

**AGENDA**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**Columbia Falls School District Six**  
**Regular Board Meeting**  
**Monday, January 12, 2026**  
**6:00 p.m.**  
**School District Six Board Room**

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Pledge to the Flag**
3. **Approval of Agenda**
4. **Consent Agenda.**
  1. Approval of December Bills
  2. Approval of Investment Reports
  3. Out of District Approval – SY 25-26  
26-202
5. **Public Participation**
  1. Student Body Representative
6. **Reports**
  1. Written
    - Board Standing Committees –See website for reports
    - Penni Anello – Glacier Gateway – Pg. 1
    - Allison Hawes – Ruder – Pg. 2
    - Ted Miller – Junior High – Pg. 3
    - Josh Gibbs – High School – Pg. 4
    - Michelle Swank – Special Education Director – Pg. 5
  2. Verbal
    - MTSBA Update – Barb Riley
    - Clerk / Business Manager – Dustin Zuffelato – Pgs. 6-7
    - Superintendent – Cory Dziowgo
    - Board Chair – Jill Rocksund
7. **Action/Discussion Items:**
  - a) Discussion and approval of the Columbia Falls School District #6 Advanced Opportunities Grant Procedure Outline. – Pgs. 8-9
  - b) Consideration of out-of-district application 26-205.
8. **Personnel**
  - a. **The superintendent has accepted the following resignations:**

Ellie Green	Track – Junior High – effective end of SY 24-25
Megan Blackman	SpEd Paraeducator – Ruder – High School – December 19, 2025
Bryan McGrath	Track – High School – end of SY 24-25
  - b. **Consideration of the Elementary Hiring Recommendations:**

Sarah Day	Kindergarten Paraeducator – Ruder
Katie Robinson	Girls Basketball Coach– Junior High

**c. Consideration of the following High School / District-wide Hiring Recommendations:**

Zulay Gonzalez	Custodian
Jessie Schaeffer	Non CDL Activity Bus Driver
Ellen Rogers	Food Service Helper/Floater
Melissa Davis	Assistant Softball Coach – High School

**d. Consideration of the following out-of-state travel and Prof. Development Committee recommendations (see attached): - Pg. 10**

**9. Miscellaneous and Future Planning:**

January 15, 2026	Bond Steering Committee – 11:00 PM
January 21, 2026	Finance Committee Meeting – 4:00 PM
January 26, 2026	Work Session – Superintendent Evaluation – 6:00 PM

**10. Executive Session:**

a. Policy 1700 - Uniform complaint decision

**11. Board Reconvenes:**

b. Vote to exit executive session.  
c. Approval of minutes.  
d. Consideration of appeal of the uniform complaint decision.

**12. Adjournment**

**The next Regular Board Meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m.,  
Monday, February 9, 2026, in the School District Six Board Room**

# January Board Report Building/Department

COLUMBIA FALLS

SCHOOL DISTRICT #6

Schools: Glacier Gateway, Ruder Elementary,  
Columbia Falls Junior High, Columbia Falls High School



## Challenging, Diverse, and Supportive Learning Environment

Our focus for this month during our PLC time is to collaboratively review student performance data to identify trends, address learning gaps, and adjust instruction to better meet student needs for the 2nd semester of the 25/26 school year.

We are excited to challenge students in the area of Science through our science classes after school for 6 weeks, that ends with a science fair.

## High Performing Workplace

During the month of December we took our monthly staff meeting to celebrate a cookie bake off with prizes for three categories and a lot of taste testing.

Sometimes we need to take the time to be together. We want each staff member to feel comfortable to communicate, collaborate, and feel like they are an important part of our team. High performing workplace starts with each person performing to their fullest potential.

## Organizational Effectiveness

Our building and district MTSS team is making progress on defining the Tier cut scores, assessments, progress monitoring, tracking tools, and specific curriculums and strategies. Most recently, we have defined the interventions in tier 1, 2, and 3 within behavioral and counseling supports we offer.

As the needs of our students increase and the human resources do not, we have to become masters at systems and effective application.

## Family & Community Engagement

Grades 1-5 performed for their families and community members on December 17th. Our programs were well attended and each group of students performed with proficient skills.

We have outlined a communication plan that focuses on creating connections with families, hoping to strengthen our partnership resulting in reinforcing positive behaviors at school and toward school in general.

## District Facilities Support & Enhance Learning

This winter break marks year 3 in our building. We are starting to see the wear and tear of 500 plus students in the building each day.

Our maintenance has worked on keeping our building maintained with updated paint, protective wall coverings, and replacing damaged flooring.

We finally have our sign fully installed and illuminated at the front of the building.

## Upcoming Events

- Book Bingo, February
- Kindergarten Winter Musical, January 23rd
- WILDCAT PRIDE Assembly, January 21st
- Semester Report Cards, January 23rd

## WILDCAT PRIDE CELEBRATIONS

- Recess Week Academy January 5-9th
- Kindness Week Academy February 9-13th

# Glacier Gateway

# January Board Report Building/Department

## COLUMBIA FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT #6

Schools: Glacier Gateway, Ruder Elementary,  
Columbia Falls Junior High, Columbia Falls High School



Ruder Elementary

### Challenging, Diverse, and Supportive Learning Environment

Ruder recently had the opportunity to host an Amplify CKLA coach who taught grade-level-selected lessons live in classrooms, followed by debriefing, Q&A, and classroom observations of teachers implementing the new curriculum. This professional learning experience also allowed the principal to collaborate with the coach on strategies to support teachers and was a highly valuable opportunity as staff continue to navigate the new curriculum.

### High Performing Workplace

The number of staff participating in the MTSS Feedback and Input Survey increased significantly this year. I am pleased to report that we met the 80% threshold in 6 of 7 categories, compared to 2 of 7 categories the previous year. This growth reflects meaningful progress toward our goal to develop and support an effective, positive workforce through distributed leadership and shared responsibility for results.

### Organizational Effectiveness

Data from the MTSS survey is being used to inform initiatives for the coming year through targeted discussions in grade-level PLCs, supporting goal setting and strengthening communication and information systems to promote effective organizational functioning.

### Family & Community Engagement

Ruder recently welcomed Columbia Falls Chief of Police, Chad Stephens, who spoke with students during our monthly assembly about one of our GROWL expectations—Ownership. Additionally, we enjoyed a wonderful turnout for our holiday musical performances. Each grade level presented its own performance, all of which were excellent and very well attended.

### District Facilities Support & Enhance Learning

Additional exterior lighting was recently installed to better illuminate the crosswalk in the drop-off area and a nearby gate used by students arriving before supervision. This improvement enhances visibility from a dark neighborhood alleyway during low-light mornings and increases overall student safety.

### Upcoming Events

- Science Fair classes begin - January 5th
- Great Brain parent meeting - January 8th
- Early Release for grading - January 23rd

### Dealer's Choice

- We celebrated the 12 Days of Christmas with various staff and student dress up days, finding Rudy our Ruder Elf, and prize drawings which created a great opportunity for students and staff to interact in a fun and festive manner.

# January Board Report

## Building/Department

COLUMBIA FALLS

SCHOOL DISTRICT #6

Schools: Glacier Gateway, Ruder Elementary,  
Columbia Falls Junior High, Columbia Falls High School



### Challenging, Diverse, and Supportive Learning Environment

The Wildcat Way Assembly was an outstanding success, featuring a powerful performance and presentation on unity by the CFHS Drumline. Under the direction of Mr. Forke, the ensemble demonstrated how collaboration and teamwork—core components of our BLUE expectations—drive collective success. The event also served to honor our student leaders for their exceptional contributions to the school community.

### High Performing Workplace

The Wildcat Building Team convened to discuss initiatives aimed at refining our school operations. The committee explored various ideas for the Student Store to better serve our students, while also discussing the continued utility of midterm grades. Furthermore, the team emphasized consistency in the enforcement of dress code and cell phone policies to maintain an equitable and focused environment. These collaborative discussions are vital to our success.

### Organizational Effectiveness

Our recent Wildcat Huddle focused on the importance of consistent expectations and enforcement across common areas. Faculty engaged in productive dialogue regarding hallway transitions and recess periods, identifying ways to align our supervisory and proactive approaches. For example, adding an active outlet for students to throw snowballs in a structured way was discussed.

### Family & Community Engagement

This year's winter band and choir concerts were a resounding success, filling the cafeteria with a great audience and wonderful sense of community. It was truly heartening to see the events so well attended to support our talented student musicians. Both concerts were incredibly enjoyable, offering a perfect blend of seasonal spirit and high-energy performances. The concerts showcased our students' immense hard work and dedication.

### District Facilities Support & Enhance Learning

To further our commitment to a positive learning environment, we are pleased to announce that specialized vape detectors have been ordered for our campus. These tools are a proactive step toward ensuring our facilities remain a healthy, safe, and focused space for all students to succeed. In addition, a new digital message board has been ordered to enhance our facility, better inform our school community about events, student achievements, and important updates.

### Upcoming Events

- Guitar Concert Monday, Jan. 12th
- Girls Basketball Games start Thursday, Jan. 15th
- Early Out Friday, Jan. 23rd
- 6th Grade Activity Night Friday, Jan. 23rd

### Wildcat Way

- We held a winter assembly, highlighted by engaging student competitions & entertaining staff skits. This was a memorable opportunity for staff & students to build our community.

Junior High

# January Board Report Building/Department

COLUMBIA FALLS

## SCHOOL DISTRICT #6

Schools: Glacier Gateway, Ruder Elementary,  
Columbia Falls Junior High, Columbia Falls High School



### Challenging, Diverse, and Supportive Learning Environment

Our High School MTSS team is committed to our overarching goal of increasing student attendance this year by introducing monthly attendance incentives for the remainder of the school year. For January, we are launching a class competition to see which group can achieve the best attendance record. The winning class will be rewarded with ice cream bars at lunch!

### High Performing Workplace

Our Bleed Blue Ticket program continues to celebrate students for Character, Focus, Honor, and Strength (CFHS). As of December 19, a remarkable 79% of staff have participated, awarding over 300 tickets! These nominations enter students into our bi-weekly drawings for local gift cards, highlighting the excellence and positive spirit within our school.

### Organizational Effectiveness

The MTSS team at Columbia Falls High School is refining the criteria for our three tiers of support: Benchmark, Strategic, and Intensive. We are aligning these tiers with school-wide data goals (80/15/5%) to ensure our resources are accurately matched to student needs. This update helps us provide the right level of targeted support to help every student thrive.

### Family & Community Engagement

Holiday music filled the air as our choir and band departments performed throughout the school and community. Highlights included the choir's visits to the Veterans home and local schools, and a fantastic night of jazz by the band at Cedar Creek Lodge. It was a wonderful way to celebrate our students' talents and connect with our community.

### District Facilities Support & Enhance Learning

A huge thank you to our hardworking janitorial staff for their dedication over the winter break! Their efforts kept our facilities in top shape, with major projects including resurfacing the gym floor and stripping and waxing the art annex floor. Their focus on general building upkeep ensures a clean and welcoming environment as we return for the new year!

### Upcoming Events

Jan. 20-23 - Finals  
Feb. 3 - Reality Fair  
Feb. 23-27 - Bleed Blue Week  
Feb. 26 - CFHS Job Fair

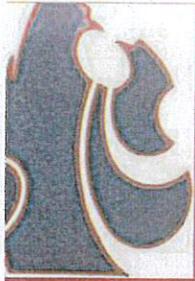
Congratulations to our Winter Royalty! Mr. and Mrs. Bowman served as King and Queen of the Night of Lights Parade, with students Christian and Molly as Prince and Princess. It was a wonderful celebration for our community!

High School  
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# January Board Report Building/Department

## COLUMBIA FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT #6

Schools: Glacier Gateway, Ruder Elementary,  
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### Challenging, Diverse, and Supportive Learning Environment

To address increasing behavioral management needs and enhance staff support, the SpEd Department has engaged in ongoing collaboration with an additional specialist, Shawna Heiser, BCBA, along with additional professional development training to help continue to implement effective behavioral interventions.

### High Performing Workplace

SD6 paraeducators and several teachers recently attended a professional development training focused on Explicit Instruction and classroom implementation strategies, with a special guest speaker, Genevieve Thomas. The training provided staff with practical, actionable strategies to support instructional practices. A follow-up training is scheduled for February.

### Organizational Effectiveness

The Office of Public Instruction provided training on best practices for writing Transition IEPs to ensure IDEA compliance. The training focused on required transition components, alignment of assessments, goals, and services, and strengthening student-centered planning to support successful postsecondary outcomes.

### Family & Community Engagement

In collaboration with Evergreen SD50, students who attend the Crossroads Program- a behavioral program serving students with social and emotional needs, students recently participated in a Christmas concert. This collaboration provided an inclusive performance opportunity and fostered positive social connections among participating students.

### District Facilities Support & Enhance Learning

A special thank you is extended to Chloe Tozzi, RN, and Brittney Hulett, RN, for providing CPR training to District staff this past fall. Their expertise and commitment ensured staff are prepared to respond effectively in emergency situations, supporting the ongoing safety and well-being of both students and staff.

### Upcoming Events

- Safety Care Review: January 28th at 2:45pm
- Explicit Instruction Session 2: February 4th at 2:00pm

### Staff Shootouts

Individual staff members have completed Non-CDL training requirements, allowing them to transport students for activities such as job shadows and Special Olympics. Thank you to those staff members for completing this training to support student access to these opportunities.

SPED Dept  
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**TO:** Board of Trustees  
**FROM:** Dustin Zuffelato, Business Manager/Clerk  
**DATE:** January 6, 2026  
**RE:** **Business Office Report for the January 12, 2026 Regular Meeting**

### **Annual School Election**

Trustee Election – Three (3) Elementary District Trustee positions expire in May (Riley, Upton, and Hill). **Deadline to file for candidacy is Monday February 9, 2026.**

General Fund Operating Levy Election – As detailed below, the Finance Committee is working on developing a recommendation regarding running an operating levy in May 2026. **The deadline to set this levy is February 24, 2026.**

### **Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee conducted a meeting December 22, 2025. A follow-up meeting is scheduled January 21, 2026. The Committee discussed not utilizing the levy authority related to high-cost housing as too many unknowns concerning the use of funds and the ongoing levy authority. Additionally, garnering community support to raise taxes to support District staff with the issue of high-cost housing was not deemed appropriate. The Committee reviewed the federal funding, specifically the Title I program in which an additional \$238k was appropriated in FY26. The Committee discussed the most effective use of these (additional) funds is to retain flexibility to mitigate issues if the (newly appropriated) federal funds were no longer available in the future. Looking forward to the next Committee meeting, the Committee will review options for the Elementary District depending on use of the federal funding for ongoing funding of staff FTE. The Committee will review budget reduction strategies in lieu of additional voted levy authority. The Committee will review the impact of the Charter School (Columbia Falls Trades Academy) on the FY 2027 High School General Fund.

### **E-Rate Program**

USAC recently announced that the 471 application filing deadline is April 1, 2026. This is later than normal and provides more time to complete the application for funding.

Category 1 – Internet Service. Currently receive \$40,128 (80%) discount of the annual recurring service expense of our wide area network – Zipfly Fiber. Currently receive \$21,736 (80%) discount off our internet service through Montana Digital. The District will need to re-bid for these services. No service/speed changes are anticipated, although the District is working to get discounted service to the Canyon Elementary Site through this Erate bidding process.

Category 2 – Managed Broadband Services. Currently receive \$33,600 (80% discount) off our service contract with Pinecove. This contract supports management of our network infrastructure. The District will consider continuing this service contract or managing with our in-house staff and capabilities.

### **2025 Audit**

Most of the requested documentation has been provided to the auditors. I recently submitted the Statement of Federal Expenditures (SEFA) and have responded to a few inquiries regarding the federal grants (single audit). I have yet to receive word as to the date(s) of the onsite field review. The District is also waiting for the actuarial valuation for the other post-employment benefits for our GASB 75 reporting. Please recall, the deadline for the Audit Report to be completed is March 31, 2026.

## Facilities

Ruder Elementary – Flooring to align to the use of two SPED classrooms was replaced over Christmas break.

High School – Gym Floor was reconditioned over Christmas Break. Heat in Library upgraded and functional. Still waiting on getting the elevator repaired.

Junior High - Gym Floor was reconditioned over Christmas Break. A new reader board was recently ordered.

Glacier Gateway – storage closets constructed for custodial equipment.

## Monthly Insurance Claim Summary

### Paid Claims December 2025

Medical Plan Paid Claims	\$ 292,775
Monthly medical expected claims based on an enrollment of 229 Plan participants (63 singles/166 families):	\$ 240,450
Plan claim liability as a percentage of expected claims:	<b>121.76 %</b>

### Paid Claim summary plan year-to-date (July, 2025 through December, 2025):

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Expected</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Medical Plan Paid Claims	\$ 1,698,003	\$ 1,416,809	<b>120 %</b>
Aggregating Deductible	\$ 100,000		
Specific Stop Loss	\$ 17,584		

# Procedure Outline: Columbia Falls School District #6 Advanced Opportunities Grant (MTAO)

## I. Definition of an Advanced Opportunity

An Advanced Opportunity is defined as an educational experience or resource that **advances the pupil's opportunity for postsecondary career and educational success**. The grant program generally serves students in **grades 6-12**. The core focus of these opportunities must be student-led learning that aligns with a student's passions, interests, strengths, needs, and culture, supporting their post-secondary pathways.

The ultimate aim is to ensure that all students have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary **to be productive citizens in a changing and diverse world**. By removing the financial costs associated with credentials, WBL, and college credit, the grant acts as a catalyst, making advanced, student-driven learning accessible to every pupil, similar to how a bridge removes the barrier of a river, connecting students directly to their desired post-secondary destination.

### High School (Grades 9-12) Examples:

- Dual credit enrollment and tuition at postsecondary institutions.
- Earning industry-recognized credentials (IRCs) such as OSHA-10, CNA, or Welding certifications.
- Participating in Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities, including pre-apprenticeships and internships.
- Taking postsecondary advancement exams (e.g. AP, IB, ACT, SAT, CLEP).

### Elementary/Middle School (Grades 6-8) Examples:

- Costs related to student-selected enrichment classes, such as robotics, coding, or hydroponics.
- Expenses for band or choir participation, including instruments, music, or travel.
- Funding for passion project supplies and materials identified by students.
- Fees for CTSO (Career and Technical Student Organization) memberships or experiences.
- Costs for summer camps (e.g. arts, medical, career exploration).
- Costs for student-led field trips.

## II. Financial Parameters for Appropriate Use (75%/25% Split)

The district must adhere to a mandatory split for all MTAO funds received totaling \$79,983.62  
**\$21,318.46** for Elementary/Middle School and **\$58,665.16** for High School

Category	Statutory Requirement	SD6 Measurable Objective	Examples of Use
<b>75% Funds (Minimum)</b>	Must be dedicated strictly to reducing <b>out-of-pocket costs</b> for qualifying pupils and families.	SD6 targets <b>100%</b> funding of eligible student requests for out-of-pocket cost reimbursement.	Dual credit tuition, AP/IB exam fees, CTE certification fees, tools/supplies for WBL, summer enrichment camp fees, necessary materials to maximize benefit.
<b>25% Funds (Maximum)</b>	Discretionary use for the <b>district expansion</b> of opportunities.	Used to enhance individualized pathways, increase WBL, and ensure sustainability.	Staffing for CTE coordination, developing new online courses, transportation for career tours, career-readiness curriculum materials, or paying for the costs of employing an advanced opportunity facilitator.

## Procedure Outline: Columbia Falls School District #6 Advanced Opportunities Grant (MTAO)

### III. Financial Contributions and Cost Offsets (Reducing Family Costs)

The grant's primary role is to serve as a **No-Cost Guarantee** by explicitly removing financial barriers for qualified advanced learning activities, leading to an estimated annual family savings of **\$25,000+** in Year 1 (FY26).

Funds that must be used to offset or replace family costs (the 75% minimum) include:

1. **Academic/Postsecondary Exam Fees:** Coverage for fees associated with the ACT, SAT, CLEP, International Baccalaureate, and Advanced Placement exams.
2. **Postsecondary Enrollment Costs:** Payment of dual credit tuition at any institution under the authority of the Board of Regents.
3. **Career Training Expenses:** Payment of exam and other fees required for **industry-recognized credentials or licenses**.
4. **Work-Based Learning (WBL) Costs:** Coverage for fees charged by a business, any out-of-pocket costs required for WBL, and the cost of workers' compensation insurance for the student during WBL. This includes covering essential materials like tools, supplies, and safety gear (PPE) for students entering local trade mentorships.
5. **Enrichment and Custom Costs:** Funding the costs of participation in out-of-school enrichment activities that advance career and educational success, as well as covering any cost identified as necessary to maximize the benefit of an opportunity for a qualifying pupil.

### IV. Guidelines and Alignment with SD6 Strategic Plan and Portrait of a Learner

The MTAO grant implementation procedures are explicitly designed to support the SD6 Strategic Plan goals, particularly those related to developing a well-rounded education, collaborative community partnerships, and preparing students to be productive citizens.

SD6 Strategic Goal/Focus	Corresponding AO Grant Strategy & Guideline	Measurement (FY28 Long-Term Goal)
Well-Rounded Education/Curriculum & Instruction	<b>Strategy A: Foster Individualized Pathways (Grades 6-12).</b> Use counseling resources to help students "map" their interests to specific Advanced Opportunities (e.g., CodeMontana, Dual-Credit IT).	<b>100%</b> of students (Grades 6-12) will have a documented "Career Interest Profile" or "Post-Secondary Plan".
Family & Community Engagement	<b>Strategy B: Embed Community-Based &amp; Experiential Learning.</b> Leverage the grant's discretionary (25%) portion to offset <b>transportation costs</b> for students traveling to job sites for WBL. Host annual " <b>Pathways Nights</b> " to educate families on applying for funds.	<b>50+ Students</b> will participate in off-campus internships, pre-apprenticeships, or job shadowing (e.g., Trades Academy), supported by <b>20 Partners</b> .
Equality of Opportunity/Equity	<b>Strategy C: Ensure Equality of Educational Opportunity.</b> Explicitly ensure the application process for funds is <b>simple, non-stigmatizing, and universally available</b> . Prioritize funding to ensure students with disabilities (via IEP teams) have equal access.	Participation rate of students qualifying for Free/Reduced Lunch* in Advanced Opportunity programs will be <b>proportional to enrollment</b> .
Core Academic-Vocational Courses	Provide funding to remove financial barriers related to earning college credits and industry credentials, such as covering costs for necessary trade tools and dual-enrollment course fees.	Students will earn <b>250+</b> dual-enrollment credits and <b>100+</b> Industry-Recognized Credentials annually.

\*or alternative measure depending on the district involvement of the Community Eligibility Program (CEP)

**For December Review (\$11,465 committed, \$38,535 remaining, 2/3=\$33,333)**

**Out of State Approval Needed**

Jenny Lovering - **Northwest Council for Computer Education Annual Conference**,  
February 25-27, Seattle WA. \$1,300

Alia Hanson - **Northwest Council for Computer Education Annual Conference**,  
February 25-27, Seattle WA. \$1,921

Jeanette Price - **French for All Institute**, June 22-26, Austin TX \$1,190

Jenny Martin - **Spanish Lessons in Columbia, Summer 2026**, Columbia \$2,000

**In-State Requests – Approval Not Needed**

Alicia Hakes - **Montana Council of Exceptional Children**, April 8-9, Bozeman MT  
\$1090

Callie Moore - **Montana Council of Exceptional Children**, April 8-9, Bozeman MT  
\$1090

Alex George - **Montana Council of Exceptional Children**, April 8-9, Bozeman MT  
\$1090

Amy Caudill - **Montana Council of Exceptional Children**, April 8-9, Bozeman MT  
\$1,090

Derek Andrews - **Family and Consumer Science State Conference**, April 15-17,  
Dillon MT \$764

**\$9,614 requested**