

AGENDA

Board of Trustees
Special Meeting
March 9, 2026



Great Falls Public Schools

1100 Fourth Street South, Great Falls, Montana



Welcome to the Great Falls Public Schools Board of Trustees meeting!

Is this your first meeting?

If this is your first time attending a meeting, let us extend our special welcome! These meetings are designed to give everyone the opportunity to participate in seeing how the Great Falls Public Schools Trustees facilitate school business.

What is the purpose of these meetings?

The meetings of the Great Falls Public Schools Board of Trustees are open to the public, are recorded, and may be accessed on our website for up to one year. These meetings are held to officially conduct the business of the school district, as governed by Montana law. Trustees are responsible for key decisions, some of which include hiring employees, reviewing negotiated agreements, approving new curriculum or changes to existing curricula, facility usage requests, and paying of monthly expenses.

How can I address the Trustees?

If you would like to address the Board of Trustees on any matter, please fill out a “Request to Speak” card available from the Clerk of the Board at each meeting. Return this card to the Clerk of the Board or the Board Chairperson. This will allow the Chairperson to recognize you at the appropriate time in the meeting and to guarantee you the opportunity to address the Board. There are federal and state laws that must be followed when addressing the Board to protect the privacy of individuals and to conduct business in an orderly manner. Details can be found on the “Request to Speak” card.

**Again – thank you for participating in this democratic process – we
appreciate your presence!**

– The Great Falls Public Schools Trustees

GREAT FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Great Falls, MT



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Gordon Johnson	Chairperson
Kim Skornogoski	Vice Chairperson
Bill Bronson	Trustee
Craig Duff	Trustee
Paige Henning	Trustee
Marlee Sunchild	Trustee
Amie Thompson	Trustee

SUPERINTENDENT'S CABINET

Heather Hoyer	Superintendent of Schools
Luke Diekhans	Director of Business Operations
Lance Boyd	Executive Director for Student Achievement
Jackie Mainwaring	Executive Director for Student Achievement
Heather Spurzem	Director of Human Resources
Jeff Williams	Director of Information Technology
Stephanie Becker	Director of the GFPS Foundation



Great Falls Public Schools
Board of Trustees
Special Meeting

AGENDA

March 9, 2026

5:00 p.m.

Aspen Meeting Room – District Office Building
1100 4th Street South, Great Falls, Montana

We Successfully Educate Students to Navigate the Future

	Page
I. CALL TO ORDER	Chairperson Johnson
II. ROLL CALL	Luke Diekhans
III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	Chairperson Johnson
IV. ADOPT AGENDA	Chairperson Johnson
V. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA	Chairperson Johnson
<p><i>The Consent Agenda consists of routine business items related to the operation of the District. Any trustee may remove an item from the Consent Agenda for discussion. Items so removed will be discussed and acted upon separately under ACTION: OTHER</i></p>	
VI. COMMUNICATION	
A. Audience Communication	
VII. ACTION ITEM	
A. Lincoln Elementary School Emergency Closure	Heather Hoyer
VIII. ACTION: OTHER	Chairperson Johnson
IX. REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES	
A. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments	Chairperson Johnson

UPCOMING EVENTS

Chairperson
Johnson

Monday, March 9, 2026

5:30 p.m.

Regular Meeting

District Office Building

ACTION TO ADJOURN

Chairperson
Johnson

 Great Falls Public Schools Great Falls, MT	Thompson	Sunchild	Skornogowski	Johnson	Hening	Duff	Bronson
Motion							
Second							
Ayes							
Nays							
Abstain							

GREAT FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MEETING DATE: March 9, 2026

CATEGORY: Action

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: VII. A.

CABINET MEMBER: Heather Hoyer

TOPIC

Emergency Closure of Lincoln Elementary School due to Partial Roof Loss in Severe Wind Event

STRATEGIC PLAN

Stewardship and Accountability

BACKGROUND

On Sunday, March 8, 2026, at approximately 12:00 p.m., Great Falls Public Schools Administration was made aware of a portion of the roof on Lincoln Elementary School tearing off as the result of the severe wind event happening in Great Falls. Obviously, the immediate concerns are for the safety of our students and staff. School [Board Policy 2221 School Emergencies and Closures](#), [Montana Code Annotated 20-9-806 School Closure Declaration of Emergency](#) and [Montana Code Annotated 20-9-806 Authority to Close A School](#) and [Montana Code Annotated 20-1-301 School Fiscal Year](#) all speak to the regulation of and guidance for schools in this situation. (See attached documents).

DISCUSSION

The GFPS administrative staff has reviewed Board Policy and Montana Codes Annotated on the statutory requirements regarding emergency school closures. For safety and security reasons, Lincoln Elementary School will be closed March 9th and March 10th, 2026 for students; staff will be on duty at an alternative location. Superintendent Hoyer and her staff will provide a plan to meet statutory requirements of student contact time and answer questions that the Board of Trustees may have regarding this incident.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Unknown at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

The District Board is requested to approve the emergency closure of Lincoln Elementary School on March 9th and March 10th, 2026.

For more information about this item, please contact Superintendent Heather Hoyer at (406) 268-6001, or Executive Directors Lance Boyd at (406) 268-6008 and Jackie Mainwaring at (406) 268-6006.

[Return to Agenda](#)

1 Great Falls School District

2
3 **INSTRUCTION**

2221

4
5 School Emergencies and Closures

6
7 The Superintendent may order closure of schools in the event of extreme weather or other
8 emergency, in compliance with established procedures for notifying parents, students, and staff.
9

10 The Board of Trustees is authorized to declare that a state of emergency exists within the
11 community. A declaration issued by the Board of Trustees is distinct from any declaration in
12 effect or previously issued by local, state or federal authorities. An emergency declaration issued
13 by the Board of Trustees authorizes the District to take extraordinary measures to protect
14 students and staff while delivering education services in a manner authorized by law. The
15 method and location of instruction and related educational services shall be implemented in a
16 manner that serves the needs of students, their families, and staff and preserves the District’s full
17 entitlement of funding.
18

19 The Trustees may order the emergency closure of one or more schools for one (1) school day
20 each year, without the need to reschedule the lost pupil instruction time when the closure is the
21 result of an emergency. The -school-day closure under this subsection is not subject to the
22 reduction in BASE aid pursuant to Section 20-9-805, MCA.
23

24 In the event of a declared emergency, the District shall avail itself of all flexibility allowed by
25 law, rule, or regulation and shall be otherwise governed by the school finance laws and rules of
26 the State of Montana. The District shall comply with auditing requirements and reserves the
27 authority to assert its rights to manage school district funds or seek state and federal funds in a
28 manner consistent with the full flexibility available under all applicable laws.
29

30 If a declaration of emergency is declared by the Board of Trustees, it may later adopt a resolution
31 that a reasonable effort has been made to reschedule the pupil-instruction time lost because of the
32 unforeseen emergency. If the Trustees adopt the resolution, the pupil-instruction time lost during
33 the closure need not be rescheduled to meet the minimum requirement for aggregate hours that a
34 school district must conduct during the school year in order to be entitled to full BASE aid. At
35 least 75% of the pupil-instruction time lost due to the unforeseen emergency must have been
36 made up before the Trustees can declare that a reasonable effort has been made.
37

38 For the purposes of this and related policies, “reasonable effort” means the rescheduling or
39 extension of the District’s instructional calendar to make up at least 75% of the hours of pupil
40 instruction lost due to an unforeseen emergency through any combination of the following as
41 outlined in accordance with Policies 2050 and 2100:
42

- 43 a. Extending the school year beyond the last scheduled day.
- 44 b. The use of scheduled vacation days in the District’s adopted school calendar.
- 45 c. The conduct of pupil instruction on Saturdays.
- 46 d. Extending instructional hours during the school day.

1 Cross References:

- 2 Policy 2100 School Calendar and Day
3 Policy 2050 Student Instruction
4 Policy 3122 Attendance Policy
5 Policy 3122R Attendance Policy Regulation
6 Policy 8110 Bus Routes and Schedules

7
8 Legal References:

- 9 § 20-1-101 (17), MCA Definitions
10 § 20-9-801 – 803, MCA Emergency School Closure
11 § 20-9-805 Rate of Reduction in Annual Apportionment Entitlement
12 §20-9-806 School Closure by Declaration of Emergency

13
14
15 Policy History:

- 16 Adopted on: July 1, 2000
17 Revised on: June 23, 2014
18 Revised on: June 28, 2021
19 Revised on: May 22, 2023

MCA Contents / TITLE 20 / CHAPTER 9 / Part 8 / 20-9-806 School closur...

Montana Code Annotated 2025

TITLE 20. EDUCATION

CHAPTER 9. FINANCE

Part 8. Emergency School Closure

School Closure By Declaration Of Emergency

20-9-806. School closure by declaration of emergency. (1) (a) Except as provided in subsection (2), if a school is closed by reason of an unforeseen emergency that results in a declaration of emergency by the board of trustees, the trustees may later adopt a resolution that a reasonable effort has been made to reschedule the pupil-instruction time lost because of the unforeseen emergency. If the trustees adopt the resolution, the pupil-instruction time lost during the closure need not be rescheduled to meet the minimum requirement for aggregate hours that a school district must conduct during the school year in order to be entitled to full BASE aid.

(b) At least 75% of the pupil-instruction time lost due to the unforeseen emergency must have been made up before the trustees can declare that a reasonable effort has been made.

(2) The board of trustees may close school for 1 school day each school year because of an unforeseen emergency and may not be required to reschedule the pupil-instruction time lost because of the unforeseen emergency. The 1-school-day closure under this subsection is not subject to the reduction in BASE aid pursuant to **20-9-805**.

History: En. Sec. 2, Ch. 85, L. 1981; amd. Sec. 10, Ch. 430, L. 1997; amd. Sec. 15, Ch. 138, L. 2005; amd. Sec. 5, Ch. 151, L. 2021.

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Montana Code Annotated 2025

TITLE 20. EDUCATION

CHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Part 3. School Terms and Holidays -- Released Time

School Fiscal Year

20-1-301. School fiscal year. (1) The school fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30. At least the minimum aggregate hours required in subsection (2) must be conducted during each school fiscal year, except that 1,050 aggregate hours of pupil instruction for graduating seniors may be sufficient. The minimum aggregate hours required in subsection (2) are not required for any pupil demonstrating proficiency pursuant to **20-9-311(4)(d)**.

(2) The minimum aggregate hours required by grade are:

(a) 360 hours for half-time kindergarten or 720 hours for full-time kindergarten, as provided in **20-7-117**;

(b) 720 hours for grades 1 through 3; and

(c) 1,080 hours for grades 4 through 12.

(3) Except for a circumstance related to an unforeseen emergency pursuant to Title 20, chapter 9, part 8, for any elementary or high school district that fails to provide for at least the minimum aggregate hours, as listed in subsections (1) and (2), to any pupil not demonstrating proficiency pursuant to **20-9-311(4)(d)**, the superintendent of public instruction shall reduce the BASE aid for the district for that school year by two times an hourly rate, as calculated by the office of public instruction, for the aggregate hours missed by each pupil not demonstrating proficiency pursuant to **20-9-311(4)(d)**.

History: En. 75-7402 by Sec. 366, Ch. 5, L. 1971; amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 373, L. 1974; R.C.M. 1947, 75-7402; amd. Sec. 6, Ch. 288, L. 1979; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 148, L. 1981; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 460, L. 1983; amd. Sec. 3, Ch. 22, L. 1997; amd. Sec. 110, Ch. 42, L. 1997; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 430, L. 1997; amd. Sec. 5, Ch. 237, L. 2001; amd. Sec. 3, Ch. 138, L. 2005; amd. Sec. 9, Ch. 1, Sp. L. May 2007; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 149, L. 2017; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 151, L. 2021; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 96, L. 2025.

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