

Hellgate Elementary Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting July 13, 2026

6:00 p.m.

OPENING

The Board of Trustees of Hellgate Elementary School District #4 met in regular session on Monday, July 13, 2026. The meeting was held in-person. The meeting was called to order by Board Chairman, Tom McLaughlin. Trustees participating were: Rich Thornock, Kallie Gatzemeier, Beth Herron, Tom Cook and Scott Rouse. Trustee Jacquelyn Ryan was absent for the meeting. Superintendent Molly Blakely and District Clerk Justine Reese were present for the meeting. District staff participating included Brendan Brown (Special Services Director), Zach Cain (Facilities Director), Nicole Kelling (Counselor), Jordan Capp (Teacher), Christy Wasem (Teacher), and Kristen Cottom (Teacher and HEEA President). Community members in attendance included: Max Mickelson, Elliott Wasem, Samuel Reichert (students); Melissa Kleschen, Angela Reichert (parents). There were up to 19 total guests/participants in the meeting, in-person.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jordan Capp and the Hellgate Robotics Team, Mechanical Masters, presented to the Trustees their most recent travel experience to compete in the Canada Cup in Niagara Falls in June 2026. They were one of 96 teams who was invited to the competition. They were incredibly successful in their endeavors and thanked the Trustees for their support allowing them to attend the prestigious competition.

HEEA

Kristen Cottom provided an update to the Trustees. She attended the Washington D.C. trip with the 8th grade group back in June 2026 and was appreciative of the respect the student group had for the trip and how well they represented Hellgate Elementary.

RECOGNITION OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

Recognition of Students and Staff was acknowledged during Public Comment.

BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

Trustees reviewed the monthly newsletter from OPI.

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ON 6/08/26

A motion was made by Kallie Gatzemeier to approve the minutes from the June 8, 2026 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Beth Herron. There was a grammatical correction requested. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Kallie Gatzemeier, and Tom Cook. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF THE WARRANTS-JUNE 2026

A motion was made by Scott Rouse to approve the June 2026 claims. The motion was seconded by Tom Cook. There was brief discussion on the item. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Kallie Gatzemeier, and Tom Cook. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES

A motion was made by Beth Herron to approve the June 2026 Student Activities Report. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. There was no discussion on the item. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Kallie Gatzemeier, and Tom Cook. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF THE BUDGET REPORT

Trustees reviewed the budget reports for June 2026.

COMPENSATED ABSENCES FUND TRANSFER

A motion was made by Scott Rouse to authorize the District Clerk to transfer up to \$29,247.29 to fund 121 (Compensated Absence Fund) from fund 101 (General Fund) effective June 30, 2026. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. There was no discussion on the item. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Kallie Gatzemeier, and Tom Cook. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

ONLINE PAYMENT PROCESSING FEE INCREASE

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to increase the parent-paid online payment processing fee from 3.5% to 4.0% per transaction for the 2026-2027 school year. The motion was seconded by Tom Cook. There was no discussion on the item. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Kallie Gatzemeier, and Tom Cook. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

FACILITY USE FEE FOR AFTER-SCHOOL AND SUMMER PROGRAMS

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve a facility use fee of \$25.00 per hour for after-school and summer use of district buildings by the YMCA, Camp Fire, Boys & Girls Club, and similar community youth-serving organizations, effective August 26, 2026. The fee is intended to help offset district costs associated with utilities, custodial services,

maintenance, wear and tear on facilities, and operational support. The motion was seconded by Beth Herron. There was brief discussion on the item. Superintendent Blakely specified summer hours will be capped at three hours per day per group. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Kallie Gatzemeier, and Tom Cook. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER CONTRACT APPROVAL

A motion was made by Tom Cook to approve the contract for the Hellgate Elementary School Resource Officer for the 2026-2027 school year (contract available in official board packet). The motion was seconded by Rich Thornock. There was clarification on the spelling of the dollar amount compared to the numerical value. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Kallie Gatzemeier, and Tom Cook. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

HIRING OF CLASSIFIED STAFF CONSIDERATION

A motion was made by Scott Rouse to approve the hiring of the following classified staff for the 2026-2027 school year: Shelly Hibbert, Title I paraprofessional; Kala Rushing, Special Education paraprofessional; and Jasmine Pyette, Special Education paraprofessional. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. There was no discussion on the item. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Kallie Gatzemeier, and Tom Cook. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

HIRING OF EXTRA DUTY CONTRACT CONSIDERATION

A motion was made by Tom Cook to approve extra duty contracts for the 2026-2027 school year for the following employees: Lucas Bewley, District 504 Coordinator; Mikel Hoffman, District Braille Specialist; and Haley Patzner, Assistant Athletics Director. The motion was seconded by Beth Herron. There was clarification regarding the specifics of a 504 and what the position entailed. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Kallie Gatzemeier, and Tom Cook. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

HOUSE BILL 203 ACCEPTANCE FOR ENROLLMENT FOR 2026-2027

A motion was made by Scott Rouse to approve the following students for enrollment at Hellgate Elementary for the 2026-2027 school year (list available in official board packet). The motion was seconded by Beth Herron. There was brief discussion on the item. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Kallie Gatzemeier, and Tom Cook. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

HOUSE BILL 203 DENIAL FOR ENROLLMENT FOR 2026-2027

A motion was made by Kallie Gatzemeier to deny the following students for enrollment at Hellgate Elementary for the 2026-2027 school year: 23, 24, 25, and 110 (list available in official board packet). The motion was seconded by Tom Cook. There was clarification provided regarding denial reasons. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Beth Herron, Kallie Gatzemeier, and Tom Cook. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

District Screen Time Policy: Superintendent Blakely provided the Trustees with a draft policy to review and consider. She requested the Trustees allow the Teachers time to provide feedback before voting on the policy language.

OPI Tobacco Use Prevention Education Grant, \$15,000: Hellgate Elementary was awarded \$15,000 to support tobacco use prevention education throughout campus.

Washington DC Trip: 41 8th grade students participated in this year's Washington DC trip.

Costco Backpack Donation: Costco donated a variety of new backpacks to Hellgate Elementary students for the upcoming school year.

Building 3 Roof Update: Zach Cain provided an update of the building 3 roof bidding process, anticipate a special meeting on July 24th, to award the lowest bidder to move forward with replacing the roof.

Building 3 Water Leak: Building 3 experienced a water leak in the fifth-grade wing. The water damage has been mitigated, and insurance is covering the damages.

Building 2 Playground: The previous playground was removed and the new playground has been procured, ideally it will be installed prior to school starting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no committee reports at the meeting.

PRINCIPALS' REPORTS

Building 1: Absent

Building 2: Absent

Building 3: Absent

Building 4: Absent

Special Services: The DBI-MTSS Hellgate Elementary team will be participating in a training held in Helena, July 2026. This training will provide further strategies to support Hellgate Elementary students.

Curriculum:

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next regular meeting of the Board will be August 10, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Tom McLaughlin, Board Chair

Justine Reese, Business Manager/Clerk