

REGULAR MEETING

February 11, 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, and Jodi Varner were in attendance; Jay Quenzer was absent. Also present were Superintendent Aaron Skogen, Principals Megan McKeighan, Associate Elementary Principal BreElle Wacker, Associate Principal/AD Bill Brist, District Clerk Jennifer Mettler; Technology Director Scott Anderson and Principal Erin Nevers was absent. Guests were Kristi Burns, Katy Kennedy, Heidi Barth and Amanda Tunby.

Consent Items:

The bills, investment report, activity account report, journal adjustments, and minutes were reviewed by the trustees; claim checks 60576 to 60621 were reviewed and approved. There being no objections, Chairperson Wang approves the consent items as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

EDUCATION REPORT

Katy Kennedy, Principal of Washington Middle School in Glendive, and Heidi Barth and their therapy dog, Kallie, visit with the board about the success of the therapy dog program in Glendive Schools.

ACTION ITEMS

LONG TERM SUBSTITUTE CONTRACT CONSIDERATION

Mr. Skogen presents to the board recommendation to hire a long-term substitute for the 5th grade. Mrs. Sheila O'Connor has been contacted to take the position for the remainder of the school year and she has accepted. The contract will be figured on a daily rate based on her position on the certified salary schedule. Jodi Varner moved to approve the long-term substitute contract with Mrs. Sheila O'Connor for the remaining 2025-26 school year. Dalon Dyke seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

FALLON COUNTY INTERLOCAL HEALTH NURSE AGREEMENT

Mr. Skogen presents to the board the interlocal agreement with Fallon County Health Department for nurse services. Fallon County would like to renew the agreement for a five-year period beginning July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2031; annual cost will continue to be \$14,700 for health services.

Dalon Dyke moved to approve the Interlocal Health Nurse Agreement between the Baker School District and Fallon County as presented. Cody Strandbakke seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

EXTRACURRICULAR HIRING CONSIDERATION(S)

Mr. Brist presents to the board the recommendation for extracurricular positions; it is recommended to hire Mr. Seth Kendall for middle school track and Mrs. Rachel Dargatz for high school tennis assistant coach. Jodi Varner moved to hire Mrs. Rachel Dargatz as high school tennis assistant coach and Mr. Seth Kendall as middle school track coach for the 2025-26 school year. Cody Strandbakke seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

3RD QUARTER 2025 OIL AND GAS ALLOCATION

Mrs. Mettler presents to the board the allocation of oil and gas for the current quarter. Revenue received this quarter is \$530,026.57 and it is recommended to deposit the revenue into the Flex and Building Reserve Funds; flex fund \$330,026.57 and building reserve \$200,000.

Dalon Dyke moved to reallocate the oil and gas revenue received on or about February 1, 2026 to the funds presented in the total amount of \$530,026.57, reserving the right to reallocate the future payments when received. Jodi Varner seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

BOARD POLICY 3630 CELL PHONE & OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Mr. Skogen presented to the board the possible changes to the cell phone policy for next school year. The policy is up for discussion at this time and no changes will be made. The goal of the policy will be to restrict cell phones on campus and only to be used before and after school and not allowed to use them during the day.

Discussion followed.

No board action required at this time but will be developed and presented at the next meeting for first reading.

REPORTS:

1. **COMPLEX, Kristi Burns (left early)**

2. **TECHNOLOGY, Scott Anderson (absent)**

Nothing to report today.

3. **PRINCIPALS**

a. **ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS, Erin Nevers (absent) & BreElle Wacker**

Thank you Mrs. Lesh – Elementary Book Swap and Accelerated Reading

In recognition of February as I Love to Read Month, both Lincoln and Longfellow Elementary are engaging in an Elementary Book Swap initiative, an idea developed and implemented by Mrs. Lesh. Students are invited to bring in books they have already read or no longer wish to keep and exchange them for new books. The swap includes a wide range of reading levels and genres, ensuring all students have access to a variety of engaging materials. Students have shown tremendous enthusiasm for the opportunity to bring home “new” books and share their own with peers. They are leaving school excited to read

Mrs. Lesh has also continued her support of the Accelerated Reading (AR) program. Students earn points through independent and group reading and are recognized with prizes at various milestone levels. Her consistency in this program ensures that students’ reading growth and achievements are celebrated, helping to motivate and instill a love of reading across our elementary schools. Thank you for your continued efforts and hard work Mrs. Lesh!

Elementary - No Chromebook February

Throughout February, our elementary schools are participating in “No Chromebook February,” an initiative designed to encourage increased reading and reduced screen time. Teachers have fully embraced the initiative, encouraging students to put away devices and choose a book to read instead. Student feedback has been positive, with minimal complaints and strong participation. This initiative aligns with growing research linking excessive technology use to increased anxiety and dysregulation, particularly in young learners. By creating intentional opportunities for students to disconnect from screens and engage in reading, we are supporting students’ academic growth as well as their social-emotional well-being.

2026 Principals Conference

We attended the Montana School Administrators Conference in Helena, which provided valuable professional learning and leadership development opportunities. There are always meaningful opportunities for collaboration with other administrators and strategies that can be applied immediately within our schools. We are grateful for the district’s support in allowing us to attend. The following were a few of our key takeaways:

The lowest accepted behavior becomes our culture.

Reinforces the importance of maintaining high expectations for both staff and students

Dr. Charles Fay - Love and Logic in the Classroom - provided practical strategies for supporting students and families through positive, respectful discipline and communication.

Dr. Shane Neiderman - “Fight, Flight, Facilitate,” focused on navigating conflict effectively with students, parents, and staff. He emphasized the importance of engaging and exploring before responding, and shared the analogy that most conflicts are “mosquitoes” rather than “moose”—reminding leaders to respond thoughtfully and proportionally.

Mini Calf Visit

On Wednesday, February 4, Ashlee Moore brought her mini calf to school for all students to see and learn about. The visit was a wonderful hands-on experience for our students, and the calf was a big hit with everyone. It is one of the cutest calves ever! Thank you to Ashlee for sharing this special opportunity with our students!

Great Potato Olympics– Longfellow

Longfellow students are participating in the Great Potato Olympics, a cross-curricular learning experience designed to engage students creatively while reinforcing academic skills. Students are designing potatoes to represent countries participating in the Winter Olympics, incorporating traditional clothing, national colors, and culturally representative elements. This project supports creativity, cultural awareness, and student engagement while connecting learning across multiple subject areas. Thank you to Mrs. Hastig for organizing this idea!

A Parade of “Athletes” will be held on Thursday at 3:20 p.m., allowing students to share their work and practice speaking skills.

Students are completing an Athlete Profile that includes basic information and a short biography, building research and writing skills.

Olympic-themed events will take place on Friday, including Potato Toss, Potato Roll, Potato Dance-Off, and Potato Bowling, encouraging teamwork and problem-solving.

Fourth grade will continue the project next week with a math extension, where students will measure distances, convert measurements, and find averages.

The project connects learning across subjects, including reading, writing, math, social studies, and physical education, through hands-on activities.

January Students of the Month: Lincoln Students - Jaxon Brewer and Nadia Lineback; Longfellow Brynn Haan and Riley Tiedemann.

b. HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, Megan McKeighan

Completed Trainings and Events:

Staff Meeting on Tuesday. Mr. Anderson reviewed email security and a recent phishing attempt, as well as other tech concerns.

We have started our tutoring program and have had multiple students staying after school to work on homework, as well as attend on Fridays 9-11AM.

Upcoming Events and Initiatives:

HOSA Field Day: February 23rd, students will travel to FMC and FCEMS to practice and learn new skills for their state competition in March.

Basketball Fun Friday Activity: Our varsity basketball players will be coordinating a Fun Friday activity for grades 3-5 in the high school gym. They will also ref a scrimmage for these students during half time of the JV games on Friday.

We are working on a calendar for the upcoming school year, and this also includes a transition to an 8 period day at the high school, with one of those periods being a 15 minute advisory/homeroom.

What is advisory?

- Daily 15 minute homeroom with the same teacher and the same students
- Short, intentional, sustainable
- Consistency > Length
- Focused on connection, academic check-ins, SEL support and learning, communication

Why Advisory?

- Stronger Student-Adult Relationships
- Each student has one identified adult who knows them well and sees them daily.
- Improves school culture, more students know more staff and vice versa
- A consistent peer group builds community and belonging
- Improved scheduling (can hold class meetings, announcements, group spirit photos, etc. during this time)
- Reinforces school routines and expectations

Benefits for School Culture

- Stronger connections across the building
- Improved attendance and engagement
- More consistent communication
- Equity: every student receives support
- Proactive rather than reactive system

c. ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL/ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR, Bill Brist

Wrestling Teams prepare for Final Tournaments: The Boys and Girls Wrestling teams will be competing at the Eastern B/C Division Tournament (hosted by Malta HS on February 12th and 13th). Individual qualifiers from this event will compete at the MHSAA All Class State Championship Tournament in Billings beginning on Thursday (2/19-21).

High School Basketball set to close out regular season: The Varsity Basketball teams look to wrap up its regular season with games against Colstrip and St. Labre at the end of this week. They will begin the post season with trips to Colstrip for the District 3B Tournament (Feb. 25-28) with the top 3 team finishers moving on to the Southern B Tournament to be held at the Metra in Billings on March 4-7.

Pep Band and Cheer Squad to perform at Basketball Tournaments: Both the Pep Band and the Cheer Squad will perform during the upcoming Basketball Tournaments representing Baker High School during the pre-game, half-time and post-game time slots.

Speech and Drama finish Season in Townsend: The Speech and Drama teams competed at the B/C East Division Championship and came away with 5 qualifiers and a third place in the team scoring. Grace Gunderson and Michael Hanson placed 4th in the Humorous Theater, Sidney Swanke and Delilah Downing finished 4th in the Dramatic Theater, and DeeAnna Hess finished 6th in the Dramatic Solo event. The team finished their season in Townsend with their participation at the State B-C Championships. Sidney Swanke and Delilah Downing finished in 7th place at State in the Dramatic Theater event, while DeeAnna Hess earned her way to the semi-finals in the Dramatic Solo event.

Music Department Participates at the Americanism Concert: The Americanism concert was held on Feb. 10th at the Longfellow Gymnasium. This event, hosted by the American Legion, featured several musical ensembles including groups from both the Middle and High School Music Departments. Upcoming: Middle & Elementary School Music departments will participate in a elementary level music festival held here in Baker on March 9 & 10.

FFA participates in District Contests: The FFA team competed in qualifying events for Meats, Vet Science and Floriculture at the Winter Eastern Districts, held at Miles City on Feb. 6th & 7th. They are scheduled to compete in the events of Mechanics, Agronomy, & Food Science at the Spring Eastern Districts, held in Glendive on Feb. 16th.

Spring Sports – Tennis, Golf and Track & Field – Start Practice on 3/16 - Academic Olympics & State BPA The Spring Sports Parents Night will be held on Tuesday, March 10th. Academic Olympics MS-3/2, HS 3/3 in Miles City. State BPA will be in Billings on March 8th, 9th and 10th.

4. SUPERINTENDENT, Aaron Skogen

Current openings: Business education, elementary education (2), head of maintenance, custodian, library, world languages, English and elementary paraprofessional.

Resignations: Kolleen Gustad, Julie Elias, Hillary Frank, Ashli Wiedmer, and Cassandra Ralls.

Next negotiation session will be February 23, 2026 at 5:30pm.

Calendar Committee: first draft is being developed.

Next scheduled board meeting is March 23, 2026 at 6 pm.

There being no other business, meeting adjourned at 7:37 pm.

s/ Jennifer Mettler

Clerk

s/ Karen Wang

Chairman