

REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SCHOOL DISTRICT #6
FEBRUARY 9, 2026

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of School District Six was held at 6:00 P.M., Monday, February 9, 2026, in the Boardroom of the administration offices at 501 Sixth Avenue West, Columbia Falls, Montana.

PRESENT:

Jill Rocksund.....Board Chair
Barbara RileyVice Chair
Megan Upton.....Trustee
Justin Cheff.....Trustee
Heather MumbyTrustee
Amanda Pacheco.....Trustee
Casey HeupelTrustee
Cory DziowgoSuperintendent of Schools

ABSENT:

Keri HillTrustee

Call to order at 6:00 P.M. by Board Chair Rocksund.

Motion by Upton, second by Pacheco, to approve the agenda as presented.
Passed 7-0.

Motion by Pacheco, second by Heupel, to approve the consent agenda.

- Approval of Board Meeting Minutes
- Approval of January Bills
- Approval of Investment Reports

Passed 7-0.

Public Participation:

Approximately six (6) people participated in the meeting remotely via Google Meets.
Approximately seventeen (17) people participated in person.

Student board leaders of the Believe Blue Club presented what is happening at the High School. A Y2K dance is planned for February 21, 2026, and Bleed Blue Week is the following week. Many fun activities are planned with a community cleanup, obstacle course in which the school would like to invite the police and fire departments to join in, and rock decorating for neighbors of the school that have to "put up with the students". On Monday, February 23, the High School will be celebrating the Special Olympics students and volunteers. The Nate Chute Foundation is hosting a consortium meeting with area high schools to share ideas regarding suicide awareness and prevention.

Written Reports:

Board Standing Committees' reports are located on the District's Website.

The Elementary School Principals (Penni Anello, Allison Hawes, and Ted Miller) provided the Board with written reports.

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVE AGENDA

APPROVE CONSENT
AGENDA

PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION:

REPORTS:

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High School Principal, Josh Gibbs, provided the Board with a written report.

Curriculum Director, Mark McCord, provided the Board with a written report.

Verbal Reports:

Trustee Barbara Riley provided the Board with the recent proceedings of the Consortium of State School Board Associations (COSSBA) and the Montana School Board Association (MTSBA). Mrs. Riley shared that the winter board of director's meeting was in January. Revised bylaws will be considered in June to incorporate new school systems, including the additions of charter schools. There were talks regarding property tax rates and some information on the revision of the school funding formula from the State. The executive director of MQEC is retiring and there should be a replacement named by the coming summer. Mrs. Riley also shared that Bridged Health Alliance submitted validation documentation to the State Commissioners of Insurance and Securities for approval. The state trust is moving forward with a start date of July 1, 2026, and the number of participants keeps increasing with approximately 200 school districts and over 15,000 employees covered.

Business Manager/Clerk Dustin Zuffelato conveyed information regarding the upcoming school election to be conducted May 5, 2026. The deadline to file for trustee candidacy was February 9th. There are three open positions for school board and four candidates have applied, so there will be a contested election. Mr. Zuffelato also mentioned that the state requires candidates to report any campaign financing with running for the school board position. The District and the Flathead Rapids soccer program are working on amending the agreement for the field maintenance and field striping. Lastly, Mr. Zuffelato shared that the District is working with the different groups who lease the Sapa-Johnsrud fields in an effort to understand how the baseball program will utilize the fields to support their program upon the expiration of the lease agreement in 2027.

Superintendent Cory Dziowgo updated the Board regarding the High School bond efforts. A steering committee resumed regularly scheduled meetings. Mr. Dziowgo has discussed this project with the PTOs in an effort to help convey information about the project and empower these members of the community to advocate for a successful levy. The elevator replacement at the High School is still ongoing. Mr. Dziowgo also shared the need for an upcoming policy committee meeting. The District's 1000 and 2000 series are ready for review. The new Simbli board management program through MTSBA will make the process easy to navigate.

Board Chair Jill Rocksund had nothing to add at this time.

Action/Discussion Items:

ACTION/
DISCUSSION ITEMS

MOTION TO APPROVE
THE ADDITION OF HS
CLASS - BOOK
LOVE AND LIT

Motion by Riley, second by Mumby, to approve the addition of a high school class- Book Love and Lit, commencing during the SY 26-27.

High School Teacher Carly Weber shared what the addition of this class would entail. The class would be a new elective course and will build a love of reading through young adult literature. The goal for the course is to have students connect to reading for pleasure. Currently the High School offers reading based courses for struggling readers in grades 9 and 10, but nothing for upper classmen. All text selected will be age appropriate and follow the

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state and district guidelines. There will always be skill sets that the students must master rather than just free reading during class times. Principal Josh Gibbs shared the process of adding a class at the High School, the course must be presented to the school administrators, approved by the Board of Trustees and then a surveyed for interest from students and parents. Mr. Gibbs added that this course will not replace the English requirements to graduate.

Public comment was requested and community member Joe O'Rourke expressed concerned with how the District would control the list of books available for students to utilize during this course. After some research, Mr. O'Rourke is worried that the list of books could come from bigger organizations. Mr. O'Rourke recommended parental consent. Curriculum Director Mark McCord commented on how well this course aligns with the District's Portrait of a Learner. The District encourages the students to be empowered, prepared and engaged. Adding the course provides students the choice of the elective course and within the course, the choice of books to read.

Passed 7-0.

Motion by Heupel, second by Pacheco, to approve the addition of high school class- Outdoor Recreation and Lifetime Fitness, commencing during the SY 26-27.

High School Principal Josh Gibbs provided background regarding this course. Last year the school lost a teacher who taught medical terminology and some cross-fit. The school is looking to add back some elective courses in the health and fitness field. There is the Fitness and Sports class available to all grades which is essentially weight training and geared more toward student athletes. The High School is looking for a class that will fit more toward those students who want lifetime activities using the natural resources in the area. Mr. Gibbs added that the financial impact for this course would take some community partnerships for equipment and the school will not be investing in new equipment.

Public comment was requested and High School Teacher Becky Bates recommended limiting the ability for students to take the course more than one time to provide the opportunity for more students to take advantage of the benefits gained from the elective.

Passed 7-0.

Motion by Riley, second by Pacheco, to approve the addition of high school class-Pre-AP Geometry and Statistics, commencing during the SY 26-27.

High School Teacher Shelly Gress mentioned that the new state standards are not being taught due to time restraints in the regular geometry and algebra II courses. Subjects like high school level statistics and probability is being missed and students in college level courses are feeling unprepared. The goal is to reach students not ready for dual credits or AP pre-calculus and this course would mitigate the gap year in a math curriculum that usually happens during a student's senior year.

Public comment was requested and Community Member Joe O'Rourke felt this course was well planned out and he appreciates the work done to get this new class approved.

Passed 7-0.

Review of FY2027 budget projections:

- Attendance data was shared by Superintendent Dziowgo. The trend with student absences is greatly improving over past years. For certified staff, the substitute fill rate is around 72%. The District is looking on how to encourage available substitutes to take open assignments.
- District Business Manager/Clerk Dustin Zuffelato shared the spring enrollment count. Enrollment continues to decline within the District. The District will use the three-

MOTION TO APPROVE
THE ADDITION OF HS
CLASS - OUTDOOR
RECREATION AND
LIFETIME FITNESS

MOTION TO APPROVE
THE ADDITION OF HS
CLASS - PRE-AP GEOM-
ETRY AND STATISTICS

2027 BUDGET
PRESENTATION

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year average to help mitigate the downward trend for FY 2027 budget purposes. It appears that students are dropping out of school and/or going to homeschooling. The components within the funding formula will be receiving an additional 3% from the state, but with the declining enrollment numbers, the additional funds will be reduced down to approximately 1.21% (increase of \$153,667) for the Elementary District and 0.29% (increase of \$19,782) in the High School District for next year. Mr. Zuffelato reviewed the Finance Committees recommendations with the Board: recommendation to not utilize Levy Authority related to high-cost housing; align staffing and class offerings to enrollment; limit impact of staff compensation on FY 2027 budget projections; and remain focused on a successful High School facility bond election.

MOTION TO CANCEL
ELEMENTARY
DISTRICT GENERAL
FUND OVER-BASE
LEVY ELECTION

Motion by Riley, second by Upton, to cancel the Elementary District General Fund Over-Base Levy Election.
Public comment was requested and there was none.
Passed 6-0.

MOTION TO CANCEL
HIGH SCHOOL
DISTRICT GENERAL
FUND OVER-BASE
LEVY ELECTION

Motion by Riley, second by Cheff, to cancel the High School District General Fund Over-Base Levy Election.
Public comment was requested and there was none.
Passed 7-0.

There is no action necessary to hold the Trustee Election in May 2026. There will be a contested election and certification of ballots will occur at the end of March.

MOTION TO APPROVE
THE ATHLETIC TRAIN-
ER CONTRACT WITH
LOGAN HEALTH

Motion by Heupel, second by Mumby, to approve the athletic trainer contract with Logan Health.
Public comment was requested and there was none.
Passed 7-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE
SUBSTITUTE PAY
RATE CHANGES

Motion by Mumby, second by Pacheco, to approve the substitute pay rate changes effective immediately.
Public comment was requested and there was none.
Passed 7-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE
SUBSTITUTE PAY
RATE CHANGES

Motion by Mumby, second by Cheff, to approve the Montana School Board Association membership for the effective dates of July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027.
Public comment was requested and there was none.
Passed 6-0, abstained – Riley.

PERSONNEL:

Personnel:

MOTION TO APPROVE
ELEMENTARY EXTRA
DUTY CONTRACTS

The Board acknowledged the following resignations previously accepted by the Superintendent: Heidi Freeman – Junior High Volleyball Coach; Kami Heinz – Junior High Grade 6 Teacher; Leslie Dimaio – Junior High Language Arts Teacher; Jenasis Falbogart – Part-time Custodian; James Heinz – Non-CDL Driver, High School Science Teacher, High School Assistant Golf Coach, High School Head Track Coach; Rich Pedersen – Full-time Bus Driver; Peter Browne – High School Social Studies Teacher; Troy Bowman – High School Athletic Director/Athletic Trainer.

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Motion by Upton, second by Pacheco, to approve the following Elementary District hiring recommendations: Paula Koch – Junior High Track Coach; Kevin Redfield – Junior High Track Coach

Public comment was requested and there was none.
Passed 6-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE
ELEMENTARY
DISTRICT HIRING
RECOMMENDATIONS

Motion by Heupel, second by Upton, to approve the following High School/District-wide Hiring Recommendations: Natalia Posada Monsalve – Custodian; Cassandra Eshom – Non-CDL Activity Bus Driver; Paula Foster – Non-CDL Activity Bus Driver; Amy Caudill – Non-CDL Activity Bus Driver; Julia Whitman – Non-CDL Activity Bus Driver; Jenni O'Brien – Non-CDL Activity Bus Driver; Brandon Karberg – High School Assistant Soccer Coach; Abigail Holderbaum – High School Girls Health/PE Long-term Substitute

Public comment was requested and there was none.
Passed 7-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE
HIGH SCHOOL AND
DISTRICT HIRING
RECOMMENDATIONS

Motion by Pacheco, second by Mumby, to approve the substitute hires.

Public comment was requested and there was none.
Passed 7-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE
SUBSTITUTE HIRING
RECOMMENDATIONS

Miscellaneous and Future Planning:

- Health Insurance Committee Meeting – Wednesday, February 18, 2026 – 4:00 P.M. – Admin Conference Room
- Student Advisory Meeting – Monday, February 23, 2026 – 11:30 A.M. – Admin Conference Room
- Policy Committee Meeting – Monday, February 23, 2026 – 5:00 P.M. – Admin Conference Room

MISCELLANEOUS
AND FUTURE
PLANNING

Vice Chair Riley commented on the school calendar options for SY2027. Mrs. Riley feels that families are not able to have daycare needs when the Christmas break is a full two weeks.

Trustee Mumby wanted to congratulate the High School Speech and Debate team on placing second place at the state competition.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, Chair Rocksund adjourned the meeting at 7:43 P.M.

MEETING
ADJOURNED



Board Chair



Business Manager/Clerk