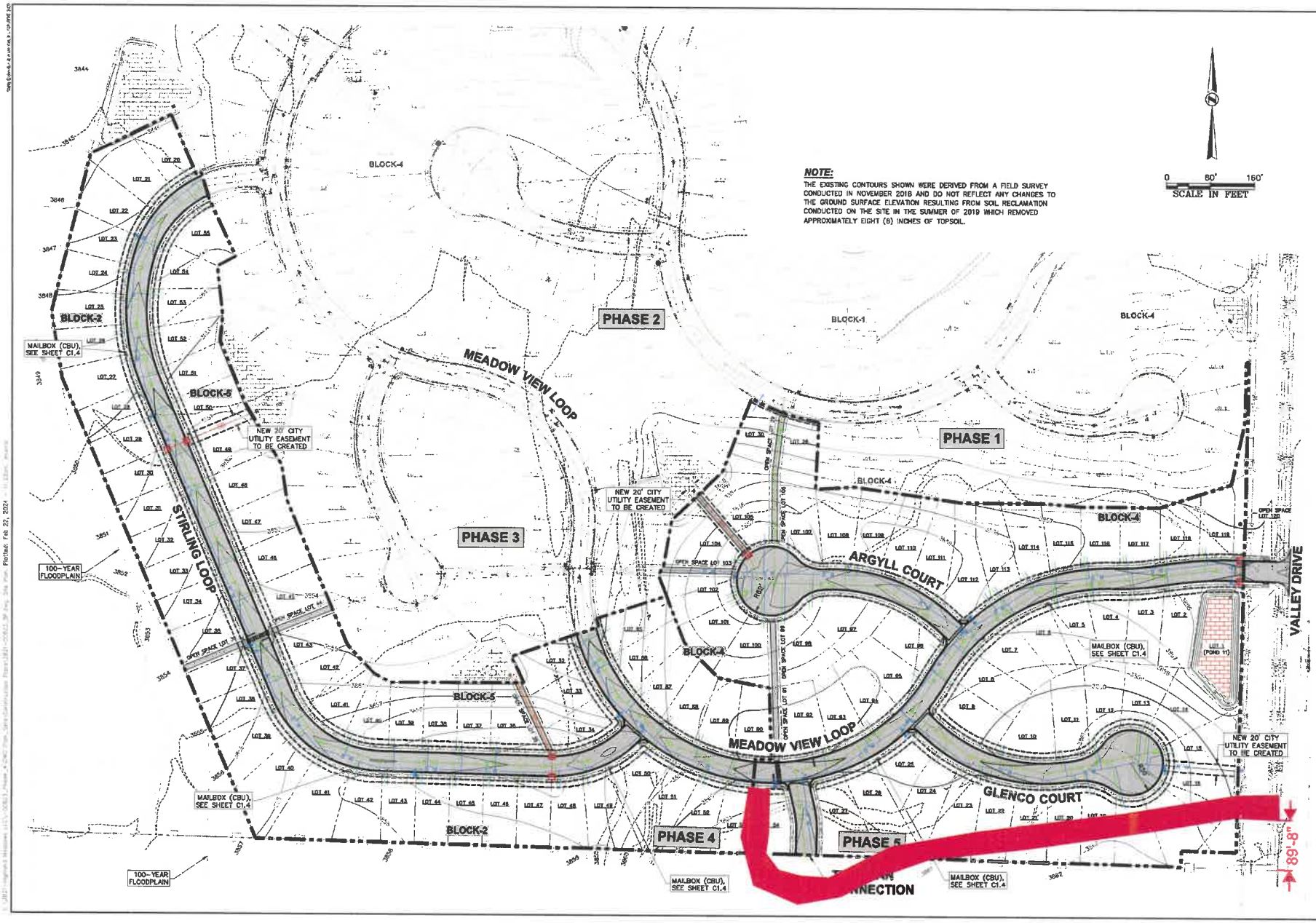
3) Going through the E-Rate process for our next internet service provider contract. Our current contract is up in July and we are in the middle of the process at the moment.

4) Setting up and testing the new bus Wi-Fi. This will be used by students. Kajeet is the company used, their devices are reasonably priced and use a content filter that is compliant with applicable laws. Overall, I am very satisfied with their performance, cost, and ease-of-use.

January and February are big months as they include spring ANB counts. That will start January 16th and conclude in February. Fall ANB was my first experience with this and I learned a lot that will hopefully make this reporting period uneventful and simpler, as the pieces are already in place. That being said, I expect it will take some of my focus away from IT-related duties as it is still a very thorough and time-consuming process.

Thank you for your time,

Eric Power
Technology Coordinator



STAHLY ENGINEERING & ASSOCIATES
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS & SURVEYORS
www.seaeng.com

BILLINGS
Phone:(406)601-4055

BOZEMAN
Phone:(406)522-9628

CODY
Phone:(307)509-5541

3539 CENTENNIAL DR.
HELENA, MT 59601
Phone: (406)-442-8594

ISSUE/REVISION

No.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	EOR	QCR
1	12-18-2023	CITY SUBMITTAL	JDM	CDP
2	2-21-2024	RESPONSE TO CITY COMMENTS	JDM	GDW

MONTANA JEREMY D. MORRIS No. 73254PE LICENSED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER

HIGHLAND MEADOWS SUBDIVISION; PHASE 4&5

HIGHLAND MEADOWS, LLC

OVERALL SITE PLAN

SHEET
C1.1

Memorandum of Understanding

January 12, 2026

Effective immediately, the East Helena School District and the East Helena Education Association agree that teacher Holly Somerfeld is exempt from the limits in the language in article 12.3.4 of the Master Agreement (Sick Leave Donations) due to the extreme nature of medical challenges facing her immediate family and her caregiving requirements. Additionally, the parties mutually agree that all teachers covered by the collective bargaining agreement are exempt from the limit of 32 hours stated in article 12.3.2 in regard to donating to this individual teacher, Holly Somerfeld. The agreement does not adjust any other language of article 12.3 or apply to any other member of the association. This Memorandum of Understanding achieves this mutual intent. This Memorandum does not constitute a change in the Master Agreement or set precedent for future matters. The employee and Association waive their right to grieve article 12.3 as stated in this Memorandum. This MOU expires at the conclusion of the 2025-26 school year.

Signed this 12th day of January, 2026.

_____ _____

President, Kate Johnson Education Association Board Chair, Scott Walter

_____

Employee (Somerfeld, H)

Attest,

_____

District Clerk

© MTSBA/MTSUIP 2023

MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
2026 ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, January 19, 2026
Helena
Billings, Montana

PROPOSALS

1. Proposal to Amend Membership By-Law -Contest Requirements for Non-Member Schools----------1
   Presented by: Lone Peak High School

2. Proposal to Amend Dues By-Law - 6 Player Playoff Profit ----------1-2
   Presented by: Highwood High School

3. Proposal to Amend By-Law for Expedited Hearings to the MHSA Executive Board ----------2-3
   Presented by: MHSA Executive Board

4. Proposal to Amend Eligibility By-Law to allow for Academic Hardship----------3
   Presented by: MHSA Executive Board

5. Proposal to Add Transfer By-Law for Homeschool or non-public schools ----------3
   Presented by: Red Lodge High School

6. Proposal to Amend Awards Rule By-Law – Change Requirements ----------4-5
   Presented by: MHSA Executive Board

7. Proposal to Amend General Penalties By-Laws -Spectators Ejections ----------5
   Presented by: MHSA Executive Board

1. Proposal to Amend Membership By-Law -Contest Requirements for Non-Member Schools

Proposal submitted by Lone peak High School

The following amendments are proposed to By-Law, Article I, Section 1.3 Membership on page 7 and subsequently to Article II, Section 1.5 Association Contest on page 10 of the current MHSA Handbook:

- (Article I, Section 1.3) If a member school wishes to invite a non-accredited school or accept an invitation from the school to participate in a two-school contest **or in an individual sport event, provided all attending member schools consent,** this would not be a violation of this section.

- (Article II, Section 1.5) If a member school wishes to invite a non-accredited school or accept an invitation from the school to participate in a two-school contest **or in an individual sport event, provided all attending member schools consent,** this would not be a violation of this section.

Rationale: This amendment would bring consistency to how this rule affects individual sports, which by nature predominantly have more than two teams participating in an event. It would give schools the freedom to choose for themselves to accept or invite participation with schools in other scholastic associations. Local schools should make the decisions about their own participation in order to take advantage of every competitive opportunity for all student athletes in Montana and in so doing, "cooperate with other organizations or individuals interested in or organized for similar or compatible purposes." (MHSA Articles of Incorporation, Article II.3)

This is a win-win proposition: Schools in favor can engage in competition with non-member schools if they choose. On the flipside, in any case where a member school does not wish to compete alongside a non-member school, or if an event is too full, member schools would have the right to exclude a non-member school.

Specifically in Track and Field there is a need for more meets. The Montana Christian Activities Association has sanctioned Track and Field and is hosting meets in Montana. These would provide more opportunities for schools to find meets for kids.

As is currently the case with two-team contests with a non-member school, this does not have any application or relevance to post season competition, only in season invitational competition.
This amendment would provide practical benefits to student athletes in our state by creating better competitive opportunities for schools in Montana. It would accomplish this by extending an already beneficial exemption to apply consistently to individual sports.

Fiscal Note: N/A

2. Proposal to Amend Dues By-Law - 6 Player Playoff Profit

Proposal submitted by Highwood High School. Highwood School is proposing the deletion of "and Class C six-player" from the "NOTE:" under Article 1, Section 2.3. On behalf of the six-player league we are also proposing the following language:

- Changing "Classes A-B" under Section 2.3 Football: to "Classes A-B-C Six-Player"

Adding the following at the end of the paragraph under Section 2.3 Football:

- In Class C Six-Player, after all approved expenses for the playoff and state championship games within that classification have been satisfied, the reserve pool monies will then be equally divided among all state playoff qualifying teams.

Rationale:
The Class C Six-Player expense model pays only mileage leaving those teams that qualify for the playoffs holding the bag for additional expenses that rarely get covered. In 2023 and 2024, Class C 6-Player turned profits for the first time ever. In response, the classification met at the 2025 Annual Meeting and unanimously supported the notion that any remaining monies following the coverage of allowable expenses go back to the teams that qualify for the playoffs to help them cover a portion of the additional expenses occurred during the playoff season.

Fiscal Note:
The conclusion was to distribute equally among the 16 teams who qualified for the playoffs, not the individual schools, as teams in a co-op can divide input costs into their squads travel. Thus, if a three-team co-operative qualifies for the playoffs, only one school will receive a check and those schools can oversee how it is disbursed to their local districts.

This proposal would change how profits from Class C 6-Player Football are distributed. Rather than all schools in the classification receiving an equal amount, only playoff qualifying teams would receive a distribution of profits

3. Proposal to Amend By-Law for Expedited Hearings to the MHSA Executive Board

The MHSA Executive Board proposes the following amendment to three different areas of the MHSA Handbook:

1 By-Laws, Article I, Section (5) Executive Board on page 9 of the current MHSA Handbook: Amend 5.5
2 By-Laws – Article VII Protests and Appeals; Subsection B: Individuals' Rules Interpretation and Procedure; Section (1) INDIVIDUAL DUE PROCESS - Page 17 of the current MHSA Handbook
3 Rules and Regulations - Section (30)- CONFERENCE CALLS – Page 26 of the current MHSA Handbook

By-Laws - Section (5) EXECUTIVE BOARD –
5.5 Video conferences necessary for the operation of the Montana High School Association shall be conducted in the same manner and with the same restrictions as regular or special meetings. Video conferences will be held only when necessary for immediate action for an interpretation of a rule, for a violation or protest which needs immediate action, or for an appeal on student eligibility. When an expedited hearing is requested prior to the next scheduled meeting, the Executive Board will assess the appellant a ***non-refundable*** ~~$250~~ ***$300*** fee to cover expenses~~. If the decision is overturned by the Executive Board, the fee will be reimbursed.~~ The Board may hold video conferences for any of the above items as well as litigation, legislative, and other emergency matters which could affect the operation of the Association.

ARTICLE VII - Protests and Appeals - Subsection B: Individuals' Rules Interpretation and Procedure
Section (1) INDIVIDUAL DUE PROCESS
1.1 If a student is ruled ineligible under Montana High School Association rules the student affected, or his/her parents or guardian, may appeal the decision to the Executive Board of the Montana High School Association by filing with the Montana High School Association, at its office in Helena, Montana, a written notice of appeal. Appeals shall be acted upon by the MHSA Executive Board at any regular or special meeting, including video conferences. When an expedited hearing is requested prior to the next scheduled meeting, the Executive Board will assess the appellant a ***non-refundable*** ~~$250~~ ***$300*** fee to cover expenses. ~~If the decision is overturned by the Executive Board, the fee will be reimbursed.~~ The hearing will be conducted by the Executive Board pursuant to the procedure set forth in section three (3) below.

Rules and Regulations - Section (30) VIDEO CONFERENCES
Video conferences necessary for the operation of the Montana High School Association shall be conducted in the same manner and with the same restrictions as regular or special meetings. Video conferences will be held only when necessary for immediate action for an interpretation of a rule, for a violation or protest

which needs immediate action, or for an appeal on student eligibility. When an expedited hearing is requested prior to the next scheduled board meeting, the Executive Board will assess the appellant a ***non-refundable*** ~~$250~~ ***$300*** fee to cover expenses. ~~If the decision is overturned by the Executive Board, the fee will be reimbursed.~~ The Board may hold video conferences for any of the above items as well as litigation, legislative, and other emergency matters which could affect the operation of the Association.

Rationale:

The Board changed this policy in 2024 and now the Board is proposing amending this policy. If passed the amount for an expedited hearing will increase $50 ($250 to $300) and the fee will now be non-refundable. The MHSA Executive Board has four scheduled Board meetings every year, which are posted throughout the year. If a school, parent or other individual wants to have an expedited hearing for an appeal, this allows them an opportunity. They can also wait for the next meeting scheduled of the MHSA Executive Board at no additional cost.

Fiscal Note:

There is no fiscal impact to the Membership.

4 Proposal to Add Eligibility By-Law to allow for Academic Hardship

Proposed by the MHSA Executive Board.

The following addition is proposed for By-Law, Article II, Section 2 on page 10-11 of the current MHSA Handbook. This would be added as 2.12 to this by-law

Proposal
Academic ***Hardship Rule: A high school student who, because of circumstances beyond his/her control such as broken home conditions, death of parents or guardian, abandonment or other exceptional circumstances, does not pass the required number of credits the previous semester may be declared eligible by the Executive Director provided a member school administrator petition the Executive Director for a waiver of the academic eligibility rule. If the waiver of the academic eligibility rule is approved by the Executive Director under the foregoing circumstances, he/she shall be eligible provided he/she meets all other eligibility requirements. Appeals on Petitions for Waiver of the Academic Rule under the Academic Hardship Rule shall be acted upon by the MHSA Executive Board at any regular or special meeting, including conference phone calls, provided the school or individual requesting, agrees to pay the cost of the call.***

The official MHSA waiver of the academic eligibility rule form must be used.

Rationale - Allowing the Executive Director to approve waivers to the 2.0 semester credit rule (4 Classes) eligibility rule provides needed flexibility in exceptional circumstances beyond a student's control—such as medical issues, family emergencies, or documented hardships. The MHSA will establish clear criteria for any approved waivers, including mandatory bi-weekly grade checks. If a student is failing any class during these checks, they will become immediately ineligible for the remainder of the semester. This process preserves academic integrity while ensuring fairness and consistency across all member schools.

The Executive Board has also seen a significant increase in appeals related to this rule, further reinforcing the need for a structured waiver option.

There is no fiscal impact to the Membership.

5 Proposal to Amend Transfer By-Law for Homeschool or non-public schools

Proposal submitted by Red Lodge High School. Red Lodge would like to propose a change within the homeschool / non-public eligibility rule.

10.1 ~~Any student, including eighth grade students allowed high school participation, who transfers from one member high school, home school, or non-member school to a member high school is ineligible to participate in a varsity Association Contest for half the number of P.I. days in the current school year of the school to which he/she transfers from the date of enrollment (first day he/she attends classes) in the school to which he/she transfer~~. A student and his/her parents or legal guardians must reside in the attendance area of the school in which he/she is enrolled except for a student enrolling in ninth grade for the first time (see Section (12) Record of Transfer.) This rule applies to a student who transfers after twenty (20) days of enrollment or after he/she participates in an athletic contest while enrolled in grades 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, EXCEPT the following students may be declared eligible:

New 10.1 ***Any student — including eighth graders who are permitted to participate in high school activities — who transfers from one member school, homeschool, or non-member school to another member, homeschool, or non-public school becomes ineligible for varsity competition. The period of ineligibility is equal to half the number of P.I. days in the current school year. This period begins on the student's first day of enrollment and attendance at the new school.*** A student and his/her parents or legal guardians must reside in the attendance area of the school in which he/she is enrolled except for a student enrolling in ninth grade for the first time (see Section (12) Record of Transfer.) This rule applies to a student who transfers after twenty (20) days of enrollment or after he/she participates in an athletic contest while enrolled in grades 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, EXCEPT the following students may be declared eligible:

Rationale:
Public school students who transfer, without a change of residence, to other member schools are ineligible to participate for a number of P.I. Days. This proposal would require public school students who transfer to a non-public or home school to be ineligible for the same number of P.I. Days as the district of residence. This proposal upholds the academic integrity of MHSA eligibility standards by addressing the growing number of students transferring from member schools to homeschooling after failing courses in an effort to regain eligibility. This would ensure that non-public and public student transfer eligibility is determined in a similar manner.

There is no fiscal impact to the Membership.

6 Proposal to Amend Awards Rule By-Law – Change Requirements

Proposed by the MHSA Executive Board. The following amendments are proposed for By-Law, Article II, Section 15.1 on page 15 of the current MHSA Handbook. This change would ensure that training gear, workout clothing, and disposable items provided to student-athletes will not count as non-monetary compensation going forward

Section (15) AWARD RULE
15.1 A student becomes ineligible from the date of the report of the violation to the MHSA if at any time the student accepts or enters into any agreement for the purpose of later accepting any compensation or thing of value for or in recognition of athletic or activities performance, with the exception of the following. A student participant may not accept monetary compensation (cash) in recognition of activities performance, participation and/or achievement. A student may accept non-monetary compensation or items of value solely in recognition of activities ability, participation and/or achievement if the total value of such non-monetary compensation or items of value, including the actual value of any gift certificates (so long as they

are not convertible to cash), discounts, coupons, etc., does not exceed $500 retail value annually (July 1 – June 30).
NOTE: For the purposes of this rule, "non-monetary compensation or items of value" does not include customary awards of a symbolic nature without resale value such as:

a. ***Training apparel for practice and/or workouts provided by the school. These items include but are not limited to the following: practice shirt, practice shorts, spandex, tights and a pair of socks.***
b. The school's athletic letter, medals, ribbons, certificates, plaques, trophies, and other emblems.
c. The award is purchased and presented by the student's parents or when the award is purchased by the student with money earned or secured through his/her own individual efforts.
d. MHSA Sportsmanship Awards

NOTE: For the purposes of this rule, these items which have been a part of the previous awards rule would be included in the "non-monetary compensation or items of value":

~~a. Training apparel for practice and/or workouts provided by the school. These items include but are not limited to the following: practice shirt, practice shorts, spandex, tights and a pair of socks.~~
b. Schools may provide warm-up shirts (e.g. shooting shirts) to be worn on the court/field before a contest.
c. Fundraising activities such as pop hoop shoots, passing accuracy contests etc.
d. Individual miniature trophies for first and second place MHSA state championship events purchased from the Association's awards provider.

Rationale
The MHSA Exeuctive Board is proposing a change to the awards rule from last year. This would move the following from counting toward the $500 annual non-monetary compensation to not counting in the future if passes:

a.training apparel for practice and/or workouts provided by the school. These items include but are not limited to the following: practice shirt, practice shorts, spandex, tights and a pair of socks. to mirror polices that have been adopted in surrounding states.

The Executive Board believes this was misplaced last year and this "throw away" gear should not count toward an athletes $500 annually.

There is no fiscal impact to the Membership.

7. Proposal to Amend General Penalties By-Laws -Spectators Ejections

Proposed by the MHSA Executive Board. The following amendment is proposed to By-Laws, Article VIII, Section (2) on page 19 and 20 of the current MHSA Handbook: Section 2 - General Penalties, Section 2.8.2:

a. Any attendee ejected by mutual agreement of the Official and Administration from a regular season or MHSA tournament contest will incur a minimum ~~three (3) game/event~~ ***two-week*** suspension from that team's games/events and all other MHSA games/events in the interim at any level of competition.

~~If the ejection occurs with fewer than three (3) games/events remaining in the team's season, the suspension will carry over to the beginning of the school's sports season which immediately follows in which there are games that week~~

If the ejection occurs with fewer than two weeks remaining in the team's season, the suspension will carry over to the start of the next sports season in and will begin/continue with that season's first schedule activity.

Rationale:

The membership approved of this new ejection rule last year. The Executive Board believes that changing the penalty from three games to two weeks will create a more consistent policy for fan ejections statewide. This change is intended to serve as a deterrent and encourage improved sportsmanship among spectators.

There is no fiscal impact to the Membership.