

## Hellgate Elementary Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting March 16, 2026

6:00 p.m.

**OPENING**

The Board of Trustees of Hellgate Elementary School District #4 met in regular session on Monday, March 16, 2026. The meeting was held in-person. The meeting was called to order by Board Chairman, Tom McLaughlin. Trustees participating were: Rich Thornock, Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier, Beth Herron Scott and Scott Rouse. Trustee Tom Cook was absent from the meeting. Superintendent Molly Blakely and District Clerk Justine Reese were present for the meeting. District staff participating included Brent Heist (Building 1 Principal), Tiffany Hobbs (Building 3 Principal), Jamie Courville (Building 4 Principal), Jordan Capp (Teacher), Christy Wasem (Teacher). Community members in attendance included: Melissa Kleschen (parent), Max Mickelson (student), Miles Hernandez (student), Emily Hernandez (student), Kimberly Hernandez (parent), Anthony Hernandez (parent), Kelsey Farago (parent), Brody Farago (student), Andrew Sand (student), Amber Sand (parent), Kelton Hundelt (student), Ashley Hundelt (parent), Hilary Woods (parent PTA), Nikki Keen (parent), London Keene (student), Angela Reichert (parent), Samuel Reichert (parent), Megan Powell (parent). There were up to 16 total guests/participants in the meeting, in-person.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment at the meeting.

**HEEA**

There was no update from the HEEA.

**RECOGNITION OF STUDENTS AND STAFF**

There was no recognition at this meeting.

**BOARD CORRESPONDENCE**

Trustees reviewed the monthly newsletter from OPI.

**REVIEW OF THE MINUTES-REGULAR MEETING 2-09-2026**

A motion was made by Kallie Gatzemeier to approve the minutes from the February 9, 2026 regular meeting. There was no discussion on the topic. The motion was seconded by Rich Thornock. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

**REVIEW OF THE MINUTES-SPECIAL MEETING 2-19-2026**

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the minutes from the February 19, 2026 regular meeting. There was no discussion on the topic. The motion was seconded by Scott Rouse. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

**REVIEW OF THE WARRANTS-FEBRUARY 2026**

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the February 2026 claims. There was no discussion on the topic. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

**REVIEW OF BUDGET REPORTS**

Trustees reviewed the budget reports for February 2026.

**REVIEW OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

A motion was made by Scott Rouse to approve the February 2026 Student Activities Report. There was no discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom

McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

**ACCEPTANCE OF CLASSIFIED STAFF RETIREMENT:**

A motion was made by Jacquelyn Ryan to accept the retirement of Ms. Lori King, paraprofessional, effective June 10, 2026 (letter available in official board packet). There was no discussion on the topic. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

**ACCEPTANCE OF CLASSIFIED STAFF RESIGNATION:**

A motion was made by Scott Rouse to accept the resignation of Mr. Christopher Swartz, food service employee, effective February 27, 2026 (letter available in official board packet). There was no discussion on topic. The motion was seconded by Beth Herron. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

**CERTIFIED STAFF HIRING CONSIDERATION**

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the hiring of the following certified staff for the 26-27 school year: Ms. Brynn Appel, Middle School Spanish (one year only), Ms. Tiffany Gardanier, Middle School Librarian. There was no discussion on the topic. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

**WORLD COMPETITION FOR ROBOTICS TEAM CONSIDERATION**

A motion was made by Scott Rouse to approve the Mechanical Masters to travel to and compete in the World Robotics Competition in Ontario, Canada June 17-20, 2026. The Mechanical Masters were present for the meeting and provided an overview of their achievement. The students detailed out how they planned to fundraise the cost to attend the competition. The Canada Cup is held at Brock University in Ontario Canada, 30 countries will be present at the competition and it is invitation only. The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

**HIRING OF TRACK COACHES CONSIDERATION:**

A motion was made by Beth Herron to approve the following personnel to be track coaches for the 2025-2026 season: Head Coaches: Dale Asanovich and Adelle Donohue; Assistant Coaches: Shane Byers, Samantha Rasmussen, Derek Dungan, Michael Straw, Emily Jones, Brynn Appel, Amber Tempel. There was no discussion on the agenda item. The motion was seconded by Scott Rouse. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST CONSIDERATIONS:**

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve leave of absence requests for the 2026-2027 school year for Ms. Olivia Moore, 4th grade teacher and Ms. Kim Kenner, building three Special Education teacher (letters available in official board packet). There was brief discussion on the topic. Kim Kenner presented her request to the board. The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom

McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

**CONSIDERATION OF EARLY ADMISSION TO KINDERGARTEN:**

A motion was made by Kallie Gatzemeier to approve early admission to kindergarten for the 2026-2027 school year for a student who exceeds the established age cutoff by 10 days. In accordance with district practice, exceptions to the age requirement may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Administration recommends conditional acceptance of the student into kindergarten, contingent upon a 30-day trial period at the start of the school year. During this time, the student's academic readiness, social-emotional development, and overall adjustment to the kindergarten environment will be closely monitored by school staff. There was brief discussion on the agenda item. The motion was seconded by Beth Herron. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION WALK CONSIDERATION**

A motion was made by Scott Rouse to approve the high school graduation walk at the conclusion of the 2025-2026 school year. There was discussion related to the safety and security of the consideration. Superintendent Blakely responded with safety procedures that will occur to ensure the safety of students and staff. Minimal disruption to the school day is expected. The motion was seconded by Beth Herron. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion was Rich Thornock. The motion carried by majority vote.

**SUBSTITUTE HIRING CONSIDERATION:**

A motion was made by Jacquelyn Ryan to approve the following substitutes for the 2026-2027 school year: Micah Larsen, Deetya Herman, Kalei Smith, Hailey Camp. There was no discussion on the agenda item. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

**ADOPT RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO IMPOSE CHANGE IN LEVIES:**

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to adopt a resolution to impose a change in levies for fiscal year 2026-2027 (full detail available in official board packet). District Clerk, Justine Reese, provided an overview of the change in levies for the upcoming budget year 26-27. The motion was seconded by Beth Herron. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

**OUT OF DISTRICT STUDENT APPROVAL CONSIDERATION**

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the following out-of-district students who began the 2025-2026 school year as in-district students but have since moved out of the district (Board Policy #3141): S.O. 8<sup>th</sup> grade, J.O. 4th grade, L.O. 3rd grade, E.O. Kinder, S.B. 8th grade. There was no discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Scott Rouse. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

**MULTIDISTRICT AGREEMENT ADDENDUM CONSIDERATION:**

A motion was made by Scott Rouse to accept an addendum to the existing multidistrict agreement with Frenchtown School District. This addendum allows both parties to benefit from the expansion of funding opportunities made allowable by House Bill 567 during the 2025 legislative session. There was no discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom

McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

*Daycare RFP:* A Request for Proposals has been completed and will be distributed next week. Superintendent Blakely provided an overview of the need in the district and the increase in leave due to daycares closing.

*Give Thx Grant:* The district was selected as one of 100 schools nationwide to receive the Give Thx Grant (valued at \$13,000), which supports student learning focused on gratitude.

*Chick-fil-A CLASS Program:* The district received approximately \$750 in lunch assistance through the Chick-fil-A CLASS program.

*2026–2027 Academic Calendar:* The proposed calendar is under consideration. Spring break will need to align with Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS), which has not yet finalized its calendar. Alignment is important due to families with students in both districts.

*University Residency Program:* Four candidates have applied to be placed at Hellgate Elementary for a one-year residency/mentorship program, cooperating teachers would receive a \$6,000 stipend.

*Bridged Health Alliance:* The state public school health insurance Trust was officially established.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

There were no committee reports at the meeting.

#### **PRINCIPALS' REPORTS**

Building 1: Brent Heist reported MAP/MAST testing just finished up. Read Across America Week was a success. Thank you to the librarians for coordinating One Book One Read community event.

Building 2: Absent

Building 3: Tiffany Hobbs reported it is spring concert season. Parent teacher conferences are coming in the week. Thank you to the PTA for providing dinners for teachers during parent teacher conferences. The PTA's glow party in building 3 was a big success.

Building 4: Jamie Courville reported it was odd not having spring break until April. Wrestling is just finishing up the season and EIS testing is also almost complete.

SPED:

Curriculum:

#### **NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The next regular meeting of the Board will be April 13, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment at the meeting.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION: Evaluation of Superintendent and District Clerk**

Superintendent Blakely requested a closed session for the Superintendent and District Clerk evaluations. Board Chair McLaughlin granted the request and called for a closed session of the board, "The next matter to come before the Board for consideration is a personal matter and in this connection it has been determined as follows: (1) that the matter of individual privacy is involved, (2) that such privacy demands protection of the individual for the sake of reputation and otherwise that little, if anything could be gained by publicly disclosing the information to be discussed, & (3) that the demand of individual privacy, in this matter clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure." Guests were excused from the meeting. The Trustees, Superintendent and District Clerk remained for the evaluations. The meeting was closed at 6:59 p.m.

#### ***Executive Session***

The Board came out of executive session at 7:59 p.m.

#### **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

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Tom McLaughlin, Board Chair

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Justine Reese, Business Manager/Clerk