

Hellgate Elementary Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting August 10, 2026

6:00 p.m.

OPENING

The Board of Trustees of Hellgate Elementary School District #4 met in regular session on Monday, August 10, 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, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Scott Rouse (attended virtually). Trustees Beth Herron and Tom Cook were 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), Brent Heist (Building 1 Principal), and Erin Ellis (Curriculum Coordinator), Haley Patzner (Dean of Students, and Kristen Cottom (Teacher and HEEA President). Community members in attendance included: Maddison Mueller (community member) and Karen Bakker (community member). There were up to 14 total guests/participants in the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Maddison Mueller introduced herself as a parent in the community.

HEEA

Kristen Cottom provided an update to the Trustees.

RECOGNITION OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

There was no recognition of students and staff at the meeting.

BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

Trustees reviewed the monthly newsletter from OPI.

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ON 7/13/2026

A motion was made by Kallie Gatzemeier to approve the minutes from the July 13, 2026 regular meeting with corrections. The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. There was clarification regarding the public comment and recognition section. There was also clarification regarding meeting minute requirements, district staff will clarify with legal counsel. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING ON 7/24/2026

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the minutes from the July 24, 2026 special meeting. The motion was seconded by Scott Rouse. There was no discussion on the item. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF THE WARRANTS-JULY 2026

A motion was made by Kallie Gatzemeier to approve the July 2026 claims. The motion was seconded by Rich Thornock. There was clarification regarding laptop purchases and annual paper expense. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES

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

REVIEW OF THE BUDGET REPORT

Trustees reviewed the budget reports for July 2026.

HANDBOOKS FOR 26-27 CONSIDERATION

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the following updated handbooks for the 2026-2027 school year: Employee Handbook, Student Handbook, Administrative Regulations Manual, Student Activities Handbook, Safety Procedural Handbook. The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. There was a request by the Trustees to remove personal phone numbers from the employee handbook. Superintendent Blakely reviewed the significant changes with the Trustees, including updates related to student food deliveries, beverages on campus, and health curriculum procedures.

Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion was Scott Rouse. The motion carried by the majority.

HIRING OF CLASSIFIED STAFF

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the hiring of the following classified staff for the 2026-2027 school year: Kyla Vande Sandt-Special Education Paraprofessional, Erin Moore-Part Time Food Service Cook, Jessa Larson-School Nurse Assistant, Suzi Erickson-Special Education Paraprofessional, Gail Goodner-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, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

RESIGNATION OF CERTIFIED STAFF

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the resignation of Chris Bosshardt, 5th Grade Teacher, effective August 4, 2026 (letter available in official board packet). The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. Trustees inquired if the position would be filled. Superintendent Blakely responded, yes, the position will be filled. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

RESIGNATION OF CLASSIFIED STAFF

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the resignation of Shelly Hibbert, Jade Brooks and Amanda Pham, paraprofessionals, effective August 24, 2026 (letters available in official board packet). The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. There was no discussion on the item. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

HIRING OF CERTIFIED STAFF

A motion was made by Jacquelyn Ryan to approve the hiring of Ms. Brooke McWilliams, 5th grade teacher for the 2026-2027 school year and Ms. Sara Shermer, 4th grade maternity substitute teacher, effective August 24, 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, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF EXTRA DUTY CONTRACT

A motion was made by Jacquelyn Ryan to approve an extra duty contract for the 2026-2027 school year for Ms. Kelsey Ostrander, Special Education Department Chair. 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, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA RESIDENCY STUDENT TEACHERS

A motion was made by Jacquelyn Ryan to approve the following candidates from the University of Montana to be hired for a year-long student teaching residency for the 2026-2027 school year: Anna Levchenko: 3rd grade, Elliot Nelson: 5th Grade, Brooklyn Grimm: 5th Grade, Emma McMillan: Music. The motion was seconded by Scott Rouse. The district will provide the students with a \$50 monthly stipend during the school year. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVE THE TRUSTEE FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to table the approval of the Trustees Fiscal Summary (TFS) Report for the 2025-2026 school year with the understanding that the Hellgate Elementary Business Manager/District Clerk shall have the ability to slightly adjust the final TFS report once all final financial information has been received from the state and county financial department sources. The motion to table the item was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. The District Clerk provided an overview of the TFS and noted that she was still awaiting interest allocations from the Missoula County Treasurer's Department. As a result, a completed report was not available for trustee approval. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the

motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVE THE BUDGET FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

A motion was made by Scott Rouse to table the approval of the Hellgate Elementary 2026-2027 annual budget report with the understanding that the Hellgate Elementary Business Manager/District Clerk shall have the ability to slightly adjust the final budget totals once all final financial data has been sent to the school district from state and county financial department sources. The motion to table the item was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. The District Clerk provided an overview of the budget and noted that she was still awaiting interest allocations from the Missoula County Treasurer's Department. As a result, a completed budget report was not available for trustee approval. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Scott Rouse, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Childcare Grand Opening: Roo's Rascals opened its doors on campus August 10th and had a great first day.

Garden Club: Hellgate Elementary will start a garden club in August/September for grades 1st through 4th. Details are in the process of being finalized.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no committee reports at the meeting.

PRINCIPALS' REPORTS

Building 1: Absent

Building 2: The new playground is set to be installed in the next two weeks.

Building 3: The roof replacement will begin soon; damage caused by a water leak will be completed prior to the start of school.

Building 4: Absent

Special Services: No Report

Curriculum: No Report

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next regular meeting of the Board will be September 14, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Tom McLaughlin, Board Chair

Justine Reese, Business Manager/Clerk