

TO: Trustees, East Helena Schools

FROM: Dan Rispens, Superintendent

BOARD MEETING: October 12, 2026

RE: Student Enrollment (October 6, 2026)

<u>School</u>	<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>To Date</u>	<u>Month Ago</u>	<u>Year Ago</u>
Eastgate	Age-K	47	49	48
	K	115	115	143
EG Total		[162]	[164]	[191]
Prickly Pear	1	138	138	126
	2	127	127	132
Prickly Pear Total		[265]	[265]	[258]
Radley Elementary	3	128	128	157
	4	160	160	159
	5	161	161	150
Radley Total		[449]	[449]	[466]
East Valley	6	151	151	151
Middle School	7	141	141	146
	8	143	142	152
EVMS Total		[435]	[434]	[449]
East Helena High	9	161	164	172
	10	179	181	134
	11	128	129	132
	12	121	121	119
EHHS Total		[589]	[595]	[557]
EVMS 227	6	1	1	1
	7	13	13	14
	8	15	16	9
EVMS 227 Total		[29]	[30]	[24]
EHHS 227	9	2	2	7
	10	9	8	16
	11	18	19	21
	12	18	18	19
EHHS 227 Total		[47]	[47]	[63]
TOTALS		1976	1984	2008

Chairman Walter and Trustees,
Here are some monthly items to share with you.

Bully Prevention Program

Our elementary committee for Bully Prevention met during the month of September to begin and line out the work to be completed this year with Character Strong. Part of this work will be grade level teams creating pacing charts with Character Strong and which of those lessons highlights a specific bully prevention component. Once these charts are complete, Mr. Somerfeld and I will be working on a framework for elementary vertical alignment along with community and parent education and other annual items. We will report to the board once the items are complete.

Early Release - Professional Development

Our September 28th Early Release was focused on parts of our math curriculum and more specifically, i-Ready. Instructional staff dug into different reports and resources from i-Ready and how to continue to implement lessons during their instructional day based on this information.

Character Strong Focus

Our September focus was respect and for the month of October we will be placing emphasis on our Character Strong trait, responsibility. We have daily examples that are shared in our morning announcements, teachers are introducing and defining what the trait is, and students are participating in activities to demonstrate an understanding of the trait.

Focus Groups and Data

On September 21st, our teams of teachers, along with our instructional tutors, coach, and myself, met to review our fall benchmark data. During our data meetings, we worked collaboratively to organize all students into our reading focus groups. These groups are 25-30 minutes, based upon schedules, and are driven by specific skill work that is tailored to student needs. In addition, our teams review how students are responding to the instruction for these focus groups on a 3 week cycle during team meetings. From there, our teams work to determine if students should move to another group or the focus of the instruction needs to be modified. Teams also created our intervention groups for math.

Walkthroughs

Our goal is to complete a walkthrough in every class every month. A walkthrough consists of collecting data and providing feedback to our instructional staff. Overall, our walkthrough form collects the same information and this year, we are asking staff to also request specific feedback that may pertain to their professional goals or other items that they are focusing on this year.

Upcoming Events

- October 19th - 23rd - Red Ribbon Week
 - October 21st - Red Ribbon Parade
- October 29th - Student of the Month Assembly
- November 2nd - Early Release - Character Strong - Pacing and Elementary Vertical Alignment

Thank you!
Brandon Crusat, Eastgate and Prickly Pear Elementary Principal

North	Gen. Insp.	Guidance	Playground	Refiling/Physical Contact	Bias	Weapons	Verbal Abuse	Threat	Bullying	Harassment	Proximity	Total
September	5		1	4								10
October	9		2	3								14
November												0
December												0
January												0
February												0
March												0
April												0
May												0
Total	9		2	3		0	0	0	0	0	0	24

All referrals and consequences include a conference with the student and a parent being notified

Month	Referrals	Time Out	Bias Sns.	At. Incas	OSS	ES	ESCT	Total
September	2							2
October	2							2
November								0
December								0
January								0
February								0
March								0
April								0
May								0
Total	2							2

Eastgate Elementary

Month	Gen. Innap./Defiance	Playground	Fighting/Physical Contact	Bus	Weapons	Vandalism	Threat	Bullying	Harassment	Profanity	Total
September	1	1									2
October	4		2					1			7
November											0
December											0
January											0
February											0
March											0
April											0
May											0
June											0
Total	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	9

***** All referrals and consequences include a conference with the student and a parent being notified*****

Month	Warning	Time Out	Bus Sus.	Alt. Recess	OSS	ISS	CSCT	Total
September				2				2
October				3	1	3		7
November								0
December								0
January								0
February								0
March								0
April								0
May								0
June								0
Total	0	0	0	5	0	3	1	3

Prickly Pear Elementary

EAST HELENA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School District No. 9 • PO Box 1280 • East Helena • Montana • 59635



Superintendent/Administration Office (406) 227-7700

Eastgate Elementary (406) 227-7770, grades pre & K

Prickly Pear Elementary (406) 227-7720, grades 1-2

Radley Elementary (406) 227-7710, grades 3-5

East Valley Middle School (406) 227-7740, grades 6-8

East Helena High School (406) 227-7730, grades 9-12



SUCCESS FOR ALL

October 12, 2026

Radley Elementary Board Report

Gus Somerfeld

❖ **Fall Academic Data**

Benchmark Test	Tier I (On Grade Level)	Tier II (Approaching Grade Level)	Tier III (Well Below Grade Level)
ELA	43% (192 Students)	30% (132 Students)	28% (122 Students)
Math	26% (115 Students)	50% (224 Students)	24% (107 Students)

- ❖ The i-Ready Diagnostic administered during the second week of school serves strictly as an initial baseline assessment. Designed as an adaptive measurement tool, this early snapshot identifies where students are starting the academic year so teachers can immediately target instruction, address learning gaps, and set individual growth goals. Because this diagnostic is given so early in the term—while students are still reacquainting themselves with school routines and testing environments—the initial results should be viewed as a starting line rather than a measure of mastery or potential. The true value of our benchmark strategy will be evident in the **Midyear Assessment Report**. That midyear milestone will offer a far more accurate reflection of student performance, progress, and growth, demonstrating the impact of high-quality classroom instruction and targeted interventions over time.
- ❖ For students who score below grade level on benchmark assessments, Radley implements additional secondary screeners, including MCOMP and phonics inventories, to pinpoint specific skill deficits. These targeted assessments allow educators to identify the precise areas where students need support, whether in mathematical computation, phonics, or other foundational literacy skills. The results guide the development of individualized interventions, ensuring that instruction is focused on addressing each student's unique learning needs and accelerating progress toward grade-level proficiency.
- ❖ October is Safety Month at Radley Elementary. Throughout the month, our students and staff will practice four key safety drills: Fire, Earthquake, Bus Evacuation, and Lockdown. While we hope to never face a real emergency, routine practice ensures our school community is prepared to act quickly and calmly. Teachers

have already reviewed all procedures in class and will do so again prior to each drill to ensure students feel supported and prepared.

- ❖ This year's Parent-Teacher Conferences were a resounding success. By shifting our traditional schedule to hold conferences roughly one month into the school year, we were able to establish early lines of communication, share crucial updates, and review initial student progress. This proactive approach received overwhelmingly positive feedback from both parents and staff.

❖ Upcoming Events:

- o Nov. 4 = STARBASE STEAM Family Engagement Night
- o Nov. 6 = Character Strong Bully Preventions Kick-Off Assembly (K-5)
- o Nov. 10 = Picture Retakes
- o Nov. 12 = Adopt-a-Species Virtual Assembly
- o Nov. 20 = End of Trimester 1

❖ [Discipline Report](#)

September Resolution Data

Total Resolutions	Total Students	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
24	14	4	7	12
Before Class	After Class	During Passing	Cafeteria/Recess	During Class
0	0	0	5	4
Classroom	Cafeteria	Hallway/Stairs/Gym	Restroom	Playground
1	2	1	0	5

Year to Date Resolutions

Total Resolutions	Total Students	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
Before Class	After Class	During Passing	Cafeteria/Recess	During Class
Classroom	Cafeteria	Hallway/Stairs/Gym	Restroom	Playground

2026-2027 -- Radley Discipline Report

CONSEQUENCES

* Every office discipline referral results in a parent phone call, at a minimum.

*** Out of School Suspensions

*** Out of School Suspension



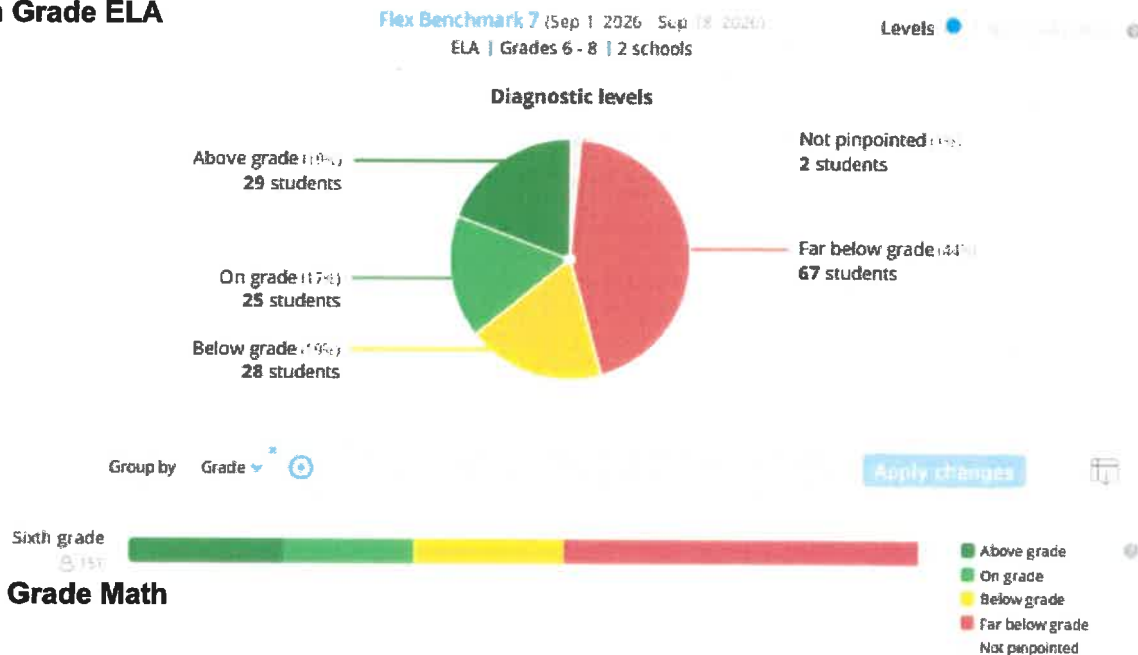
EVMS October Board Meeting



Academics:

Benchmark data is complete and students have started interventions on Sept. 30.

6th Grade ELA



6th Grade Math

i-Ready Inform Results



School EAST VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL
Subject Math
Academic Year 2026 - 2027
Grade 6
i-Ready Inform Assessment Most Recent
Prior i-Ready Inform Assessment None

Criterion Referenced

Overall Placement

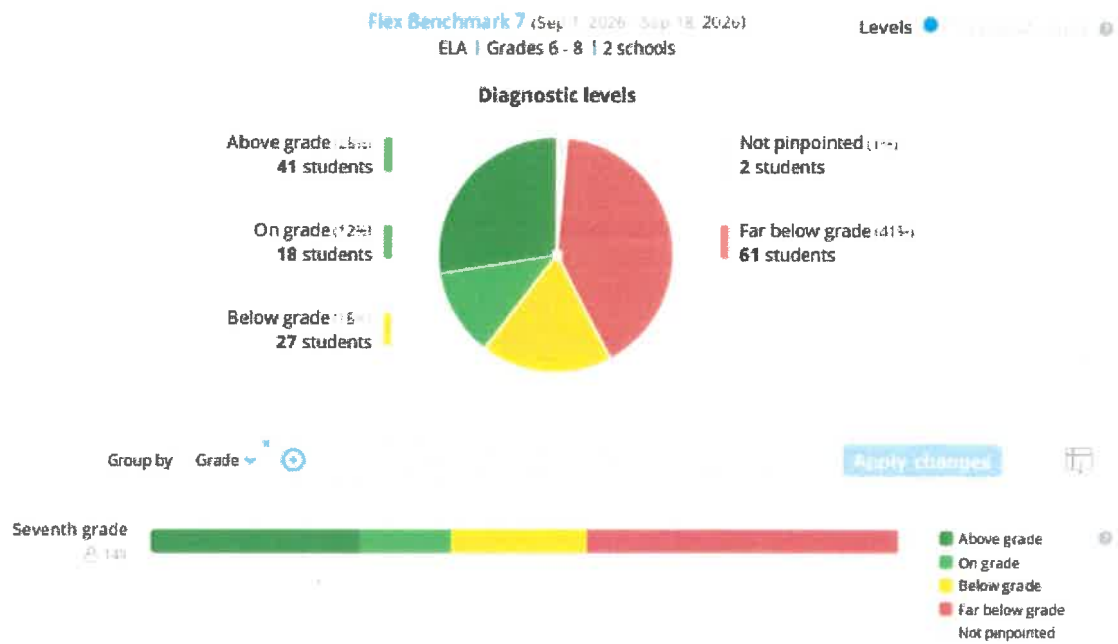
Students Assessed/Total: 149/151



Placement by Domain



7th Grade ELA



7th Grade Math

i-Ready Inform Results

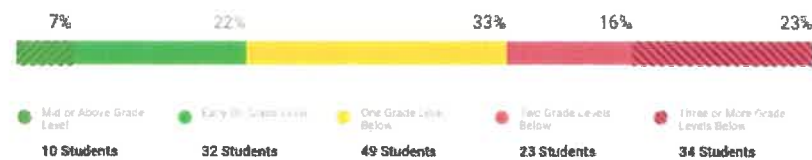


School EAST VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL
Subject Math
Academic Year 2026 - 2027
Grade 7
i-Ready Inform Assessment Most Recent
Prior i-Ready Inform Assessment None

Criterion Referenced

Overall Placement

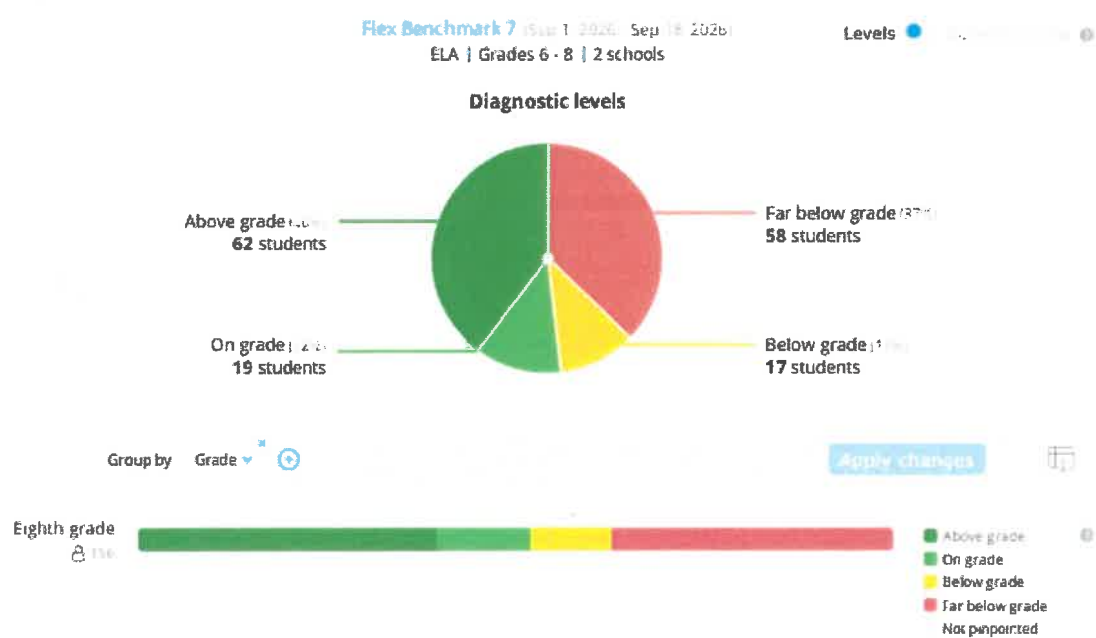
Students Assessed/Total: 148/150



Placement by Domain



8th Grade ELA



8th Grade Math

i-Ready Inform Results



School: EAST VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL
Subject: Math
Academic Year: 2026 - 2027
Grade: 8
i-Ready Inform Assessment: Most Recent
Prior i-Ready Inform Assessment: None

Criterion Referenced

Overall Placement

Students Assessed/Total: 156/156



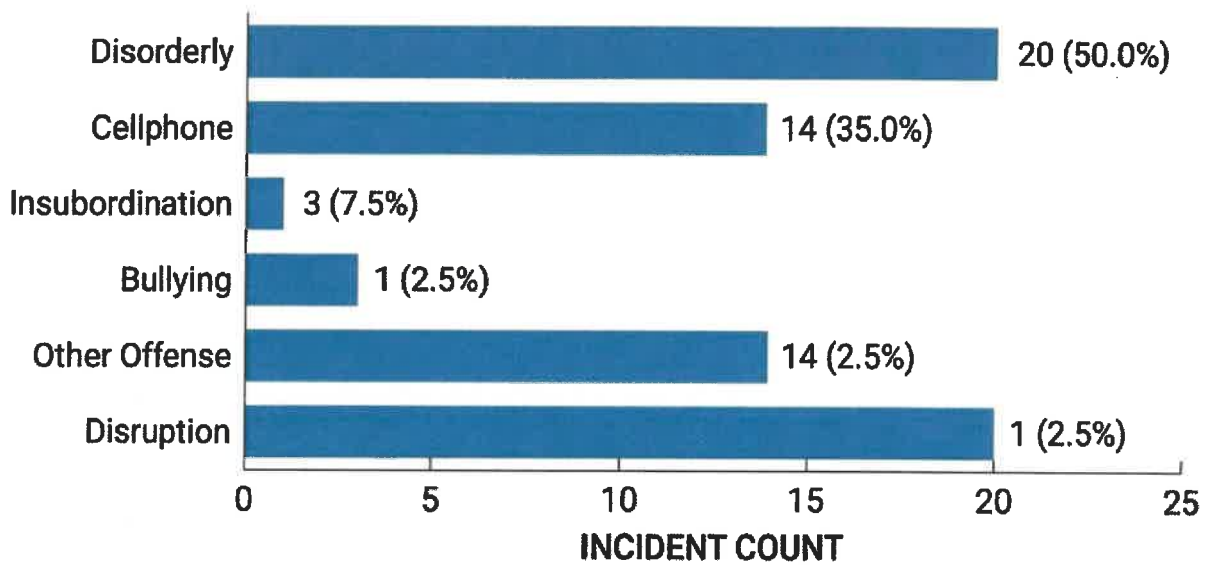
Placement by Domain



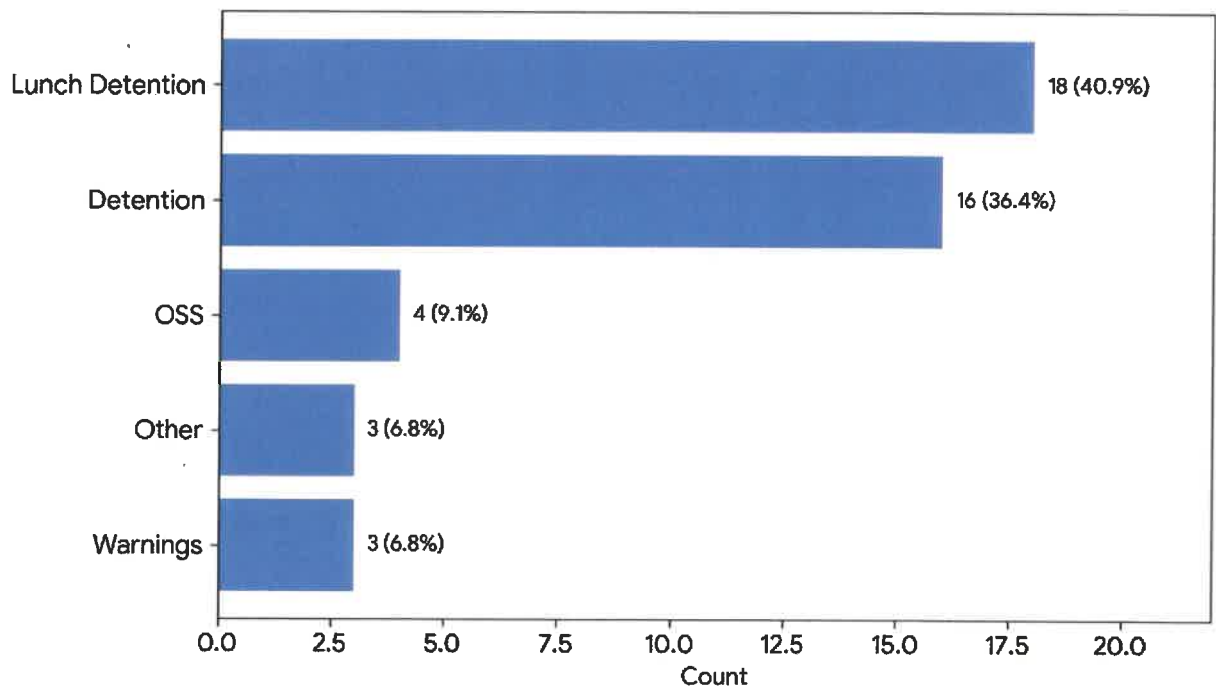
Katherine Senecal—EVMS's superhero—has met with each grade level team to analyze data and select students for targeted interventions in their areas of need. These six-week intervention programs are flexible: once a student demonstrates mastery, they return to an enrichment class, making room for another student to receive support. Each grade level is supported by two math and two reading interventionists. Now in its third year, our Learning Lab intervention program continues to refine its approach to maximize student growth.

[illegible]

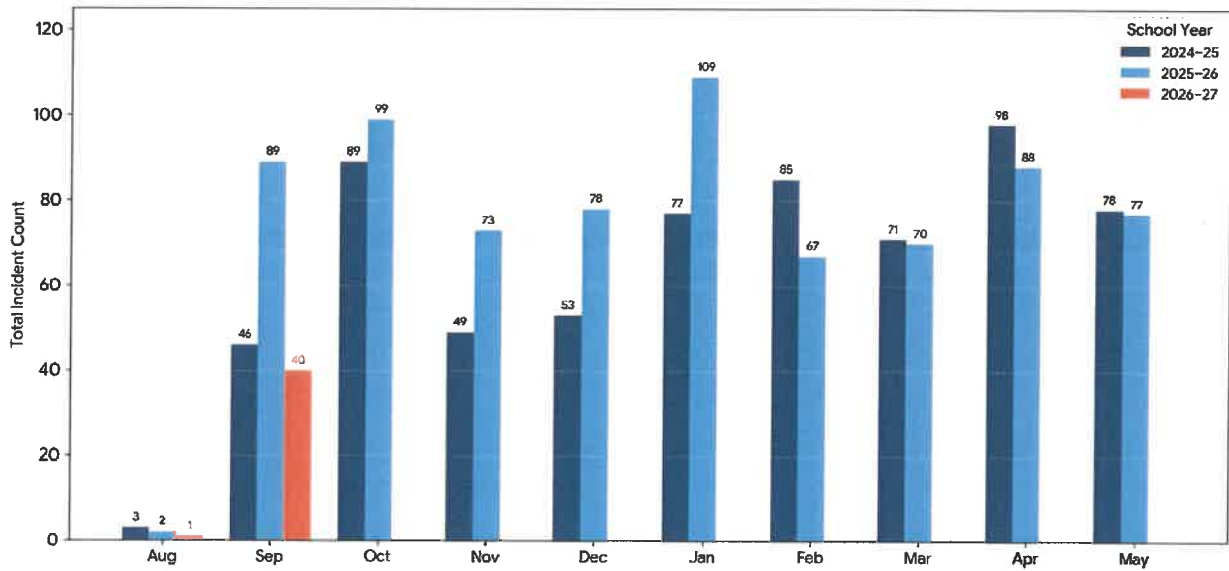
SEPTEMBER BEHAVIOR BREAKDOWN (TOTAL: 40 INCIDENTS)



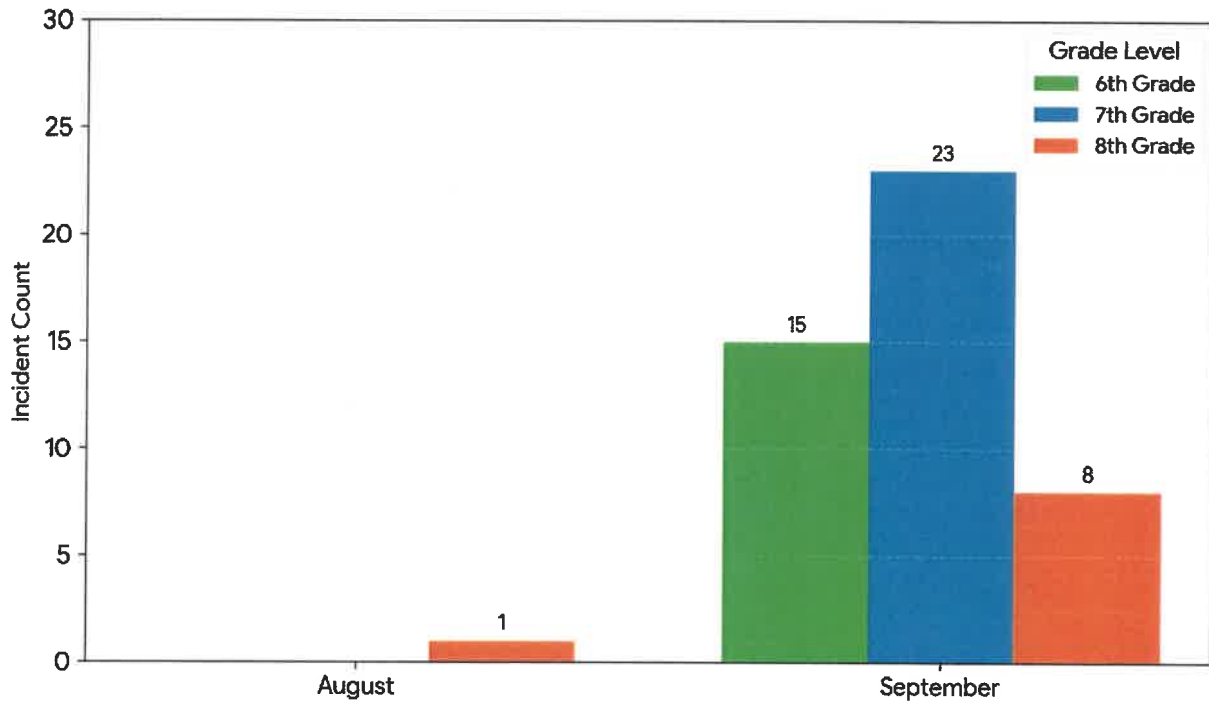
September Consequence Breakdown (Total: 44)



2024–2027 Behavior Comparisons (Full School Year)



Write-Ups by Grade Level (August & September)



Out of all incidents, 38 students were written up, 87% of the student population have not received a write up this month

EVMS Sports

Volleyball and XCountry are finishing up their season in the next couple of weeks. It's great to see the progress the students have made. Shout out to all the coaches.



East Helena High School
"Home of the Vigilantes"
2760 Valley Drive, East Helena, MT 59635
(406) 227-7730 - Phone • (406) 227-3520 - Fax

EHHS Principal Report

October 2026

Counselors Corner

We continue to work on being able to give students, especially our Seniors up to the date information via the Vigilante Record. Seniors started the FAFSA process last Thursday with reps from Helena and Carroll College.

Homecoming Week

Once again a very busy week for everyone with activities in the school every day from dress up days to pep assemblies, and after school sporting events. The Parade went well and the week was capped with the Football Game, and Dance on Saturday night.

Graduation

The Graduation Committee had its first meeting with 2027's Graduation set to be at EHHS, either outdoor or indoors. Over the next year we will be looking at alternative spaces again as our two bubble classes of '29 and '30 approach the horizon.

Internships

Congrats to the following students who have started internships:

Jessica Jayne- Keller Williams Real Estate

Cassidy Lyle- Earthly Creatures Vet Internship

Caydee Cookson- Social Media Internship for EHHS Volleyball

Booster Club Activities Fundraiser

Upcoming:

4th Annual Casino Night - Saturday November 14th.

Be Respectful • Be Responsible • Be Engaged • Be a Graduate

Each year the Booster Club raises thousands of dollars for our student activities, and every year with the help of generous local donations they hold this gala night which is the single largest fundraising event of the year for our activities.

Vigilante Marching Band

The Vigilante Marching Band performed at Carroll College recently with the Carroll Band. Students performed the national anthem and their halftime show music on the field!

Choir

Choir recently worked with Deke Sharon, a singer, arranger, producer, and educator who has played a major role in shaping modern a cappella music. Deke has inspired singers around the world through his work with Pitch Perfect and other productions. Students were challenged to think on their feet, take musical risks, and explore new ways to create and collaborate as an ensemble.

His energy, creativity, and passion made the visit both educational and memorable.

Classroom Activities

Recent out of school Field Trips have been for Lifetime Sports and Biology, while Animal Science has had a guest presenter and Culinary's Pro Start class has been working on advanced meals.

Shout Out

The Student Council and Ms. Schoenfeld for their organizing and planning of the Homecoming Week.

School Board Report- October 2026

East Helena High School

As we are moving through a new school year, we have really emphasized what it means to be a Vigilante and to be a student at East Helena High School. We started with schoolwide expectations and have asked teachers to continually address expectations in their classrooms. As a staff, we created three goals for our school. This work was done in groups before bringing together the entire staff to see the commonalities in what staff wanted to focus on for the next school year.



1. During the 2026-2027 school year, EHHS will elevate our accountability by setting a standard for attendance and tardiness. We will praise positive behaviors quarterly and continue to address those that don't meet expectations. EHHS will all follow the 10-Day Absence Policy by 100% as measured by attendance data in IC.
2. During the 2026-2027 school year, EHHS will reduce hallway disruptions and students wandering around the building by 50% as measured by electronic hall pass systems and discipline data. All teachers will be taking responsibility for all students and communicating these expectations and holding everyone accountable.
3. During the 2026-2027 school year, all EHHS staff will be reminded of schoolwide expectations and will implement all rules consistently and with fidelity as measured by staff check-ins and discipline data. All staff need to be on the same page and follow all procedures.

It has been incredible to see not only the staff working together but the reduction of students in the hallways, increased communication home, and the success with the students in the first few months of school. We will continue to address behaviors and work with students as we near the end of the first quarter.

In the month of September, we had 60 referrals resulting in 40 detentions. This time last year, there were 29 referrals and 6 detentions. As a result of some student issues/referrals, we have had 74 student meetings, had 15 parent meetings and made 42 phone calls home directly related to behaviors. This clear and consistent communication helps us to build relationships

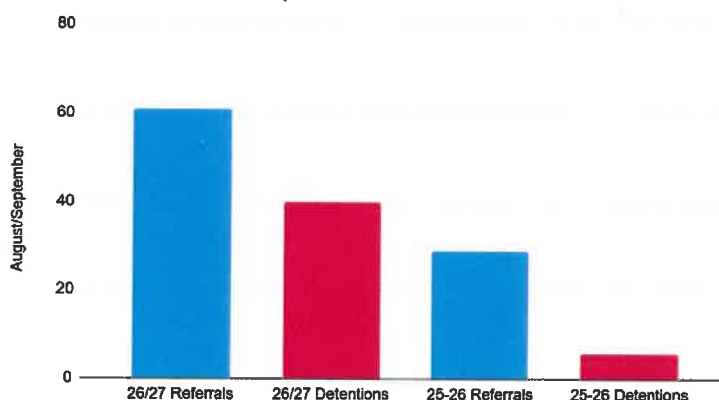
with our students and parents. This also helps students know what to expect, what will be the consequence for certain choices, and allows us to have conversations on how to improve behaviors and provide support at school. As for In-School Suspensions, we had 2 incidents that required ISS (most tied to misbehavior in classrooms). We also had 13 Out of School Suspensions. These events involved five students for all of the separate suspensions.

PBIS breaks information down into Tier 1, 2 and 3. Below is the breakout of students receiving office referrals, detentions or suspension. As you can see, the vast majority of our students are following our expectations and doing great work in our school.

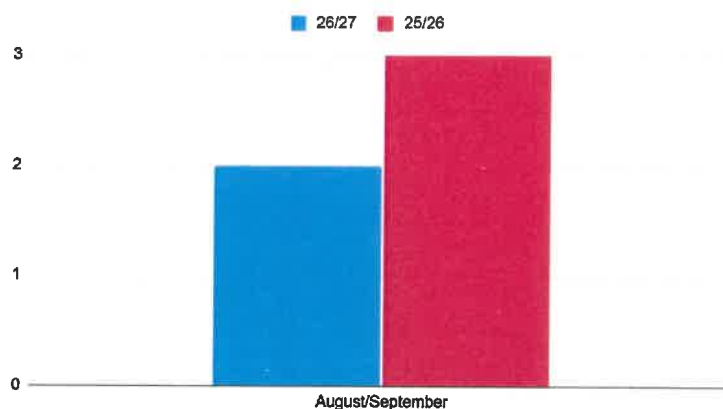
PBIS Tiers	Students	Percentage
Tier 1	641	96.2%
Tier 2	21	3.1%
Tier 3	5	0.7%

Comparison Between School Years:

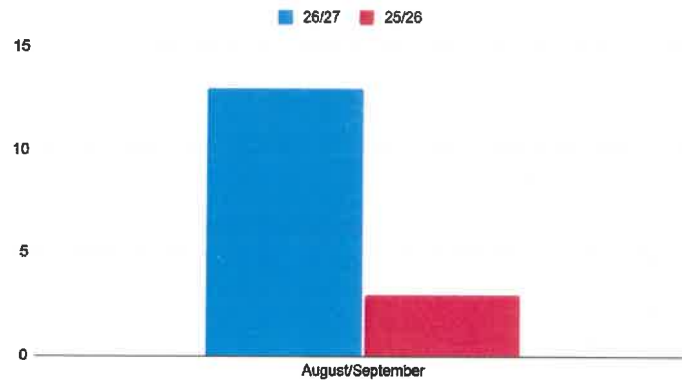
Referral/Detention Comparison



August/September ISS



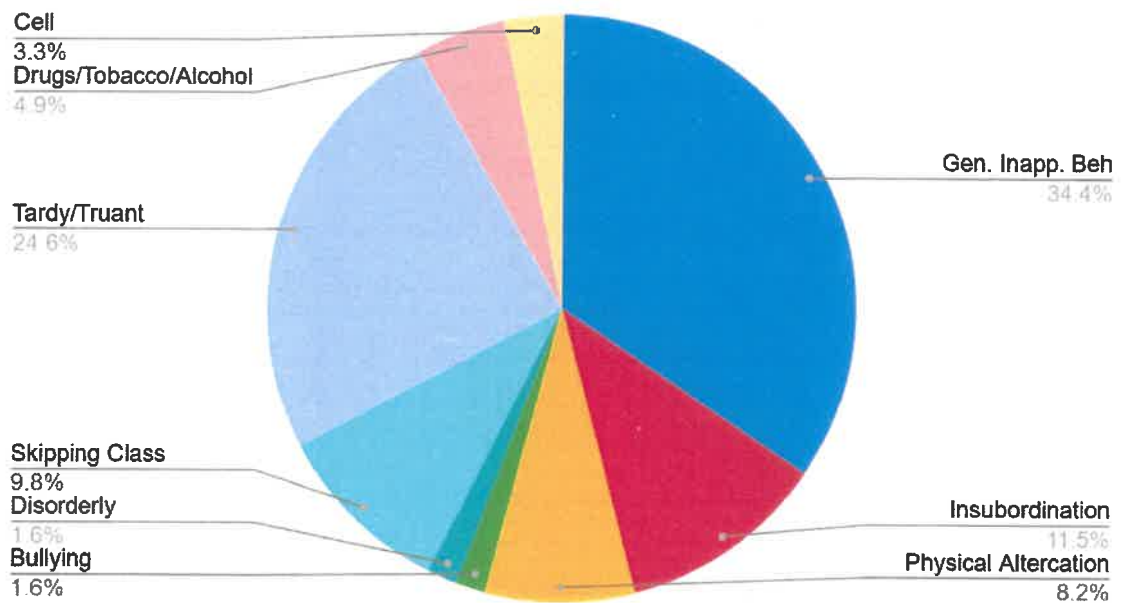
August/September OSS



Office Referrals by Category:

The office referrals for August/September are outlined below! While we are seeing more referrals, most are being handled in the classrooms by classroom teachers.

August/September 2026 Referral Types



Mrs. Klock
EHHS Vice Principal



East Helena High School

School District No. 9 * P.O. Box 1280 * East Helena, MT. 59635

District Office (406) 227-7700 * EHH School Office (406) 227-7730

“Success For All”

To: East Helena School Board

From: Shaun Murgel

Subject: 10/12/2026

Activities: We are almost at the end of our Fall Sports Season. Golf, Flag Football, and Soccer have already finished up. I will let you know the results of the flag championships at the board meeting as they are competing after my report is due. Cross Country will finish up at the end of the month with their state championship being held in Billings at Amend Park. Volleyball will finish up with the regular season at the end of the month and are currently sitting in 4th place in the conference. If they finish in 3rd or 4th they will do a play in game to determine if they go to the Divisional Tournament in November, in Miles City. Football will finish up the regular season at the end of the month. If they finish out their last 3 games with wins they will be the number one seed and will have an opening round bye. If they win this weekend they will be guaranteed a spot in the playoffs. All of our programs keep getting better and I get a lot of good feedback from other schools when our student athletes are on the road about how well our kids compete and our class citizens as well. Speech and Debate has started practicing for their season. They open up the year in Sidney on Halloween and we are excited to be hosting the State Speech meet here in East Helena in January.

Transportation: We are very fortunate to have great bus drivers and they have logged a lot of travel miles as well transporting all of our Fall Activities. We have been fortunate to have great weather and I hope that we can continue to get more of the same at the end of our Fall sports and start of our Winter sports.

Kirk Hedrick khedrick@ehps.k12.mt.us Transportation Supervisor Contact
<https://ehhs.ehpsmt.gov/ehhs-athletics-activities/athletics-updates/sports>

District Website link: <https://www.ehpsmt.gov/>

AD Newsletter link: <https://ehhs.ehpsmt.gov/ehhs-athletics-activities/athletics-updates>

Facilities: As always, the buildings are getting used almost every day and when our own students are not using them we have a lot of outside groups that are able to utilize our facilities.

Facility Use Schedule Link and my email:

<https://www.ehpsmt.gov/district-facilities/district-facility-use/facility-reservation-instructions>

smurgel@ehps.k12.mt.us.

Thanks,
Shaun Murgel



EHPS Technology Report

Oct 12th, 2026



To the EHPS Chairman and Board of Trustees,

Technology efforts this month have focused primarily on fall reporting and validating district data in Infinite Campus. This includes reviewing enrollment data, program participation, course information, and staffing information to ensure there are no discrepancies on our end before we certify with the state.

With the vast amount of data involved for this period of reporting, I've created some new reporting tools within Infinite Campus to identify potential issues before the reporting period starts. The idea with these is to have reports we can pull weekly/monthly/etc... that identify potential issues ahead of time and hopefully reduce the amount of time spent fixing them in the future.

Thank you for your time,

Eric Power
Technology Coordinator

Policy 3231: Searches and Seizure

Original Adopted Date: 09/09/2022 | Last Reviewed Date: 10/12/2026

The goal of search and seizure with respect to students is meeting the educational needs of children and ensuring their security. The objective of any search and/or seizure is not the eradication of crime in the community. Searches may be carried out to recover stolen property, to detect illegal substances or weapons, or to uncover any matter reasonably believed to be a threat to the maintenance of an orderly educational environment. The Board authorizes school authorities to conduct reasonable searches of school property and equipment, as well as of students and their personal effects, to maintain order and security in the schools.

The search of a student, by authorized school authorities, is reasonable if it is both: (1) justified at its inception, and (2) reasonably related in scope to the circumstances which justified the interference in the first place.

For the safety of the student body and staff, school authorities are authorized to utilize any reasonable means of conducting physical searches, including but not limited to the following:

A search of the student's clothing by requesting that the student remove any coat, jacket, or other outer wear which can then be searched and by requesting that the student empty their pockets;

A search of any container or object used by, belonging to, or otherwise in the possession or control of a student; and/or

Devices or tools identified in school district policy or the student handbook or deemed necessary by the Superintendent or designee.

Any search of a student will be conducted by 2 staff members, unless exigent circumstances exist.

School Property and Equipment and Personal Effects of Students

School authorities may inspect and search school property and equipment owned or controlled by the District (such as lockers, desks, and parking lots).

The Superintendent may request the assistance of law enforcement officials, including their use of specially trained dogs, to conduct inspections and searches of lockers, desks, parking lots, and other school property and equipment for illegal drugs, weapons, or other illegal or dangerous substances or material.

Students

School officials may search any individual student, his/her property, or District property under his/her control, when there is a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence that he/she is violating the law, Board policy, administrative regulation, or other rules of the District or the school. Reasonable suspicion shall be based on specific and objective facts that the search will produce evidence related to the alleged violation. The types of student property that may be searched by school officials include but are not limited to lockers, desks, purses, backpacks, student vehicles parked on District property, cellular phones, or other electronic communication devices.

Students may not use, transport, carry, or possess illegal drugs or any weapons in their vehicles on school property. While on school property, vehicles may be inspected at any time by staff, or by contractors employed by the District utilizing trained dogs, for the presence of illegal

drugs, drug paraphernalia, or weapons. In the event the school has reason to believe that drugs, drug paraphernalia, or weapons are present, including by alert-trained dogs, the student's vehicle will be searched, and the student expressly consents to such a search.

Also, by parking in the school parking lots, the student consents to having his/her vehicle searched if the school authorities have any other reasonable suspicion to believe that a violation of school rules or policy has occurred.

Seizure of Property

When a search produces evidence that a student has violated or is violating either a law or District policies or rules, such evidence may be seized and impounded by school authorities and disciplinary action may be taken. As appropriate, such evidence may be transferred to law enforcement authorities.

United States Constitution

Fourth Amendment

Description

Unreasonable Search and Seizure

United States Supreme Court

469 U.S. 325 (1985)

Description

New Jersey v. T.L.O.

557 U.S. 364 (2009)

Safford Unified School Dist. No. 1 v. Redding

Cross References

Code

3200

Description

[Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

3330

[Use of Alcohol Sensor Device](#)

Policy 5322: Military Leave**Original Adopted Date:** 09/09/2022 | **Last Revised Date:** 10/12/2026

Pursuant to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and the Montana Military Service Employment Rights, the Superintendent shall grant military leave to employees for voluntary or involuntary service in the uniformed services of the United States, upon receipt of the required notice.

Military Leave

A District employee who is a member of the national guard of Montana or any other state or who is a member of the organized or unorganized reserve corps or military forces of the United States and who has been an employee for a period of at least 6 months must be given leave of absence with pay at a rate of 120 hours in a calendar year or academic year if applicable, for performing military service. The full 120 hours of leave must be credited in full to an employee after 6 months of employment and in each successive calendar year, or academic year if applicable.

Military leave may not be charged against the employee's annual vacation time. Unused military leave must be carried over to the next calendar year, or academic year if applicable, but may not exceed a total of 240 hours in any calendar or academic year.

Right to Return to Work

After a leave of absence for state military duty, an employee is entitled to return to employment with the same seniority, status, pay, health insurance, pension, and other benefits as the employee would have accrued had the employee not been absent for state military duty. If an employee was in probationary status when ordered to state military duty, the District may require the employee to resume the probationary period upon returning to employment with the District.

Benefits shall be maintained for these employees as required by law and/or collective bargaining agreements. A service member who returns to the District for work following a period of active duty must be reinstated to the same or similar position and at the same rate of pay unless otherwise provided by law.

Time spent in active military service shall be counted in the same manner as regular employment for purposes of seniority or District service unless otherwise provided in a collective bargaining agreement.

Nondiscrimination

The District will not discriminate in hiring, reemployment, promotion, or benefits based upon membership or service in the uniformed services.

Requests for Leave

All requests for military leave will be submitted to the Superintendent, in writing, accompanied by copies of the proper documentation showing the necessity for the military leave request.

When possible, all requests for military leave will be submitted at least one (1) full month in advance of the date military service is to begin.

Persons returning from military leave are asked to give the Superintendent notice of intent to return, in writing, at least one (1) full month in advance of the return date.

The District shall post notice of the rights, benefits, and obligations of the District and employees in the customary place for notices.

Policy 5323: Personal and Emergency Leave

Original Adopted Date: 10/12/2026

Personal and Emergency Leave

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent, and in accordance with District policy and any applicable collective bargaining agreement, employees may be granted personal or emergency leave at the discretion of the Board of Trustees pursuant to the following conditions:

1. Leave will be without pay unless otherwise stated. If leave is to include expenses payable by the District, leave approval will so state.
 2. Leave will be granted only in units of half ($\frac{1}{2}$) or full days.
 3. Notice of at least one (1) week is required for any personal leave of less than one (1) week; notice of one (1) month is required for any personal leave exceeding one (1) week.
 4. The Board hereby delegates to the Superintendent the authority, in unusual or exceptional circumstances, to grant immediate personal or emergency leave to employees who have exhausted or are not covered by sick leave or vacation pending Board approval of personal or emergency leave.
-

Policy 5324: Civic Duty Leave

Original Adopted Date:10/12/2026

Jury Duty

When an employee is summoned for jury duty, the Superintendent may request that the Court excuse the employee from jury duty if the employee's presence at work is necessary for the proper operation of the District. If the employee is not excused or no request is made to excuse the employee, a leave of absence for jury duty will be granted. The employee may elect to receive regular salary or to take annual leave during jury time. An employee who elects not to take annual leave, however, must remit to the District all juror and witness fees and allowances (except for expenses and mileage).

Witness Subpoena

When an employee is subpoenaed to serve as a witness, the employee may elect to receive regular salary while serving as a witness, or take annual leave. An employee who elects not to take annual leave, however, must remit to the District all witness fees and allowances (except for expenses and mileage).

Public Office

If an employee is elected or appointed to a city, county, or state public office, the District shall grant to the employee a leave of absence while the employee is performing public service, not to exceed 180 days per year. An employee granted a leave of absence shall make arrangements to return to work within 10 days following completion of the service for which the leave was granted. If the District employs 10 or more persons, the employee will be restored to their position with the same seniority, status, compensation, hours, locality, and benefits as existed immediately prior to the leave of absence.

During the leave of absence, the employee cannot be required to perform work or to use leave or benefits without the consent of the employee. If the District provides health care benefits to the employee, the District shall continue offering the employee health care coverage at the employee's own expense.

4 Day Sub Committee
September 16th, 2026
Prickly Pear Conference Room - 3:30 - 4:15

Representation

- Central Office Administration - Dan Rispens
 - Secondary Administration - Paul Condon
 - Elementary Administration - Brandon Crusat
 - Union Leadership - Kate Johnson, Michelle Lashway
 - Eastgate - Kate Johnson
 - Prickly Pear - Sarah Sandau
 - Radley - Caitlyn Lesofski
 - EVMS - Rosie Kraft/Tyler Patrick
 - EHHS - Kelli Kerpa
 - School Board - Stacy Baird
-

I. Review Objectives

- A. To review work done last year and come to an agreement on next steps and timeline.

II. Provide Context On Sample

III. Review Staff Survey Results

A. Immediate Thoughts

1. Concerns about younger students and time of day and time away from classroom on a 3 day weekend and the impact on routines.
2. Wondering on districts who do 5 day for younger students and 4 for older students
3. Wondering if teams can limit events to just Fridays and if this is realistic. MHSA notes that there are not enough refs to be scheduled on just Fridays.
4. The majority of staff is for it with some legitimate concerns
 - a) A lot of concerns are for the unknown
5. Wondering if the community can adapt to the change
6. Townsend went through the same growing pains as what is being reflected in the survey results
7. Wondering about childcare for staff and for community and how much this will swing things
8. Wondering if appointments would actually be able to be scheduled on a Friday if they are also doing a 4 day week
9. Wondering how subs would respond
- 10.

IV. Next Steps

A. Community Survey

1. Sample questions and delegations
 - a) Sub question
 - b) Generally feeling towards a 4 day week
 - c) Review previous surveys
 - d) Talk to other districts
 - e) Brandon will share a document for the committee to add questions to
 - (1) Timeline will be to have committee add within two weeks
 - f) Avoid questions about "daycare" on Fridays
 - g) Avoid questions about pay
2. Identify purpose
3. Sample preface message
 - a) The district has researched other districts who have transitioned to a 4 day week and have sent out staff surveys. The district would like to collect feedback from the community

V. Timeline

A. Review survey and identify next meeting date

1. Brandon will send out document to gather sample survey questions. Committee will have two weeks to add to this. Brandon will work on a sample survey and send it to the committee. Once finalized, a date will be chosen to send it out and then a date will be chosen when the committee will meet to review results.
2. The goal is to bring something back to the school board in November/December.

VI. Other

East Helena Community Survey - 4 Day Week

Introduction - The district has researched other districts who have transitioned to a 4 day week and have sent out staff surveys. The district would like to collect feedback from the community to assist in planning next steps. The purpose of this survey is to give the calendar committee additional guidance on next steps.

This survey will close on October 19th, 2026

jcordell@ehps.k12.mt.us [Switch account](#)



Not shared

Purpose - East Helena Public Schools are researching a 4 day school week to assist with sub shortages, event conflicts, and staff recruitment and retention.

After you have had a moment to read through through the introduction and purpose of our survey, we would appreciate you taking time to answer the following questions.

Do you have children currently enrolled in the school district?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Which stakeholder group best describes you? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ Parent/guardian
- ☐ Local business owner
- ☐ Community member without students
- ☐ District staff/teacher
- ☐ Student

If annual student instructional hours would remain relatively the same, would you be in favor of a 4 day week?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Would you be in favor of a 4 day week if it means increasing the length of the school day?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

In order to keep annual student instructional hours relatively the same, would you prefer to lengthen the day or decrease traditional school breaks and holidays?

- ☐ Increase the time per day
- ☐ Decrease traditional school breaks and holidays
- ☐ A combination of the two

Would moving to a 4 day school week help your family with travel plans, scheduling appointments, or other activities?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you have students in multiple buildings or levels (e.g. PreK - 5th or 6th - 12th), would you prefer all students to be on a 4 day school week or would you consider the older students doing a 4 day school week and the younger students doing a 5 day school week?

- ☐ Keep all PreK - 12th on the same schedule
- ☐ Open to younger students on a 5 day week and older students on a 4 day week
- ☐ I am open to either
- ☐ I am opposed to a 4 day school week
- ☐ NA

What potential impacts (positive or negative) do you foresee a 4 day school week having on students, families, extracurricular activities, and the community?

Your answer

Do you have additional questions that could be answered at an informational community night or through district correspondences?

Your answer



Submit

Clear form

These are examples to display how daily hours are impacted by total days

2026/27 - 4 Day Example 1

August 2026							September 2026							October 2026							November 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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30	31													25	26	27	28	29	30	31							

December 2026							January 2027							February 2027							March 2027						
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April 2027							May 2027							June 2027							July 2027						
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August 2026							September 2026							October 2026							November 2026						
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														1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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December 2026							January 2027							February 2027							March 2027						
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13	14	15	16	17	18																						

First and Last Days - August 24th and June 8th

Teacher August In Service Days - August 24th and 25th

Student Contact Days = 146

No Early Releases

2026/27 - 4 Day Example 2

August 2026							September 2026							October 2026							November 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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30	31													25	26	27	28	29	30	31							
December 2026							January 2027							February 2027							March 2027						
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						5							2								1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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27	28	29	30				24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28													
							31																				
April 2027							May 2027							June 2027							July 2027						
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25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31

August - 3

September - 17

October - 18

November - 13

December - 13

January - 16

February - 18

March - 18

April - 16

May - 16

June - 6

Total - 153

No Early Releases*

August 24th-25th - In Service Days

August 26th - First Day of School

September 1st - Labor Day

October 1st-10th - ADA Day

November 20th - Thanksgiving Break

December 23rd - January 1st - Winter Break

Break ends April 1st - 4 day schedule

May 1st - Lasting Day of School

June 9th - Last Day of School

In Service Days (No Student Enrichment)

September 11th

October 9th

November 13th

December 11th

January 8th

February 12th

March 12th

April 6th

May 14th

First and Last Days - August 24th and June 8th

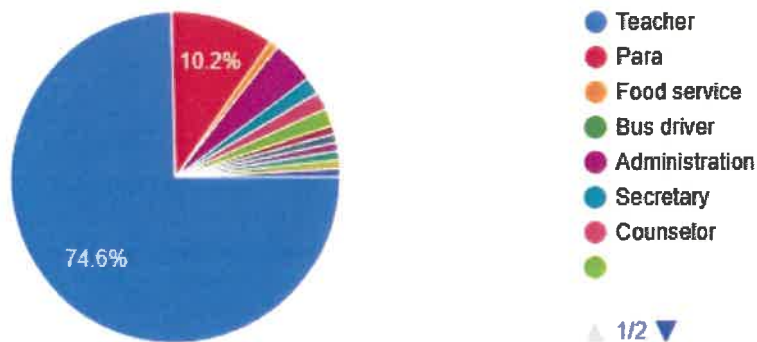
Teacher August In Service Days - August 24th and 25th

Student Contact Days = 146

No Early Releases

What role do you serve in our schools?

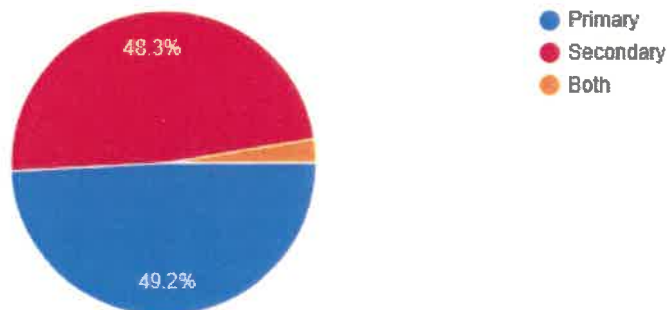
118 responses



Teacher - 74.6 %
 Para - 10.2%
 Admin - 4.2%
 Tutor - 3%
 Counselor - 1.7%
 Other - 2%
 Food Service - 1%
 Secretary - 1.7%
 Tutor - 2.4%
 Career Coach - 0.8%
 SLP - 0.8%
 Food Service - 0.8%

Do you work in primary or secondary grades?

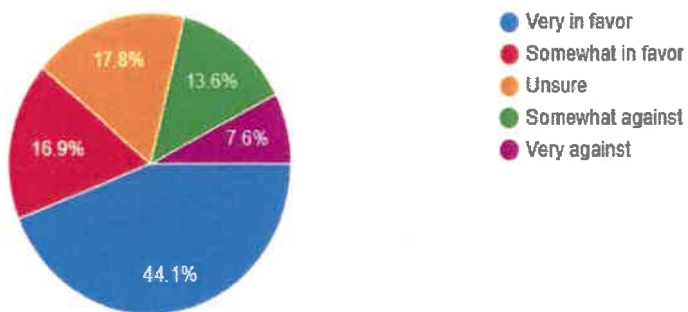
118 responses



Primary
 Secondary
 Both

What is your general feeling towards a 4 day school week initially?

118 responses



Very in favor
 Somewhat in favor
 Unsure
 Somewhat against
 Very against

Very In Favor - 49

- Primary - 16
- Secondary - 33

Somewhat In Favor - 20

- Primary - 10
- Secondary - 10

Unsure - 19

- Primary - 10
- Secondary - 9

Somewhat Against - 16

- Primary - 14
- Secondary - 2

Very Against - 8

- Primary - 5
- Secondary - 3

Unsure Summary - Wonderings

- Cannot say they are against it since they have not seen it.
- A balance of long days for students and a long weekend.
- Not what may be best for younger students and can see benefits for older students.
- Not sure what logistics would look like.
- Wondering what "problem" this is trying to solve.

Unsure Summary - Concerns

- Too long of a day for students, especially younger students.
- Less time with family, even though there would be 3 day weekends.

Initial Feelings - Summary

Staff/Student Morale and Burnout: Many staff members desire the three-day weekend to alleviate teacher and student burnout, allowing for more rest, family time, and the ability to schedule appointments (medical, chores, etc.) without taking time off during the school week. This is also viewed as a benefit for teacher retention and recruitment.

Academic Concerns for Younger Students: There is significant concern, especially among staff who work with primary and elementary-aged students, that the extended school day (ending around 4:00 PM) would be too long. Respondents worry that students lack the stamina to maintain focus and quality engagement, leading to decreased learning and potential increases in behavioral issues. Three-day weekends are also noted as making it difficult for younger students to establish and maintain routines, with some noting increased learning loss and "more hectic" behavior upon returning.

Benefit for Secondary Students and Activities: A major positive cited is that a four-day week would greatly reduce student and staff absences, particularly on Fridays, which are frequently missed due to sports, activities, and travel. Scheduling away games/activities on Fridays would ensure students do not miss instructional time, reduce the need for substitute teachers (a current struggle), and make it easier for staff coaches to attend events.

Logistical and Family Challenges (Daycare/Commute): Logistical challenges are raised regarding the proposed hours, particularly the early start time (around 8:00 AM). Many local daycares do not open until 7:30–7:45 AM, making it difficult for staff with young children to drop them off and arrive at school on time. Concerns also include the long commute for some students/staff, the potential for students to be unsupervised on Fridays, and the impact of late dismissal times on students participating in after-school activities (e.g., gymnastics, dance).

Which option would you prefer for Mondays we usually have off for holidays?

116 responses



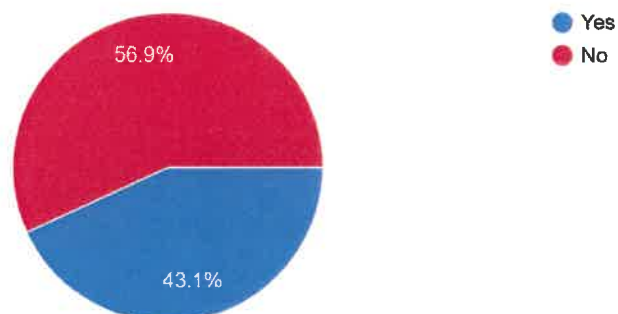
Which would you prefer in regards to year start/end times and breaks? Please keep in mind you would have 3 Fridays per month off (Lots of 3 day weekends!)

118 responses



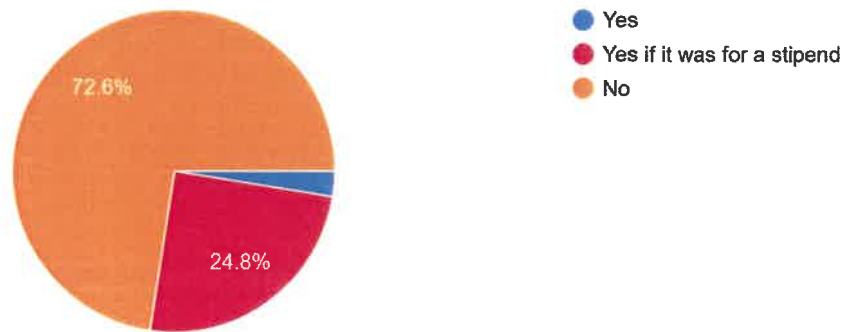
Would you be interested in the district providing a Friday childcare program?

116 responses



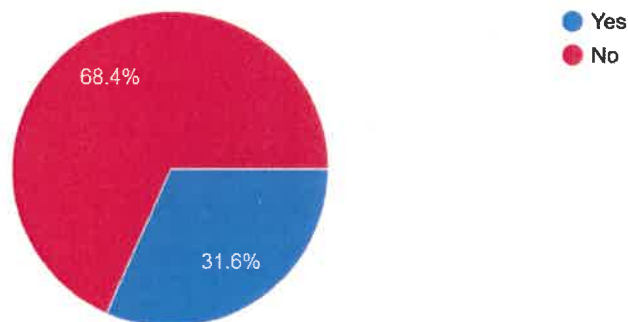
Would you be interested in assisting in the Friday childcare program?

117 responses



Would you be interested in teaching an enrichment class or hosting a club on a Friday?

114 responses



Role Being Affected Concerns - Summary

Impact on Students (Especially Younger and At-Risk): The most frequent concern is the long days, which are viewed as developmentally inappropriate for younger students (PreK, Kindergarten, and Elementary) due to fatigue, reduced attention span, and potential negative effects on behavior. Several respondents also worry about the significant loss of instructional/intervention time and reduced contact days for “at-risk” students who rely on school for safety and food security.

Scheduling and Logistics: Major concerns include the earlier start times (e.g., 7:25 AM), which conflict with the 7:30 AM opening times of available daycares for staff members with young children. Staff also expressed worry about the longer workdays leading to burnout and difficulty managing personal family obligations, such as attending their children’s after-school sports or activities.

Curriculum and Instruction: Staff are concerned about condensing a 5-day curriculum into four longer days, requiring substantial adjustments to pacing, lesson planning, and instructional delivery, and the potential for students (especially those on a block schedule) to forget material over extended four-day breaks. A shift to a 7-period day is seen as crucial for the secondary level to mitigate burnout and maintain learning momentum.

Financial and Contractual Issues: There is concern that the change might result in reduced pay for some staff, particularly paras, and questions about meeting contracted days/hours for existing pay and retirement/insurance.

Block Schedule Effectiveness: Secondary educators specifically fear that remaining on a block schedule combined with a 4-day week would be detrimental, leading to student burnout, teacher burnout, and extremely long periods (potentially 4 days) between class meetings, which would negatively impact material retention.

Additional Questions - Summary

Scheduling and Structure Details: Respondents require a detailed plan on the year, month, and daily schedules, including what the class periods look like (specifically asking if a 7-period day or block schedule would be used, and if a 7-period day is being considered). There is also interest in seeing how other districts with shorter start/end times structured their calendars, and whether elementary schools could remain on a 5-day schedule while secondary schools transition to a 4-day week.

Staff Compensation and Requirements: Key questions revolve around how the change would affect staff, including whether teaching salaries would decrease due to fewer workdays and if classified staff wages would be adjusted to maintain the same overall monthly pay. Staff also want to know the required hours before and after school, the number of mandatory in-building Fridays (and their duration/purpose—meetings, professional development, or work time), and how the change impacts current contract agreements and PIR requirements.

Student Well-being and Community Impact: Staff seek information on the effect on student outcomes, especially long-term academic success, and how longer days would impact younger students (such as those in the LittleLantes program) and the need for intentional movement breaks. Concerns include what safeguards will be in place for student safety on Fridays, whether school lunches/meals would still be available for students in need, and if there would be an option for Friday supervision/daycare to increase community acceptance.

Rationale and Activities: Several respondents asked for the rationale behind pursuing the 4-day week, questioning if the push is staff, admin, or community driven. There is a strong desire to prioritize scheduling all activities and away events on Fridays and Saturdays to prevent students from missing instructional time, and a concern about how a later release time would affect after-school clubs and activity participation.

Additional Comments - Summary

Logistics and Childcare Challenges: Concerns exist about the proposed long school day (ending around 4:00 PM for elementary and 4:30 PM for secondary) conflicting with the operating hours of local daycares, many of which open at 7:30 AM or later and close around 4:00 PM. This schedule places an "impossible situation" and a "disproportionate burden" on staff with children and working families who rely on shared schedules or single-parent households. Additionally, the differing release times for schools could complicate bus routes and parent pick-up schedules.

Impact on Students and Learning: Many respondents worry about the longer school days for younger students (Kindergarteners and "littles"), citing concerns about decreased stamina, increased behaviors, and difficulty maintaining focus, especially since younger students are "pretty done by 3:10." Concerns were raised about the quality of learning, particularly if a block schedule is maintained, arguing that students need daily math, reading, and writing; seeing students only on Mondays and Wednesdays is deemed "not enough."

Community Perception and Messaging: There is a concern that framing the change around "teacher morale" or retention sends the wrong message to the public, implying teachers need to work less despite having existing extended breaks.

Activities and Equity: The later release times (after 4 PM) may cause students to miss out on non-school sanctioned activities, sports, and enrichment programs offered in Helena (e.g., dance, gymnastics, karate), as East Helena does not offer many of these programs. Multiple respondents stressed that any change should be implemented **district-wide** (all or nothing) for fairness and equity, rather than being limited to just secondary or primary schools.

Financial and Operational Considerations: Questions were raised regarding the financial feasibility, with some stating that costs associated with a four-day week seem "fiscally irresponsible" if the district pays more for one less day. Other operational concerns include student food/safety on Fridays, providing afternoon snacks, and the details regarding compensation, which must remain the same since student contact time would increase.