

## REGULAR MEETING

January 14, 2026

6:00 PM

The regular meeting of the Baker School Board was called to order by Chairperson Karen Wang at 6pm in the Boardroom of Baker High School. Trustees Dalon Dyke, Cody Strandbakke, Jodi Varner and Jay Quenzer were in attendance. Also present were Superintendent Aaron Skogen, Principals Megan McKeighan and Erin Nevers, Associate Elementary Principal BreElle Williams, Associate Principal/AD Bill Brist, and District Clerk Jennifer Mettler; Technology Director Scott Anderson was absent. Guests were Jocelyn Graham, Karlee Dyke, Avery O'Connor, Madison O'Connor, Megan Varner, Brooklyn Miller, Janalee Ferrell, Jacob Ferrell, Emily Enos, Pam Beach, Missy Thielen, Wyatt Thielen, Sienna Gardner, Brittany Hoversland, Kristi Burns, Nattie Hester, Leah Gardner, Yvonne Skogen, Ellie Gardner, Morgan Sonsalla, Bracyn Hastig, and Jerrick Moser.

### **Consent Items:**

The bills, investment report, activity account report, journal adjustments, and minutes were reviewed by the trustees; claim checks 60505 to 60575 were reviewed and approved. There being no objections, Chairperson Wang approves the consent items as presented.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

### **EDUCATION REPORT – Baker Cross Country Team**

Yvonne Skogen and the Cross Country Team thank the board for the season and opportunity to compete.

They provided a recap of their season for the board.

Cross Country Team leaves the meeting.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### **CLOSE UP TRAVEL ASSISTANCE REQUEST**

Mrs. Hoversland introduces her students to present to the board their request for travel assistance for their Close-Up trip to Washington DC in April.

Jodi Varner moved to approve the travel assistance per student for their Close-Up trip and pay each student traveling to be paid at \$12/hr for the hours worked in concessions as presented. Jay Quenzer seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

Students leave the meeting.

#### **EXTRACURRICULAR HIRING CONSIDERATION**

Mr. Brist presented to the board the recommended hire for High School Tennis Head Coach; it is recommended to hire Keli Bertsch for 2025-26 season. Dalon Dyke moved to hire Mrs. Keli Bertsch for Tennis Head Coach for the 2025-26 season. Cody Strandbakke seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

#### **COMPLEX HIRING CONSIDERATIONS**

Mrs. Kristi Burns makes a recommendation to the board to hire two swim aides/janitors until Lifeguard Certification course in the spring/summer; it is recommended to hire Jackson Bartholomew and Kaine Kendall. Jay Quenzer moved to hire swim aides/janitors as presented for the Baker Recreation Center. Dalon Dyke seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

#### **BOARD POLICY 3630 – CELL PHONE AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Mr. Skogen presented to the board the current cell phone policy and the possibility of being a cell phone free school district in the future. Policy needs to be updated to coincide with the student handbook for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> offense; it is being presented to the board to discuss changes and put in place for the Fall of 2026. Discussion followed.

Jodi Varner moved to table the agenda item until the next meeting. Cody Strandbakke seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

Board Chair requests to move the superintendent evaluation to the end of the meeting.

### **REPORTS:**

#### **1. COMPLEX**

Membership continues to grow; had a night swim in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce with about 59 swimmers. Mid-December put out flyers with holiday member promos/discounts and getting new memberships, starting back Weight Loss Wars from 2018, put out to the public to offer Aqua Fit classes, bringing back the Lazy Man Triathlon starting March 30th. Facility continues to stay busy.

#### **2. TECHNOLOGY, Scott Anderson**

Absent

#### **3. PRINCIPALS**

##### **a. ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS, Erin Nevers & BreElle Williams**

Superb Substitutes– We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to our regular and incredibly consistent substitutes, as well as the college students who have generously stepped in to support our schools over the past few weeks. Leading up to the holidays and during the return of results, when so many

of our staff were out for various reasons, your dedication, flexibility, and positive attitudes have truly kept our buildings thriving. We could not have done it without each of you, and we are deeply grateful for the vital role you play in our school community.

Thank you Mrs. Frye - A special recognition goes to Mrs. Frye, our testing coordinator extraordinaire. We truly appreciate her outstanding efforts in keeping our staff organized and informed for both district and state assessments. She communicates testing schedules clearly, ensures every student completes their assessments smoothly, and consistently takes initiative without needing reminders. Mrs. Frye's dedication and reliability make a huge difference—thank you for all that you do!

FastBridge Winter Screening - Ends January 30th

MAST - Window 2 - January 12th- March 6th

SEL with Fallon County Mental Health Council

20 Minute Talk on Resiliency

After-School Staff Mindfulness & Connection Session

Chromebook Use & "I Love to Read" Month–February

Beginning in February, we will be implementing an "I Love to Read" month, during which Chromebook and iPad use will be significantly limited across classrooms. Our goal is to intentionally reduce reliance on devices for a set period of time.

Research shows a strong connection between device use, emotional regulation, attention, and behavior. This initiative will allow us to collectively observe how reduced technology impacts focus, behavior, and overall classroom climate.

Student Teacher –We are excited to welcome Jasmine Qualley, a Baker High School graduate, who will be joining us for the second half of the year as a student teacher in Mrs. Johnson's 6th-grade classroom.

Spartans of the Month–November/December

Lincoln:

2nd Grade: Raena Webber, 2nd Grade: Lex Varner

Longfellow:

4th Grade: Espyn Palluck, 5th Grade: Harper Renner

**b. HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, Megan McKeighan**

**Completed Trainings and Events:**

End of Semester 1 on Thursday, January 8th

Sportsmanship Assembly

Mental Health Screener was completed, thank you Mrs. Burdick for all your hard work organizing this and having students complete the screener.

**Quarter Two Data:**

Enrollment is up 6 students

Behavior Referrals are down in general

Suspension days are down in the high school which would indicate a decrease in major infractions

We have less high school students failing classes

We are continuing to struggle with attendance, full absences and tardies

Staff Meeting on Tuesday, we discussed cell phone policy, backpack policy, attendance/truancy, and adding an advisory/homeroom class period.

**Upcoming Events and Initiatives:**

Smithsonian Update and O'Fallon County Museum Collaboration: The O'Fallon County Museum is one of only 18 organizations nationwide to be accepted into the Smithsonian Institution's "Democracy in Dialogue" program for Spring 2026.

Over a three-month virtual exchange, Baker High School students will explore how our own history, values, and resilience fit into the broader American story, and share that perspective with students from other communities across the country. As the U.S. prepares to celebrate its 250th birthday, this national program highlights the idea that America's story is best told through the communities that built it -- places like Baker.

As part of the program, students will create a multimedia project that highlights Baker's history, people, and place in the American story, sharing our community's perspective during the nation's 250th anniversary. It's a chance to put Fallon County on the national map while honoring the people, places, and experiences that make our corner of Montana unique.

**c. ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL/ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR, Bill Brist**

High School and MS Basketball: Results from December and the first part of January have the Lady Spartans with a perfect record (6-0) and the Boys' Varsity are currently 4-2. Upcoming games – From Jan. 16 to Feb. 17, the Baker HS teams will play a total of 9 game dates with district

opponents and also games against Bowman (1/27) and Miles City (2/17). The results of these games will help to determine their seeding for the district 3B Tournament.

Upcoming: Friday, 1/16 @ Lodge Grass, Saturday, 1/17 - Huntley Project at home, 1/22 @ Colstrip, 1/24 St. Labre at home. The MS Boys opened with games against Miles City last Saturday, and will travel to Dickinson tomorrow. The boys 4/5th grade team will scrimmage prior to the game against Harding County on Monday, 1/19.

HS Wrestling: The Boys and Girls teams attended tournaments at Sidney, Glasgow, Huntley Project, Bozeman and Hettinger. Regular season contests will continue through the month of January with the Divisional Tournament being hosted at Malta on Feb. 13th and 14th.

Individually for the girls, Jayda Harbaugh has four tournament 1st place finishes and is undefeated in all of her matches (18-0). Kylie Schwartz is close winning all of her matches with one lone defeat (23-1). Ryann Gorder has placed in every tournament and has a 21-3 record.

Speech & Drama and Debate: The final regular season competition will be in Glendive this weekend. The State qualifier and Divisional event will be held at Shepherd on January 24th. The State event will be held in Townsend on the 30-31st.

Baker FFA: Three Baker HS students attended the Fusion Leadership Conference in Helena along with Assistant Advisor Dale Schmidt. This included Daniel Schmidt, Casey Koenigsfeld & Jaxon Lyson. Next up for Baker FFA will be the LDE Days hosted in Rosebud on January 19th.

Sportsmanship Assembly: A short HS/MS Assembly was held on January 8th in an effort to help educate students to further make correct choices in regard to exceptional sportsmanship at all of our Baker HS/MS activities. The Baker Pride in Conduct poster was reviewed.

Montana High School Association Annual Meeting: The MHSA Annual Meeting will begin with Preconference meetings held on Sunday (1/18) and will include planning meetings for B-C Tennis, Class B Representatives, Southern B Division, and the MIAAA annual meeting (Montana Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association). The MHSA Annual Meeting will be on Monday (1/19). This will include a pair of general sessions along with Classification Caucuses. The goal of the Annual meeting is to provide the opportunity for member schools to provide input within the rules, laws and legislation of the Association. Proposals to be considered during the voting session have been included in this month's board packet. Proposals are as follows:

1. Proposal to Amend Membership By-Law -Contest Requirements for Non-Member Schools-----1  
*Presented by: Lone Peak High School*
2. Proposal to Amend Dues By-Law - 6 Player Playoff Profit -----1-2  
*Presented by: Highwood High School*
3. Proposal to Amend By-Law for Expedited Hearings to the MHSA Executive Board -----2-3  
*Presented by: MHSA Executive Board*
4. Proposal to Amend Eligibility By-Law to allow for Academic Hardship-----3  
*Presented by: MHSA Executive Board*
5. Proposal to Add Transfer By-Law for Homeschool or non-public schools -----3  
*Presented by: Red Lodge High School*
6. Proposal to Amend Awards Rule By-Law – Change Requirements -----4-5  
*Presented by: MHSA Executive Board*
7. Proposal to Amend General Penalties By-Laws -Spectators Ejections -----5  
*Presented by: MHSA Executive Board*

#### **4. SUPERINTENDENT, Aaron Skogen**

Current Openings: Business Education, Elementary Education (received applications), Head of Maintenance, Assistant High School Tennis, Middle School Track.

Negotiations w/BEA: 3rd Session, Wednesday January 28th @ 5:30 p.m.

Consideration of Therapy Dog: talked with Glendive Schools

Next scheduled board meeting is February 11, 2026 at 6 pm.

All guests leave the meeting at 7:49 pm.

Chairperson Wang calls for recess at 7:49pm.

Meeting reconvenes at 7:56 pm.

#### **ACTION ITEM:**

##### **SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION – EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chairperson Wang requests to go into executive session to discuss the Superintendents evaluation.

Executive session starts at 7:56 pm.

Meeting reconvenes at 9:06 pm.

Chairperson Wang recommends to offer Mr. Skogen a 3 year contract, 1% increase to base contract for each of the 3 years (\$112,616, \$113,742 and \$114,880), increasing the benefit stipend from \$2500 to \$3500, 260 day contract to 250 day contract and guarantee bonus of \$2,000 for 2026-27 with bonus in 2027-28 and 2028-29 contingent on oil and gas revenue received, language to be determined at a later date with the administrative

handbook. Jay Quenzer moved to approve the superintendent contract as presented. Dalon Dyke seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

There being no other business, meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

*s/ Jennifer Mettler*

Clerk

*s/ Karen Wang*

Chairman