

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**  
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
3 **HELD JANUARY 12, 2026**  
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 4<sup>th</sup> Street South, on the 12<sup>th</sup> Day  
7 of January 2026.

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

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

14  
15 **Trustees Present:** Gordon Johnson  
16 Kim Skornogoski  
17 Bill Bronson  
18 Craig Duff  
19 Amie Thompson  
20 Paige Turoski

21  
22 **Trustee Absent:** Marlee Sunchild - 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; Heather Spurzem, Director of Human  
27 Resources; and Stephanie Becker, Director of the Great Falls Public Schools  
28 Foundation.

29  
30 Also present was Tom Cubbage, Great Falls Education Association President.

31  
32 The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Trustee Duff.

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34  
35 **ADOPT AGENDA**

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37 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to adopt  
38 the agenda as presented.

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40  
41 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

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

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46 **A. Minutes of the December 29, 2025 Special Board Meeting** – The Board approved  
47 the minutes of the December 29, 2025 Special Board Meeting as presented.  
48

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

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3 **C. Good Apple Awards** - The Board approved the nominations of Good Apple Awards  
4 for Isaac Hann, Custodian, Riverview Elementary School; Morgan Yelvington,  
5 Carpenter, Buildings and Grounds; and Devon Breuer, Teacher, Mountain View  
6 Elementary School.

7  
8 **D. Great Falls High School Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) State  
9 Career Development Conference Travel Request** – The Board approved the Great  
10 Falls High School DECA Club travel to the State Career Development Conference in  
11 Missoula, Montana on February 1-3, 2026.

12  
13 **E. Great Falls High School (GFHS) Business Professionals of America (BPA)  
14 Travel Request to the State Leadership Conference** – The Board approved travel for  
15 GFHS BPA to attend the State BPA Leadership Conference being held in Billings, MT  
16 on March 8-10, 2026.

17  
18 **F. Great Falls High School Chamber Orchestra Tour Travel Request to Seattle,  
19 Washington** – The Board approved the Great Falls High School Chamber Orchestra  
20 tour to Seattle, Washington March 18-21, 2026.

21  
22 **G. Great Falls High School (GFHS) Delphian Choir Travel Request to Tacoma,  
23 Washington** – The Board approved the GFHS Delphian Choir travel request to perform  
24 at the American Choral Directors Association’s biennial conference in Tacoma,  
25 Washington on March 4-7, 2026.

26  
27 **H. Donation of Two Freezers for Great Falls Public Schools Food Pantries** – The  
28 Board approved to accept the donation of two (2) freezers from Candice English to  
29 Great Falls High School and Longfellow Elementary School for use in their school food  
30 pantries.

31  
32 **I. Donation of Thirty-Two (32) Pallets of Paper** – The Board approved to accept the  
33 donation of thirty-two (32) pallets of assorted paper from PrintingCenter USA to Great  
34 Falls Public Schools.

35  
36 **J. Donation to Purchase New Lunch Cafeteria Tables for Meadow Lark Elementary  
37 School** – The Board approved to accept the donation of \$32,906.74 from Jim and  
38 Debbie Filipowicz to purchase cafeteria tables for Meadow Lark Elementary School.

39  
40 **K. Donation to Purchase New Playground Equipment for West Elementary School**  
41 – The Board approved to accept the donation of \$217,614.47 from Roger Duncan and  
42 Pam Nommensen to purchase new playground equipment at West Elementary School.

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45 **COMMUNICATION**

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47 **A. Superintendent Report**

1 Superintendent Hoyer introduced Great Falls Public Schools (GFPS) Foundation  
2 Director, Stephanie Becker, who explained that the GFPS Foundation annual report  
3 was revised with a new format, including an impact statement and redesigned grant  
4 features, with reduced mailings to donors contributing \$250 or more. Superintendent  
5 Hoyer then continued her report by highlighting several other initiatives and directives.  
6 Indigenous Education activities included welcoming an apprentice carver who worked  
7 with students on ceremonial paddles. She thanked the safety committee for progress on  
8 a draft interlocal agreement with the Cascade County Sheriff's Office for a Reserve  
9 School Resource Officer (SRO) program and recognized School Resource Officers  
10 during Law Enforcement Appreciation Day on January 9, 2026. Appreciation was  
11 extended to numerous community donors for equipment, supplies, and financial  
12 contributions in support of Great Falls Public Schools. January was noted as National  
13 School Board Appreciation Month, and the Board mission statement was read. Special  
14 thanks were extended to the Board of Trustees for their advocacy and support of Great  
15 Falls Public Schools, noting that they sacrifice many hours of their time to the School  
16 District, all on a volunteer basis. Superintendent Hoyer provided an update on the  
17 Innovative Tax Credit, with \$688,000 contributed to Fiscal Year 2026 toward program-  
18 specific student supports. The Data for the Day focused on the district's poverty index,  
19 which has increased to 66.95%, outlining factors affecting Title I eligibility, and  
20 emphasizing the ongoing efforts of staff and community partners to support students as  
21 needs grow.

22  
23 **B. Audience Communication – None.**  
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26 **ACTION ITEMS**  
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28 **A. E-Rate Request for Proposals (RFP) and Bids for Firewall Support and District**  
29 **Routers** – Director of Information Technology, Jeff Williams, discussed the government-  
30 funded Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support Program, commonly known as  
31 the E-Rate program, that helps ensure schools and libraries can obtain  
32 telecommunications and internet access at affordable rates to meet the needs of today's  
33 world of interactive, individualized digital learning. Currently, the District qualifies for an  
34 80% discount on eligible equipment and services purchased upon application approval  
35 and availability of funding. The discount is calculated each year and is dependent on the  
36 number of students eligible for free or reduced lunch through the National School Lunch  
37 Program (NSLP). The District will request bids and secure funding for extending the  
38 current Firewall licensing and support as well as upgrades of many District routers. The  
39 E-rate program requires applicants to follow a formal process that creates open and fair  
40 competitive bidding.

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42 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the  
43 process and timeline presented for the creation of, request for, and evaluation of  
44 submitted competitive bids for the E-Rate Request for Proposals.  
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47 **ACTION: OTHER**  
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1 There were no items removed from the Consent Agenda to discuss.  
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#### 4 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

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6 **A. 2024-2025 Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Credit Report –** Secondary  
7 Schools Curriculum Director Beckie Frisbee reviewed enrollment numbers for both AP  
8 and Dual Credit courses. She discussed the enrollment trends during the past five  
9 years and explained the differences between AP courses and Dual Credit courses.  
10 Enrollment in dual credit courses has remained relatively consistent and has increased  
11 since COVID, reflecting expanded opportunities and student participation. Slightly lower  
12 participation in 2024 was attributed to scheduling conflicts. Most AP courses are offered  
13 at both Charles M. Russell and Great Falls High Schools, with testing details, costs, and  
14 participation rates reviewed. A brief discussion addressed college acceptance of dual  
15 credit and AP coursework, noting that while acceptance policies vary by institution,  
16 students continue to benefit academically from these courses regardless of credit  
17 awarded.  
18

19 **B. Review of the 2026 Montana High School Association (MHSA) Proposals to be**  
20 **Voted on at the Annual Meeting –** Great Falls Public Schools Athletic Director, Mike  
21 Henneberg, reviewed seven different proposals that will be voted upon at the Montana  
22 High School Association (MHSA) annual meeting taking place on January 19, 2026, in  
23 Helena, Montana. Mr. Henneberg explained how he and voting members Geoffry  
24 Habel, Principal at Great Falls High School, and Jamie McGraw, Principal at Charles M.  
25 Russell High School intend to vote on each of the proposals as they represent Great  
26 Falls Public Schools at the meeting. Mr. Henneberg will provide an update to the Board  
27 upon his return on the voting outcome of each of the proposals.  
28

29 **C. Superintendent Evaluation Report –** Superintendent Evaluation Committee  
30 Chairperson Amie Thompson stated that the public evaluation survey will open and be  
31 accessible via a link on the District website, with additional opportunities for public input  
32 available through written comments or in-person attendance at a future Board meeting.  
33 Board members will receive an email from Trustee Thompson with their evaluation link  
34 and the Superintendent's self-evaluation. The evaluation is based on four standards  
35 aligned with the District's Strategic Plan. Board evaluations are due by January 30, with  
36 a follow-up discussion with the Superintendent scheduled for a February Board  
37 meeting.  
38

39 **D. First Reading of Revised Board Policies 2600 – *Work Experience/Internship***  
40 ***Program; 3655 – Student Safety; 5122 – Fingerprints and Criminal Background***  
41 ***Investigations; and 5122P – Federal Background Checks, Fingerprints, and***  
42 ***Information Handling Procedure*** - Superintendent Hoyer reviewed the recommended  
43 language revisions from the Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA) and the  
44 Board Policy Committee to each of the revised Board policies listed. The language  
45 changes proposed bring policies into alignment with legislative directives and/or clarifies  
46 confusing language. She asked if anyone had questions or concerns regarding any of  
47 the policy revisions to contact her prior to the next regular Board meeting.  
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1 **E. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments**

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3 Trustee Duff thanked Director Stephanie Becker and the GFPS Foundation for their  
4 continued work and support.

5 Trustee Skornogoski reported completing a half-day substitute assignment at the Early  
6 Learning Center, noting it was her favorite experience since 2017. She stated the  
7 substitute experience provides valuable insight into student needs. She also shared  
8 she again serves on the Calendar Committee and will update the community when input  
9 opportunities are available.

10 Trustee Thompson shared she also completed a half-day substitute assignment at the  
11 CORE School at Morningside Elementary School on December 19<sup>th</sup>. She served as a  
12 door monitor for concerts and commented that it was an easy assignment, which was  
13 met with laughter.

14 Trustee Bronson noted the Insurance Committee continues to review and evaluate  
15 information related to the health care trust in order to make a final decision.

16 Trustee Turoski reported that the Budget Committee continues to meet and announced  
17 a Town Hall planned for March, encouraging community attendance.

18 Chairperson Johnson shared attendance at a KEY meeting with strong participation,  
19 emphasizing the group’s commitment to education and its outreach to legislators and  
20 the community, and expressed appreciation to those involved.

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23 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

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25 Chairperson Johnson highlighted upcoming events, including a Board Policy Committee  
26 meeting on January 16, 2026 and the next regular Board meeting that will be held on  
27 January 26, 2026.

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30 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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32 With no further comments or items to be discussed, motion by Chairperson Johnson  
33 and seconded by Trustee Skornogoski to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of  
34 Trustees at 6:30 p.m.

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Gordon Johnson, Chairperson

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42 Luke Diekhans, Clerk  
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