

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
3 **HELD FEBRUARY 23, 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 4th Street South, on the 23rd day
7 of February 2026.

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9 At 5:30 pm, Vice-Chairperson Skornogoski called to order the Regular Meeting of the
10 Board of Trustees.

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12 Vice-Chairperson Skornogoski reported that, per Board Policy 1420, all Board meetings
13 are recorded and posted on the District website for one (1) year.
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15
16 **ROLL CALL:** Luke Diekhans took roll call.
17

18 **Trustees Present:** Kim Skornogoski – Vice-Chairperson
19 Bill Bronson
20 Craig Duff
21 Marlee Sunchild
22 Amie Thompson
23

24 **Trustees Excused:** Gordon Johnson – Chairperson
25 Paige Henning
26

27 **Others Present:** Heather Hoyer, Superintendent; Luke Diekhans, Director of Business
28 Operations; Jackie Mainwaring and Lance Boyd Executive Directors of Student
29 Achievement; Heather Spurzem, Director of Human Resources; and Stephanie Becker,
30 Director of Great Falls Public Schools Foundation. Also present was Tom Cubbage,
31 Great Falls Education Association President.
32

33 Vice-Chairperson Skornogoski asked everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.
34
35

36 **ADOPT AGENDA**
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38 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Craig Duff, passed unanimously to adopt the agenda
39 as presented.
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42 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**
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44 Motion – Craig Duff, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the
45 Consent Agenda as presented.
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47 **A. Minutes of the February 9, 2026, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved
48 the minutes of the February 9, 2026, Regular Board Meeting as presented.

1
2 **B. Minutes of the February 9, 2026, Closed Session** – The Board approved the
3 minutes of the February 9, 2026, Closed Session as presented.
4

5 **C. Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.
6

7 **D. Good Apple Awards** – The Board approved the nominations for Good Apple
8 Awards: Sabra Wheeler and Pam Underwood, Resource 2 Teachers, Nichole Newton,
9 Speech and Language Pathologist, and Cyrilla Carper, Para Educator all located at C.
10 M. Russell High School; Julie Murray, Resource 2 Teacher at Paris Gibson Education
11 Center; Mason Shaw, Teacher Aide and Heather Mills, Counselor both located at
12 Whittier Elementary School.
13

14 **E. Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) TR-35’s School Bus Driver**
15 **Certificates** – The Board approved the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) TR-
16 35’s School Bus Driver Certificates for the individuals listed in the agenda.
17

18 **F. Charles M. Russell High School Business Professionals of America**
19 **(BPA)Travel Request to State Leadership Conference in Billings, Montana** - The
20 Board approved the Charles M. Russell (CMR) High School BPA travel request to
21 Billings, Montana from March 8-10, 2026, for the State Leadership Conference.
22

23 **G. Great Falls High School Academic World Quest Travel Request to Missoula,**
24 **Montana** - The Board approved the Great Falls High School (GFHS) Academic World
25 Quest travel request to Missoula, Montana from March 1-2, 2026.
26

27 **H. Establish New “Code Girls” Student Activity Account at East Middle School** –
28 The Board approved East Middle School’s request to open the “Code Girls” Student
29 Activity account.
30

31 **I. Great Falls High School Request to Rename Student Activity Account** – The
32 Board approved Great Falls High School’s request to rename the “Robotics” Student
33 Activity account to “STEM”.
34

35 **J. Student Activity Monthly Report for January 2026** – The Board approved the
36 Student Activity Accounts for January 2026 as presented.
37

38
39 **COMMUNICATION**

40
41 **A. Character Strong – Lewis and Clark Elementary School** – Executive Director
42 Jackie Mainwaring stated that this report will be rescheduled.
43

44 **B. Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB) Communication** - None
45

46 **C. Superintendent Report** – Superintendent Hoyer recognized Diana Pettit, a food
47 service employee who noticed students struggling to remain seated during lunch. She
48 sat with them and helped them remain seated and keep eating.

1 Superintendent Hoyer shared tools developed by K-6 Teacher on Special Assignment,
2 Miranda Murray, for teachers to use on the state mandated days of observation. On
3 February 12, 2026, students throughout the District celebrated Abraham Lincoln's
4 birthday and today, February 23rd, students celebrated George Washington's birthday.
5 She stated that this is a great opportunity for students to explore his role as the first U.S.
6 President, his leadership during the American Revolution, and his contributions to the
7 founding of our nation.

8 Superintendent Hoyer stated that Reannon Medrano has been selected to become the
9 next Principal of East Middle School and Mike Hodges has been selected to become
10 the next Associate Principal of C.M. Russell High School starting the 2026-2027 school
11 year.

12 Director of Music and Fine Arts, Dusty Molyneaux, stated that March is National Youth
13 Arts Month. He read the proclamation and reviewed all the events taking place
14 throughout the District in the month of March.

15 Superintendent Hoyer reviewed the highlights, concerns, and barriers that Sunnyside
16 Elementary School, Mountain View Elementary School, Lincoln Elementary School, and
17 the Early Learning Family Center reported during their third quarter review discussions.
18 Each school is responsible for developing initiatives that align with the Healthy, Safe,
19 and Secure Schools; Student Achievement; and Stewardship and Accountability
20 portions of the District's Strategic Plan.

21 The Data for the Day was a presentation on the RESTART Program. Liaison, Cory
22 Reeves, reported that the RESTART program allows Great Falls Public Schools to work
23 with at risk students who are in significant danger of dropping out of school. This
24 program allows Mr. Reeves to work on academic, social, and work force training in
25 collaboration with Alliance for Youth, Youth Court Services, Alluvion Health, Great Falls
26 Transit, Great Falls Library, McDonalds, Domino's Pizza, Schulte's, Career and
27 Readiness Center and Future Build to get students reengaged and on a pathway to
28 success. Mr. Reeves stated that during semester one, eight (8) students completed the
29 program. To date, the average daily attendance rate is 90.25%. One (1) student
30 reported on her experience and is thankful for the opportunity to participate in the
31 program.

32

33 **D. Audience Communication – None**

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35

36 **ACTION ITEMS**

37

38 **A. 2024-2025 Financial Statements and Audit Report – Final** – Eide Bailly Partner,
39 Brian Stavenger, stated that at the December 15, 2025, Board meeting the audit
40 remained in draft form pending the release of the compliance supplement for audits for
41 Montana local government entities. The compliance supplements have since been
42 finalized. Since the last Board meeting on February 9, 2026, the Eide Bailly auditor was
43 able to verify Comprehensive School and Community Treatment (CSCT) revenue with
44 the State of Montana. Brian stated that there was only one change from the December
45 15, 2025 Board meeting; and that was a post adjustment in the CSCT code from a
46 duplicate receipt.

47

1 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to approve
2 the General-Purpose Financial Statements with Auditors Report for Fiscal Year ended
3 June 30, 2025, as presented.

4
5 **B. Financial Report and Check Register for January 2026** – Director of Business
6 Operations, Luke Diekhans, reviewed the financial report and check register for January
7 2026.

8
9 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to approve
10 the January 2026 Financial Report and Accounts Payable checks #142816 - #143206 in
11 the amount of \$1,800,248.68 and Payroll checks #85361 - #85539 in the amount of
12 \$783,302.99 as presented.

13
14 **C. Declare Reduction in Force (RIF) Process and Criteria to be Used in the Event**
15 **RIF Becomes Necessary** - Director of Human Resources, Heather Spurzem, explained
16 the Budget Committee will be developing budget recommendations for the next school
17 year. It is necessary to have the Reduction in Force process in place should reductions
18 in programs, non-essential activities, and/or staff be necessary.

19
20 Motion – Marlee Sunchild, Seconded – Craig Duff, passed unanimously to declare the
21 possibility of a Reduction in Force and to adopt the process and criteria as presented.

22
23 **D. Non-Renew Temporary, Non-Tenured Teachers with Positions Expiring June 5,**
24 **2026** – Director of Human Resources, Heather Spurzem, explained the non-renewal of
25 the non-tenured teachers listed in the agenda is required because the teachers were
26 hired after the school year had started, for a variety of reasons, for positions on a
27 temporary basis with contracts that expire on June 5, 2026. She explained the teachers
28 have the opportunity to apply for jobs, through the in-district transfer/hiring process, next
29 year for which they are qualified to teach.

30
31 Motion – Marlee Sunchild, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to
32 approve the non-renewal of the teachers listed in the agenda as their positions are
33 temporary and will expire June 5, 2026.

34
35 **E. Lewis and Clark Elementary School Roof Project** – Director of Business
36 Operations, Luke Diekhans, reported that the District attempts to rotate roof
37 replacements on a yearly basis. He reported that there were seven (7) sealed bids
38 received. Each bid was reviewed by Cushing Terrell Architects (CTA) to ensure that all
39 qualifications have been met. Jimmy’s Roofing was the lowest qualified bidder with a
40 total bid of \$1,299,400.

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42 Motion – Craig Duff, Seconded – Marlee Sunchild, passed unanimously to award the
43 Lewis and Clark Elementary School Roof Project Base Bid, Alternate Bid #1, and
44 Alternate Bid #2 scheduled for the summer of 2026. The lowest qualified bidder was
45 Jimmy’s Roofing with a Base Bid of \$719,000. Also accepted was the Alternate Bid #1
46 to include Section E for \$293,000 and Alternate Bid #2 to include Section F for
47 \$287,000 for a total cost for the project being \$1,299,400.00.

1 **F. Resolution Estimating Changes in Revenues/Mills from Tuition, Adult**
2 **Education, Building Reserve, Flexibility Fund, Bus Depreciation, and**
3 **Transportation Levies for School Fiscal Year 2026-27** – Director of Business
4 Operations, Luke Diekhans, explained Montana State Law requires school boards to
5 adopt a resolution whenever Trustees intend to impose an increase in a non-voted levy
6 in the ensuing fiscal year. The Board Budget Committee reviewed the estimated
7 permissive levies at a work session held on January 8, 2026. Luke explained increases,
8 decreases and/or no changes in each of the funds. The estimated impact for all the
9 combined Elementary and High School budgets is an increase of 6.63 mills. The impact
10 on taxes for a home with an estimated taxable valuation of \$100,000 is an increase of
11 \$8.95 for all funds combined, a home valued at \$300,000 is an increase of \$26.85, and
12 a home valued at \$600,000 is an increase of \$53.10. This information will be published
13 in the local paper and on the District website. Exact fiscal implications will not be known
14 until August as these are estimates only.

15
16 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Marlee Sunchild, passed unanimously to adopt the
17 resolution estimating changes in revenues/mills to the Adult Education, Building
18 Reserve, Flexibility, Bus Depreciation, Transportation and Tuition levies for the school
19 fiscal year 2026-27 as presented.

20
21 **G. Board Budget Committee Recommendation Regarding an Elementary and/or**
22 **High School Levy Including the Related Ballot Proposition and Resolution -**
23 Trustee Bronson explained that a Board Budget Committee meeting was held on
24 February 17, 2026. The Board deliberated after hearing administrative options. With
25 reserves available to address the projected budget shortfall, the Board Budget
26 Committee recommended to forego asking for additional support of District programs
27 via a levy for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Trustee Bronson stated that a sample ballot
28 proposition and resolution calling for a levy was included as part of this agenda item for
29 informational purposes only.

30
31 Motion – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the Board Budget Committee's
32 recommendation to not request a levy in the 2026-2027 fiscal year as presented.

33
34 **H. Second Reading of Revised Board Policies 1210 – *Qualifications, Terms, and***
35 ***Duties of Board Officers; 1310 – District Policy and Procedures; 1770 – Uniform***
36 ***Complaint Procedure; and 3510 – School-Sponsored Student Activities -***
37 Superintendent Hoyer stated that no comments or recommendations for changes were
38 received since the first reading at the February 9, 2026, Board meeting. She did,
39 however, clarify that policy 1770 is a Board of Trustees policy and is intended to be
40 used for complaints, except for those governed by a specific process in state or federal
41 law that supersedes this process or governed by a collective bargaining agreement.
42 Matters covered by a collective bargaining agreement will be reviewed in accordance
43 with the terms of the applicable agreement.

44
45 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Craig Duff, passed unanimously to approve revised
46 Board Policies 1210 – *Qualifications, Terms, and Duties of Board Officers; 1310 –*
47 *District Policy and Procedures; 1770 – Uniform Complaint Procedure; and 3510 –*
48 *School-Sponsored Student Activities* as presented.

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ACTION: OTHER

There were no items extracted from the Consent Agenda to discuss.

REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES

A. Great Falls Education Association Grant Team Report – Great Falls Education Association (GFEA) President, Tom Cabbage, and his Supporting Teachers through Attraction and Retention (S.T.A.R.) team reported on what they have done with the National Education Association’s (NEA) Excellence in Education Grant Program and how important it is to support new teachers throughout the District.

B. Career and Technical Education (CTE) Report – Career Pathways Advisor, Derik Senger, and Workforce Data Management Specialist, Veronica Griffith reported that there are seven (7) approved Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that include: Business and Computer Science, Family and Consumer Science, Industrial Technology, Health Science, Stagecraft Design, Video Production, and Air Force Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (AFROTC). There are seven (7) Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO’s) programs that include: Business Professionals of America (BPA), Marketing/Business Education (DECA), Family Career & Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), Future Health Professionals (HOSA), Jobs for Montana Graduates (JMG), Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC), and Workforce Development Organization (Skills USA). They also reported that there are ten (10) student run businesses including: Art, Auto Shop, Bison Barista, Bison Wear, DECA Stores, Lynx Graphics, Rustler Roast, Video Production, and Welding. They reviewed student course enrollment from 2019 to current and thanked community partners for their continued support.

C. Superintendent Evaluation - Trustee Thompson reported that the Board met with Superintendent Hoyer in a closed session on Monday, February 9, 2026. Individual Board members had the opportunity to discuss their scores and comments with Superintendent Hoyer. The public survey garnered four (4) submissions and the results from that survey were also discussed, giving Superintendent Hoyer and the Board members the opportunity to reflect on feedback from public comments. Trustee Thompson stated that an evaluation summary will be provided by the Superintendent Evaluation Committee Chairperson and a formal letter regarding the results will be made public prior to the next regular Board meeting scheduled on March 9, 2026.

D. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments – Trustee Sunchild stated that she appreciated the change in the Superintendent’s evaluation process. She also thanked the Executive Directors for their work and presentation at the work session prior to the Board meeting. Trustee Duff thanked Tom Cabbage and the STAR group for their report. He thanked the Budget Committee for their work. He is also looking forward to attending the Grease production.

1 Trustee Bronson stated that he enjoyed all of the presentations tonight. He thanked the
2 Great Falls Public Schools Foundation and addressed an email that was sent out
3 regarding future funding to the Supportive Arts Program.
4 Trustee Thompson thanked everyone for their reports.

5

6 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

7

8 Vice-Chairperson Skornogoski said the next Regular Board Meetings are scheduled for
9 Monday, March 9, 2026, and Monday, March 23, 2026.

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12 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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14 Vice-Chairperson Skornogoski adjourned the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees
15 at 7:15 p.m.

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Kim Skornogoski, Vice-Chairperson

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Luke Diekhans, Clerk