

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
EAST HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 9**

Call to Order

Trustees of School District No. 9 held a meeting on Monday, January 12, 2026 at Radley Elementary School. Chairman Walter called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.

In Attendance:

Chairman Scott Walter, Vice-Chair Tyrel Murfitt, Trustees; Stacy Baird, Martin Balukas, Tristan Ulmer, Tiffany Richardson and Mark Diehl. Superintendent Dan Rispens and Student Representative Xavier Nunn. Principals; Brandon Crusat, Gus Somerfeld, Lynsi Morris and Paul Condon. Vice Principals; Michael Kemper and Trish Klock.
Kate Johnson, Jill Hayter, Trinity Nelson and Jen Cordell

Review the Agenda

Chairman Walter mentioned that Vice-Chair Murfitt noticed a Legislative Item on the Agenda. There is no Legislative report.

Hear the Public

No Comments from the Public

Reports

Xavier Nunn spoke about the events since Christmas break. The boys and girls Basketball Teams have each played 6 games since the last Board meeting. He gave a shout out to DeonDray Ellis on the boys basketball team for 1000 career points! The Swim Team had meets last month with top finishers. Speech and Debate as well as the Drama Team all had a very good month placing in their competitions as well. The Wrestling Teams as well, had a very successful month and Xavier gave another shout out to Eli Erdahl who came away with his 100th career win. January 21st marks the halfway point in the school year.

Principal Crusat commented that since the last School Board meeting and District Calendar meeting, they have formed an additional Elementary Calendar Committee. The primary focus being the pros and cons, implications and additional elements to research that are elementary specific as pertains to 4 day school week. The Committee is not advocating for or against a 4 day week, they are just gathering information specific to the elementary and what that could look like.

Principal Somerfeld reported that he didn't have too much to add to his report but wanted to point out that January is School Board Appreciation Month. Mrs. Jones, the Radley Librarian, and her class spent some time putting together appreciation messages for the School Board.

Principal Morris added to her report that they had 24 girls on the 7th and 8th grade basketball team with 2 8th graders going to the freshman team. Rosie Kraft is running their 4 day school week pros and cons research at EVMS.

Vice-Principal Kemper's additions to his report included a student enrichment class update. The Winter session flyer will be going out this week with 7 class offerings. SRO Deputy McBride is back at EVMS.

Principal Condon added to his report that the Calendar Committee will meet again in the next two weeks and should have more to present at the February School Board meeting.

Vice Principal Klock relayed that even with the short school time in December, behavior was great and they were able to have a lot of fun activities. She thanked the Drivers Education teachers and their willingness to take on additional students when necessary. Right now there are only 13 students on a waiting list. With another one or two classes in the summer they will be caught up. Mrs. Klock spoke about the different options for students wanting to take Driver Ed Classes.

Athletic Director Murgel stated that he appreciated the opportunity to attend the National Athletic Director's Conference in December. There were many sessions and it was very informative.

IT Coordinator Eric Power, informed the Board that he had interviewed and hired the IT Help Desk position. He is looking forward to the spring counts coming up.

Trustee and Committee Reports of the K-12 Board

The Personnel Committee met and interviewed candidates for the Business Manager position.

Strategic Planning - Scan for Future Needs

Superintendent Rispens said the dates are set for the meetings with the Strategic Planning Committee in the spring. He spoke about a large aerospace manufacturing company, Janicki. Their executives will be in Helena tomorrow looking at possibly building a large manufacturing facility somewhere in the Pacific Northwest Region. They are looking at East Helena as a possible site for that facility and will be touring the area tomorrow.

Notifications of Retirements and Resignations

- Jill Hoogerheide -Clerk/Business Manager
- Ralph White -Bus Driver

Consent Agenda

- A. Board Minutes; December 8, 2025
- B. Pay Warrants
- C. Personnel Action
- D. Surrounding School District Student Enrollment Approval
- E. Recommended Employment of Staff

- Tyler Murray -Football Head Coach
- JD Ferris -Assistant Football Coach
- Alex Johnson -Assistant Football Coach
- Drew Boedecker -Assistant Football Coach
- Alex Reid -Assistant Football Coach
- Troy Arntson -Assistant Football Coach

- Noah Danielson -Assistant Football Coach
- Rick Thompson -Boys Soccer Head Coach
- Nathaniel Bailey -Cross Country Head Coach
- Bret Charlton -Assistant Cross Country Coach
- Katie Gleich -Substitute
- Tyler Patrick -Substitute
- Maddie Vandehey -Substitute
- Janelle Taylor -Substitute
- Talea Wigen -Substitute
- Dwain Hoover -Custodian
- Tyler Murray -8th Grade Girls BBall Coach
- Jack Prka -7th Grade Girls BBall Coach
- Joseph Krall -Full Time Bus Driver
- Nick Turner -Bus Driver
- Trance Koch -IT Help Desk

East Helena School District Students Requesting Enrollment in Other School Districts for the 2025 -2026
School Year:

	<u>Helena</u>	<u>Glacier High School</u>
10th	1	
12th		1

Total: 2

Trustee Baird asked that the minutes be pulled for correction.

Motion made by Vice Chair Murfit to approve the Consent Agenda items: Warrants, Personnel Actions, Surrounding School District Student Enrollment and Recommended Employment.

Seconded by Trustee Richardson Unanimous vote

Motion Carries

Trustee Baird asked that her comments in the December Minutes be corrected.

Chairman Walter asked for a correction in the Motion of the Disposal of District property.

Vice Chair Murfitt made a motion to approve the December 8, 2026 Minutes as amended.

Seconded by Trustee Richardson Unanimous vote

Motion carries

Unfinished Business

2nd Reading Policies #1230 and # 2700

Motion made by Vice Chair Murfitt to approve Policy #1230 and #2700 on Second Reading

Seconded by Trustee Richardson Unanimous vote

Motion Carries

New Business

Selection of Business Manager

Superintendent Rispens explained that an interview committee consisting of two members of the Board's Personnel Committee has interviewed 3 candidates and selected Jane Knudsen as our finalist.

Motion made by Trustee Ulmer to offer a contract to Jane Knudsen as the District Business Manager.

Seconded by Vice Chair Murfitt Unanimous vote

Motion Carries

Appointment of the Clerk of the Board

Trustee Ulmer made a motion to appoint Jane Knudsen as District Clerk for the remainder of the 25-26 school year. Second by Vice Chair Murfitt Unanimous vote

Motion Carries

Designate District Superintendent as Temporary Fiscal Signatory

Trustee Balukas made a motion to appoint Superintendent Dan Rispens as temporary fiscal signatory for the District until the new Clerk can begin work.

Seconded by Trustee Ulmer Unanimous vote

Motion Carries

Student Travel Request - Culinary Arts and CTE (Ag)

Superintendent Rispens introduced Trinity Nelsen, Culinary Arts Teacher

Trinity spoke about the trip to Spain and answered questions from the Board

Motion by Trustee Balukas to approve student travel to Spain in 2027

Seconded by Trustee Baird Unanimous vote

Motion Carries

Temporary Easement Request - Highland Meadows

The City of East Helena has requested temporary access easement to our Prickly Pear Property to re-route the temporary access to Highland Meadows. The request is on behalf of the contractor who needs to re-route the road to finish the installation of utilities for the final street construction.

The Board discussed the request in detail.

Motion by Vice Chair Murfit to approve the easement for Highland Meadows as shown with the requirements that the contractor be responsible for any and all permits related to the temporary detour.

The easement for the detour ends on December 31 of 2026 with additional access granted for the maintenance of any permits which terminates upon the satisfaction of the permit conditions.

Seconded by Trustee Richardson Unanimous vote

Motion Carries

Policy First Reading MTSBA Model Policies:

Chairman Walter preferred to discuss each policy separately.

Motion by Trustee Balukas to approve revisions to Policy #1401 under First Reading, Seconded by Vice Chair Murfitt Unanimous vote

Motion Carries

Motion by Trustee Balukas to approve the revisions to Policy #2161 under First Reading, Seconded by Trustee Richardson Unanimous vote

Motion Carries

Motion By Trustee Balukas to adopt option 2 of Policy #2335 under First Reading, Seconded by Trustee Ulmer Unanimous vote

Motion Carries

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt to approve the revisions to Policy #3110 under First Reading, Seconded by Trustee Baird Unanimous vote

Motion Carries

Motion by Trustee Balukas to table Policy #2600 and Policy #3665, until further clarification is received. Seconded by Vice Chair Murfitt Unanimous vote

Motion Carries

Motion By Richardson to approve revisions to Policy #3150 on First Reading, Seconded by Vice Chair Murfitt Unanimous vote

Motion Carries

Motion by Vice Chair Murfit to approve revisions to Policy #3600 under First Reading, Seconded by Trustee Richardson Unanimous vote

Motion carries

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt to table the changes to Policy #4550 as presented until we get additional clarification, Seconded by Trustee Richardson Unanimous Vote

Motion carries

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt to accept the revisions to Policy #5015 on First Reading, Seconded by Trustee Richardson Unanimous Vote

Motion Carries

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt to table Policy #5122, Seconded by Trustee Ulmer Unanimous Vote

Motion Carries

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt to approve revisions of Policy #5321 under First reading, Seconded by Trustee Baird Unanimous Vote

Motion Carries

Consideration of EHEA MOU - Somerfeld Leave Donations

Motion by Trustee Baird to approve the MOU as presented, Seconded by Trustee Ulmer

Unanimous Vote

Motion Carries

MHSA 2026 Executive Board Proposals

Athletic Director Shaun Murgel shared information about the upcoming MHSA meeting and proposals the MHSA Board will consider. He gave a rundown to the Board of the guidelines and bylaws.

Evaluation of the Superintendent

Chairman Walter, as Presiding Officer, determined that the evaluation of the Superintendent and the individual right to privacy clearly outweighs the public's right to know and therefore the following portion of the meeting would be held in closed session. After the Board moves out of closed session and back into open, any activities or motions made will be done in a public setting. 7:37pm

The Board entered closed session @ 7:45pm

The Board exited closed session @ 8:34pm and returned to open session

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, Seconded by Trustee Ulmer, to extend the Superintendent's contract for 1 additional year, effective July 2026. Unanimous vote

Motion Carries

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:39

Submitted by: J. Cordell
District Secretary, Jen Cordell

2-9-26
Date

Approved by: Scott A. Walter
Chairman, Scott Walter

FEB. 20, 2026
Date