

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**  
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
3 **HELD FEBRUARY 9, 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 9<sup>th</sup> Day  
7 of February 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 Marlee Sunchild  
19 Amie Thompson  
20 Paige Turoski

21  
22 **Trustee Excused:** Craig Duff

23  
24 **Others Present:** Heather Hoyer, Superintendent; Luke Diekhans, Director of Business  
25 Operations; Lance Boyd and Jackie Mainwaring, Executive Directors of Student  
26 Achievement; Jeff Williams, Director of Information Technology; Heather Spurzem,  
27 Director of Human Resources; and Stephanie Becker, Director of the Great Falls Public  
28 Schools Foundation.

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

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

33  
34  
35 **ADOPT AGENDA**

36  
37 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Paige Turoski. Trustee Bronson requested to  
38 remove VII Action Item A *2024-2025 Financial Statements and Audit Report – Final*  
39 from the agenda as the District is awaiting the final report from the auditors. Trustee  
40 Bronson made an amended motion to adopt the agenda with Action Item A removed.  
41 Motion seconded by Paige Turoski. Motion passed unanimously.

42  
43  
44 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

45  
46 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to approve  
47 the Consent Agenda as presented.

1 Superintendent Hoyer stated she received multiple requests for the Charles M. Russell  
2 HOSA students to provide a report to the Board upon their return from their travel this  
3 summer to Ghana Africa with Medical Squads Abroad.

4  
5 **A. Minutes of the January 26, 2026 Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved  
6 the minutes of the January 26, 2026 Regular Board Meeting as presented.

7  
8 **B. Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.

9  
10 **C. Good Apple Awards** - The Board approved the nominations of Good Apple Awards  
11 for Lora Dimitroff, Food Service Employee, C.M. Russell High School; Sheila Taggart  
12 and Nicole Peterson, Second Grade Teachers, West Elementary School; Ryan Stoll,  
13 Plumber Foreman, Buildings and Grounds; and Becky Bralick, Instructional Coach,  
14 District Office Building.

15  
16 **D. Incoming Student Attendance Agreement for the 2025-2026 School Year** – The  
17 Board approved the incoming student attendance agreement for the 2025-2026 school  
18 year for the student listed in the agenda. Tuition will be paid for by the District of  
19 Residence.

20  
21 **E. Great Falls High School Symphonic Band Tour Travel Request to Salt Lake  
22 City, Utah** – The Board approved the Great Falls High School Symphonic Band travel  
23 request to Salt Lake City, Utah on March 26-28, 2026.

24  
25 **F. Charles M. Russell High School HOSA – Future Health Professionals Medical  
26 Squads Abroad Travel Request to Ghana Africa** – The Board approved the Charles  
27 M. Russell High School HOSA Medical Squads Abroad travel request to Ghana Africa  
28 on June 5-14, 2026.

29  
30 **G. Charles M. Russell High School Chanteur Choir Tour Travel Request to Salt  
31 Lake City, Utah** – The Board approved the Charles M. Russell High School Chanteur  
32 Choir travel request to Salt Lake City, Utah on March 25-29, 2026.

## 33 34 35 **COMMUNICATION**

### 36 37 **A. Report of the Student Representatives**

38 Paris Gibson Education Center (PGEC) student representative Aspen Logan-Schwecke  
39 shared that best-selling author Jamie Ford visited with students to discuss creativity,  
40 writing, trauma, and his current work, sharing a new piece with PGEC students for the  
41 first time. Science students engaged in hands-on learning through a Mousetrap Catapult  
42 Challenge, everyday science explorations, and friendly design competitions. Students  
43 love “Foreign Fridays,” preparing international recipes to broaden cultural awareness.  
44 Technical and applied math students toured the 120th Airlift Wing at the Montana Air  
45 National Guard, gaining hands-on learning exposure through the loadmaster shop and  
46 fire station. The Build MT program continues to provide students from all three high  
47 schools with career exploration, hands-on training, industry-recognized certifications,  
48 and job placement support, and has recently been approved as a dual enrollment

1 course offering two college credits. PGEC hosted a statewide 3D archery tournament  
2 with participation from five schools; Great Falls students earned the top three individual  
3 scores, and the Paris team won first place in the 3D Archery tournament. Aspen also  
4 highlighted a collaborative Art and English course studying *The Princess Bride*, which  
5 allows students to earn credit in both subjects, as well as chemistry lessons featuring  
6 exothermic epoxy resin projects.

7  
8 Charles M. Russell (CMR) High School student representatives Emerson Hamma and  
9 Lydia Comstock highlighted a wide variety of academic, extracurricular, and service  
10 activities. Club updates included HOSA – Future Health Professionals students  
11 preparing for a service trip to Ghana Africa, High School House students progressing on  
12 construction of a community home, all Business Professionals of America (BPA)  
13 members qualifying for the state competition with multiple first-place and gold medal  
14 finishes, and strong performances by Speech and Debate, Orchestra, Band, Choir, and  
15 Advanced Placement Art students at regional, state, and national competitions. The  
16 Peer Mentor group added a new gratitude-focused installation in the commons.  
17 Lessons loved in the classrooms included interdisciplinary and hands-on learning in  
18 world languages, English, culinary arts, and forensics. Students also reported the  
19 success of 8th Grade Parent Night, local career exploration opportunities, recent athletic  
20 achievements across multiple winter sports (including the wrestling team winning the  
21 Crosstown match for the first time in eighteen years), participation in National News  
22 Literacy Week, and Rustler Pride activities welcoming younger students into the school  
23 community.

24 Trustee Skornogoski asked student representative, Lydia Comstock, to provide more  
25 detail on the several photos in the report that contained her image. Lydia shared her  
26 successes in Speech and Debate and stated she and another team member were All-  
27 Americans. The last student crowned an All-American was twelve years ago.

28  
29 Great Falls High School (GFHS) student representatives Seth Royer and Weston Stoll  
30 shared Choir students from both high schools performed with the University of Montana  
31 Chamber Chorale under the direction of Dr. Hirner. The upcoming drama production of  
32 *Grease* was highlighted, along with a related silent auction fundraiser. The Speech and  
33 Debate team performed well at the state tournament, producing two high place finishers  
34 in Humorous Interpretation and Memorized Public Address one state champion in  
35 Informative Speech. Students competed successfully at the Region 3 BPA competition,  
36 with 28 students advancing to the state competition. Several teachers were recognized  
37 for their dedication and impact on students. Classroom highlights included hands-on  
38 lessons in Earth and Space Science and U.S. History. The Introduction to Industrial  
39 Technology program was showcased, noting a complete HVAC system donated from  
40 Falls Mechanical that supports student learning in residential construction and electrical  
41 skills. Winter sports updates included successful seasons for wrestling, swimming, and  
42 boys' and girls' basketball. Career Exploration students also heard from Governor Greg  
43 Gianforte, who shared career advice and personal experiences. Student Recognition  
44 honorees were celebrated for exemplifying core school values. Additionally, three Great  
45 Falls High freshmen were selected to represent Montana's Second Congressional  
46 District in the 2026 Congressional App Challenge and will present their work in  
47 Washington, D.C.

1 **B. Superintendent Report**

2 Superintendent Hoyer shared congratulations to PGEC student representative Aspen  
3 Logan-Schwecke for her upcoming graduation, upon finishing one final class. Aspen  
4 will remain on the student Board panel for the remainder of the 2025-26 school year.  
5 Superintendent Hoyer reported that three individuals have filed for trustee positions,  
6 with write-in candidates accepted until March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Counselors and Crossing Guards  
7 were recognized on February 3 for their contributions to student well-being and school  
8 climate. Code Girls United, Montana’s largest computer science education organization,  
9 supports statewide student learning in an area where Montana ranks last nationally. A  
10 Great Falls Middle School team (Lily Kirkaldie, Charlie Kotthoff, and Danica Sabo) won  
11 the Congressional App Challenge and will present their app *Cursive Create* at the U.S.  
12 Capitol in April. Enrollment trends were reviewed, noting a gradual decline that is less  
13 significant than projections made in 2019 and reflects count-day attendance for trend  
14 purposes only. Strategic Plan highlights, concerns, and barriers were summarized from  
15 Buildings & Grounds, West Elementary, and Valley View Elementary, including staffing  
16 supports, family engagement efforts, student mental health initiatives, attendance  
17 improvement, instructional focus, and communication planning. Data for the Day  
18 included an overview of major school threat incidents, with increased numbers  
19 attributed to improved tracking and reporting methods implemented this year.  
20

21 **C. Audience Communication**

22 Community member Judy Mortensen provided an update on her concerns with SJ48 –  
23 an interim study on the public health and safety impacts of marijuana legalization – and  
24 the effects on school-aged children.  
25

26  
27 **ACTION ITEMS**

28  
29 **A. 2024-2025 Financial Statements and Audit Report – Final** – This agenda item was  
30 removed and the final action postponed via prior unanimous Board decision in IV Adopt  
31 Agenda process.  
32

33 **B. Second Reading of Revised Board Policies 1111 – Election; 2131 – Student and**  
34 **Family Privacy Rights; 3410 – Student Health/Physical Screenings/Examinations;**  
35 **7122 – Intent to Increase Non-Voted Levy; and 7122F – Notice of Intent to Impose**  
36 **an Increase in Levies Form** – Superintendent Hoyer reviewed the policies above. It  
37 was noted by Trustee Bronson that HB22 amends the previous version of MCA 20-9-  
38 116, which is already referred to in the reference section for Policy 7122. Therefore, the  
39 legal reference to HB22 (2025) on page 40, line 57 in the agenda, is not needed.  
40 Superintendent Hoyer stated that HB22 (2025) would be stricken from the final version  
41 of Policy 7122. She stated that no further comments or recommendations for changes  
42 to any of the remaining policies listed above were received since the first reading of the  
43 policies at the January 26, 2026 regular Board Meeting.  
44

45 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to approve  
46 Board Policies 1111 – Election; 2131 – Student and Family Privacy Rights; 3410 –  
47 Student Health/Physical Screenings/Examinations; and 7122F – Notice of Intent to

1 *Impose an Increase in Levies Form* as presented and Policy 7122 – *Intent to Increase*  
2 *Non-Voted Levy* approved with the amended edit as listed above.

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4  
5 **ACTION: OTHER**

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

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10 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

11  
12 **A. First Reading of Revised Board Policies 1210 – *Qualifications, Terms, and***  
13 ***Duties of Board Officers; 1310 – District Policy and Procedures; 1770 – Uniform***  
14 ***Complaint Procedure; and 3510 – School-Sponsored Student Activities***

15 Superintendent Hoyer reviewed the recommended language revisions from the  
16 Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA) and the Board Policy Committee to each  
17 of the revised Board policies listed. One minor change to replace the word “in” with the  
18 word “on” on page 44, line 29 of Policy 1210 was received. The language changes  
19 proposed bring policies into alignment with legislative directives and/or clarifies  
20 confusing language. She asked if anyone had further questions or concerns regarding  
21 any of the policy revisions to contact her prior to the next regular Board meeting.

22  
23 **B. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments**

24 Trustee Sunchild – Expressed appreciation for the Strategic Plan highlights and the  
25 opportunity to see positive work happening across the schools.

26 Trustee Johnson – Noted that he previously thought elementary schools were “cookie  
27 cutter,” and appreciated learning that each school has its own unique strengths.

28 Trustee Skornogoski – Thanked school counselors and crossing guards. Encouraged  
29 the community to review and share the newly released school calendar on Facebook to  
30 increase public awareness and participation.

31 Trustee Turoski – Shared that technology staff are addressing current issues and that  
32 Lexia is supporting phonics and word-sound instruction at the elementary level. Also  
33 noted a personal update that she will miss the next Board meeting due to her upcoming  
34 marriage and name change.

35 Trustee Bronson – Reported on attending MTSBA meeting and emphasized the  
36 importance of closely monitoring state revenue, noting concerns about a general fund  
37 deficit that could impact public school funding in coming years. Encouraged trustees to  
38 provide collective input on the MTSBA annual membership survey to support strategic  
39 planning and collaboration. Also shared a personal moment of being recognized by a  
40 community member whose diploma he had presented.

41 Trustee Thompson – Agreed with Trustee Sunchild regarding appreciation for the  
42 Strategic Plan highlights and commended Superintendent Hoyer for her transparency.

43  
44 **C. Superintendent Evaluation Report** – Trustee Thompson reviewed the approved  
45 process for conducting the yearly Superintendent Evaluation. In accordance with  
46 Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 2-3-203(3), Chairperson Johnson stated this portion of  
47 the evaluation process may be conducted in closed session. Superintendent Hoyer

1 exercised her right to be evaluated in closed session and Chairperson Johnson  
2 recessed the Board meeting at 6:30 p.m. to continue the evaluation in closed session.

3  
4 Chairperson Johnson reconvened the regular Board meeting at 7:50 p.m. He stated  
5 that Trustee Thompson will provide a synopsis of the final evaluation at the next Board  
6 meeting on February 23, 2026.

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9 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

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11 Upcoming events include a Board Budget Committee meeting on February 17, 2026  
12 and a Board Work Session followed by a regular Board meeting on February 23, 2026.

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15 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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17 With no further comments or items to be discussed, motion by Chairperson Johnson  
18 and seconded by Trustee Skornogoski to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of  
19 Trustees at 7:51 p.m.

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25 \_\_\_\_\_  
Gordon Johnson, Chairperson

26 \_\_\_\_\_  
27 Luke Diekhans, Clerk  
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