

Minutes

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES EAST HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 9

Call to Order: Trustees of School District No 9 held a meeting on May 11, 2026. Chairman Walter called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM.

In Attendance

Trustees Present: Chairman Scott Walter, Vice Chair Tyrel Murfitt, Stacy Baird, Tiffany Richardson, Tristan Ulmer, Martin Balukas and Mark Diehl.

Superintendent Dan Rispens, Clerk Jane Knudsen, District Secretary Jen Cordell, Athletic Director Shaun Murgel and Technology Coordinator Eric Power.

Principals: Brandon Crusat and Paul Condon. Vice Principals: Michael Kemper and Trish Klock. Matt Krantz.

Visitors: Kate Johnson and other members of the public.

Review the Agenda

No comments from the board.

Hear the Public

None.

Reports

Student Report

Xavier Nunn gave his last report as Student Representative to the Board.

Administrator Reports

The individual principals, the Athletic Director and Technology Coordinator provided their reports as part of the board packet.

Trustee and Committee Reports of the K – 12 Board

Personnel – see consent items.

Infrastructure/Transportation – update on Valley Drive.

Strategic Planning – Scan for Future Needs

The Superintendent will contact Debra Silk about our updated strategic plan.

Trustee Richardson asked about adding school funding to our plan to better inform the community.

Notifications of Retirements and Resignations

The Following Staff Resignations Have Previously Been Accepted:

Olivia Brus	-EVMS Special Education
Philesha Merriman	-PPE Tutor
Lindsey McGill	-Radley Tutor
Teri Valvoda	-Radley Para
Tom Stevison	-Bus Driver

Consent Action Items

Board Minutes

Regular Meeting April 13, 2026

Infrastructure & Transportation Committee April 23, 2026

Long Term Infrastructure Committee April 27, 2026

Personnel Committee May 1, 2026

Approval of Former and New Warrants (Claims #51949-52032)

Surrounding School District Student Enrollment Approval

Recommended Employment of Staff:

Heather Countryman	-Summer Program Instructor
Josh Jones	-Summer Program Instructor
Tyler Patrick	-EVMS Teacher
Richard Donofrio	-Boys Head Soccer Coach
Ray Sebestyn	-Assistant Football Coach
Dante Vallance	-Assistant Football Coach
Duncan Kraft	-Assistant Football Coach
Bret Charlton	-EHHS Summer Program Instructor
Riley Samson	-EHHS Summer Program Instructor
Alex Reid	-EHHS Summer Program Instructor
Shelby Holmes	-EHHS Summer Program Instructor
Ty Murray	-EHHS Summer Program Instructor
Derek Bonogofsky	-Bus Driver
Cody Criner	-Substitute
Janie Barfuss	-Substitute
Jillian Hayter	-Assistant Volleyball Coach
Bill Casey	-Assistant Golf Coach
Gunner Gleasman	-EHHS Social Studies Teacher
Kira Kuhlman	-Radley Special Education Teacher
Preston Deshner	-Summer Program Paraprofessional
Olivia Nett	-PPE Instructional Tutor
Kayleigh Neal	-EHHS Social Studies

To: Dan Rispens, District #9 Superintendent and Board of Trustees

Fr: Brandon Crusat, Eastgate and Prickly Pear Elementary Principal

Re: 2026-27 Hiring Recommendations

Certified Staff Recommendation for 2026-27

I recommend the following **tenured** staff members be rehired for the 2026-27 school year:

Beck, Camryn	Bender, Marne	Dachs, Shana
Fetherston, Tana	Graham, Kayla	Griffiths, Katie
Haas, Jolette	Hansen, Catherine	Hager, Jen
Heidinger, McKenzie	Johnson, Kate	Krantz, Matthew
Krause, Jenni	Lunday, Nancy	Mikesell, Ashlee
Odegard, Nikki	Odermann, Jannice	Ophus, Kristin
Petersen, Kara	Phelps, Kelsey	Pollington, Amy
Salerno, Alyssa	Sandau, Sarah	Shaul, Alyssa
Simonson, Adrienne	Vetsch, Erin	Warner, Jenn
Wilson, Jillian		

I recommend the following **nontenured** staff be rehired for the 2026-27 school year:

Jones, Joshua

I recommend the following **nontenured** staff be rehired for the 2026-27 school year and be awarded the status of tenure:

Beveridge, Rachel
Power, Christina

Burke, Samantha

Lehman, Eric

Classified Staff Recommendation for 2026-27

I recommend the following **classified** staff be rehired for the 2026-27 school year.

Boltz, Laura
Combs, Kayla
Kalous, Bethany
Madsen, Erika
Mergenthaler, Hillary
Terry, Alyssa
Umsted, Kerstie

Burgess, Nicole
Elgen, Kendra
Kalous, Kari
Cole -McLaughlin, Connie
Menius, Alicia
Tyler, Lew

Clark, Natalie
Foster, Monica
Kuhl, Joseph
Rivers, Caitlin

To: Dan Rispens, District #9 Superintendent and Board of Trustees
Fr: Gus Somerfeld, Radley Elementary Principal
Re: 2026-27 Hiring Recommendations

Certified Staff Recommendation for 2026-27

I recommend the following **tenured** staff members be rehired for the 2025-26 school year:

Bright, Rachel
Countryman, Heather
Haines, Tricia
Mazanec, Traci
Penner, Julie
Senecal, Katherine
Teders, Vashti

Clement, Carrie
Dusenberry, Camilla
Krantz, Matt
Metzger, Kim
Rubio-Pratt, Veronica
Snarr, Karley

Cloeren, Michael
Finstad, Erin
Linder, Ashley
Olson, Karly
Scoles, Jennifer
Speicher, Kari

I recommend the following **non-tenured** staff be rehired for the 2026-27 school year:

Arnold, Mekenzie

Countryman, Amber

Harrington, Tara

Lesofski, Caitlyn

I recommend the following **non-tenured** staff be rehired for the 2026-27 school year and be awarded the status of tenure:

Cathcart, Bethany

Classified Staff Recommendation for 2026-27

I recommend the following **classified** staff be rehired for the 2026-27 school year:

Baker, Savannah
Hansen, Isabella

Cavalli, Rachel
Heigh, Alex

Deshner, Preston
Hogue, Abby

Jatkowski, Darlene
Ryan, Debra
Yeary, Melinda

Lashway, Michelle
Smith, Emily

Owens, Megan
Terry, MaryAnn

To: Dan Rispens, District #9 Superintendent and Board of Trustees
Fr: Lynsi Morris, EVMS Principal
Re: 2026-27 Hiring Recommendations

Certified Staff Recommendation for 2026-27

I recommend the following **tenured** staff members be rehired for the 2026-27 school year:

Arntson, Troy	Brown, Bryanna	Senecal, Katherine
Gates, Carolyn	Horne, Cory	McLaughlin, Whitney
Metzger, Kimberly	Murphree, Kaitlyn	Walsh, Beth
Schoppe, Tamika	Somerfeld, Holly	VanNice, Kevin
Wigen, Jodi	Lance, Sophia	Cantrell, Jonathan
Berg, Christina	Jones, KD	

I recommend the following **nontenured** staff be rehired for the 2026-27 school year:

Kraft, Duncan	Kraft, Rosie	Martinez, Melanie
Yackley, Jaden	Wigen, Samantha	Patrick, Tyler
Wallis, Caleb	Pendergast, Tess	Guenzel, Maya
Cooney, Alexis		

I recommend the following **nontenured** staff be rehired for the 2026-27 school year and be awarded the status of tenure:

Vermillion, Kara Davis, Lucy Sebestyen, Ray Purcell, Brooklyn

Classified Staff Recommendation for 2026-27

I recommend the following **classified** staff be rehired for the 2026-27 school year.

Hines, Jennifer	Palmer, Summer	Mullen, Rachel
Dunlap, Debbie	Maness, Cody	Olds, Gracie

To: Dan Rispens, District #9 Superintendent and Board of Trustees
Fr: Paul Condon, EHHS Principal; Trish Klock, EHHS Vice Principal
Re: 2026-27 Hiring Recommendations

Certified Staff Recommendation for 2026-2027

I recommend the following **tenured** staff members be rehired for the 2026-2027 school year:

Ty Ridgeway	Carson Bender	Jana Nygaard
Cole Bass	Tamika Schoppe	Ashley Torgerson
Sarah Cobb	Victoria Curtiss	Whitney Mitchell
Casey Harris	Jon Moore	Christa Schoenfeld
Marne Bender	Nicole Hash	Bret Charlton
JD Ferris	Shelby Holmes	Ty Murray
Tabitha Smail	Riley Sampson	Kelli Kerpa
Alex Johnson	Amanda Countryman	Ethan Hoffman
Rebecca Bergman	Andrew Elliott	Brandy Gallups

I recommend the following **nontenured** staff be rehired for the 2026-2027 school year:

Trinity Nelson Samantha Wigen Hanna Carey Nick Edlund

I recommend the following **nontenured** staff be rehired for the 2026-2027 school year and be awarded the status of tenure:

Cody Tofflemire Breanna Humphrey-Gilbert Patrica Gillett Alex Reid

Classified Staff Recommendation for 2026-2027

I recommend the following **classified** staff be rehired for the 2026-2027 school year.

Tammi Daum Tonya Hauck Janie Taylor
Stormi Lucero Bridget Guerin Randall Gillett

To: Dan Rispens, District #9 Superintendent and Board of Trustees
From: Michelle Olds, Food Service Supervisor
Re: 2026-27 Food Service Classified Staff Hiring Recommendations

I recommend that following **FOOD SERVICE STAFF** be rehired for the 2026-27 school year

Aaron Strong Dicee Harrison Izabella TwoTeeth Leslie Plettenberg
Kat Salisbury Joe Guerin Blanca Saur Renee Slocum
Kayla Groat Lauren Dotson Misty Lockey

To: Dan Rispens, District #9 Superintendent and Board of Trustees
From: Steve Skains, Maintenance/Custodian Supervisor
Re: 2026-27 Classified Staff Hiring Recommendations

Maintenance/Custodial Staff

Mason Skains Liam Gallups Michael Sloan Cason Greg
Rick Krause Ken Leistiko Laurie Leistiko Dwain Hoover
Rainier Murgel Rick Leistiko Harold Olson

Thank you for your consideration.

To: Dan Rispens, District #9 Superintendent and Board of Trustees
From: Kirk Hedrick Transportation Supervisor
Re: 2026-27 Classified Staff Hiring Recommendations

Bus Drivers

Hank Flatow Steve Allen
Kelly Allen Stuart Beagles Doug Hollingshead
Carl Moore Joseph Krall Randy Siemers
Sherylle Pellen Nick Turner Thomas Holdforth
Lane Erdahl Ray Rutherford Derek Bonogofsky
Byron Staten Teresa Johnson Holden Stagg

Thank you for your consideration.

To: East Helena Board of Trustees
Re: 2026-27 Hiring Recommendations

Administrative Staff recommended for contract renewals:

Gus Somerfeld Brandon Crusat Eric Power Jane Knudsen
Jennifer Wiedbusch Steve Skains Michelle Olds Jen Cordell

Shaun Murgel
Janice Osborne
Denise Linton

Michael Kemper
Paul Condon
Kaylee May

Kaylee May
Kirk Hedrick
Trance Koch

Lynsi Morris
Jillian Hayter
Trish Klock

Submitted by Dan Rispens, Superintendent

D. East Helena School District Students Requesting Enrollment in Other School Districts for the 2026 - 2027 School Year:

	<u>Clancy</u>
2nd	1
4th	2
7th	1

Total: 4

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Ulmer to approve the Consent Action Items as presented. Unanimous vote for the motion. Motion carries.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Baseball Facility Booster Fundraiser Consideration

This is a continuing discussion of the fundraising plans that the EHHS Booster Club is pursuing with EHHS Baseball.

No action taken.

EHPS School Board Self Evaluation and Professional Reading

Board Chair Walter discussed options for self-evaluation and book study and will conduct a survey with the Board Members for additional direction.

No action taken.

NEW BUSINESS

Oath of Office for Newly Elected Trustees

Susie Hedalen, Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction, administered the Oath of Office to Martin Balukas, Tristan Ulmer, and Brandon Hansen.

Reorganization of the Board

At this time Board Chair Walter turned the meeting over to Superintendent Rispens. Supt Rispens called for nominations for the Board Chair. **Trustee Balukas nominated Trustee Walter. No other nominations. The motion passed 7-0.**

Superintendent Rispens turned the meeting back to the newly elected Board Chair.

Board Chair Walter called for nominations for Vice Chair. **Trustee Hansen nominated Trustee Murfitt. No other nominations. The motion passed 7-0.**

Board Committee Appointments

Board Chair Walter presented the following for committee appointments.

- Infrastructure & Transportation: Stacy Baird, Brandon Hanson, Tyrel Murfitt

Consideration of School Resource Officer Contract with Lewis and Clark County Sheriff's Office
Superintendent Rispens presented the renewal of the three-year agreement between the District and the Lewis and Clark County Sheriff's Office for SRO Services.

Motion by Trustee Baird, seconded by Vice Chair Murfitt to approve the agreement. The motion passed 7-0.

Charter School Annual Performance Report Review

Superintendent Rispens presented the Performance Review for the 227 Academy.

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Ulmer to approve the Performance Review for the 227 Academy. The motion passed 7-0.

Non-renewal of Temporary Certified Staff for no Cause, M. C., J. C.

Staff hired for temporary positions who need to be non-renewed and must re-apply for consideration for the 26-27 school year.

Motion by Trustee Balukas, seconded by Vice Chair Murfitt to non-renew the teacher contract without cause for M.C. The motion passed 7-0.

Motion by Trustee Balukas, seconded by Vice Chair Murfitt to non-renew the teacher contract without cause for J.C. The motion passed 7-0.

Future Meeting Dates:

Special Meetings – Wednesday, May 20 and May 27, 2026 5:30 @ East Valley Middle School
Regular Meeting - Monday, June 8th, 2026 at 5:30 PM - East Valley Middle School Library

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 PM.

The next regular meeting will be held on June 8, 2026 EVMS Library

Submitted by:  Date: 6/8/2026
District Clerk, Jane Knudsen

Approved by:  Date: JUNE 16, 2026
Chairman, EHPS Board of Trustees

- Bargaining (Certified): Stacy Baird, Tristan Ulmer, Scott Walter
- Bargaining (Classified): Tyrel Murfitt, Tiffany Richardson, Scott Walter
- Budget, Personnel & Insurance: Martin Balukas, Tiffany Richardson, Tristan Ulmer
- Policy Review & Oversight: Martin Balukas, Brandon Hanson, Tyrel Murfitt
- Representatives to the Long-Term Infrastructure Committee: Stacy Baird, Scott Walter
- Representatives to the District Staff Professional Development Committee: Tiffany Richardson, Tristan Ulmer
- Representatives to the School Calendar Research Committee: Stacy Baird, Martin Balukas, Student Representative-TBD

Appointment of District Clerk

The Board must officially declare the appointment for District Clerk for the 26-27 school year.

Motion by Trustee Baird, seconded by Trustee Richardson to appoint Jane Knudsen as the Clerk for East Helena School District #9 for the 2026-2027 school year. The motion passed 7-0.

Out of State Travel Request: EHHS E-Sports

Members of the EHHS E Sports Team have qualified for Nationals and need to request permission for out-of-state travel to attend the competition.

Motion by Trustee Balukas, seconded by Trustee Hansen to approve the out-of-state travel request for the E Sports team to travel to Boise Idaho. The motion passed 7-0.

Health Insurance Renewal Update

Superintendent Rispens gave an update on our annual health insurance renewal and premium costs.

Setting Administrative Staff Salaries

Superintendent Rispens submitted his proposed salary adjustments for staff not covered by collective bargaining.

Motion by Vice Chair Murfitt, seconded by Trustee Richardson to approve the recommended administration staff salaries. The motion passed 7-0.

Trustee Resolution #246 Requesting County Conduct Elections

This resolution notifies the Lewis and Clark County Elections Office that we will have them administer our school elections in 2027.

Motion by Trustee Richardson, seconded by Vice Chair Murfitt to approve the resolution The motion passed 7-0.

MTSBA Trainings and Opportunities

Board Chair Walter shared information for Trustees to consider upcoming training opportunities through the Montana School Boards Association.

Non-Resident Student Application Consideration

The Board was asked to consider the applications for non-resident status for the 2026-27 school year.

Motion by Trustee Hansen, seconded by Trustee Richardson to approve the non-resident applications as presented. The motion passed 7-0.