MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES HELD OCTOBER 12, 2026

A duly called Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Great Falls Public Schools was held at the District Offices Building, 1100 4th Street South, on the 12th day of October 2026.

At 5:30 pm, Chairperson Johnson called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees and informed the participants and audience that the meeting was being recorded per Board Policy 1420.

ROLL CALL: Luke Diekhans took roll call.

Trustees Present: Gordon Johnson, Chairperson
Bill Bronson
Craig Duff
Paige Henning

Trustees Excused: Kim Skornogoski, Vice Chairperson
Marlee Sunchild
Amie Thompson

Others Present: Heather Hoyer, Superintendent; Luke Diekhans, Director of Business Operations; Lance Boyd and Jackie Mainwaring, Executive Directors for Student Achievement; Lane McGrath, Data Center Lead; Heather Spurzem, Director of Human Resources; and Katelyn Marsik, Director of the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation.

Also present were Tom Cubbage, Great Falls Education Association President and Student Board Representatives from Great Falls High School, Paris Gibson Education Center, and C.M. Russell High School.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Johnson.

ADOPT AGENDA

Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Henning, passed unanimously to adopt the agenda as presented.

APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

Motion – Paige Henning, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

A. **Minutes of the September 21, 2026, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved the minutes of the September 21, 2026 Regular Board meeting as presented.

B. **Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.

C. **Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) TR-35 School Bus Driver Certificate** The Board approved the Montana OPI TR-35 School Bus Driver Certificate for the individual listed in the agenda.

D. **TR-1 Bus Route Reimbursement Claims** - The Board approved the TR-1 Bus Route Reimbursement Claims for the bus routes of the high school and elementary school districts.

E. **Request for Records Disposal – Human Resources Office** – The Board approved the request for the disposal of the Human Resources Office records listed in the agenda that are in compliance with the approved State, Local Government Records Committee Retention Schedule.

F. **Donation of Scaffolding to C.M. Russell High School –** The Board approved the donation of scaffolding from Opportunity Bank to C.M. Russell High School's Industrial Technology program, with thanks.

COMMUNICATION

A. **Report of the Student Representatives**
Great Falls High School (GFHS) student representatives Kaitlynn Fulbright, Weston Stoll, and Sydney Trunkle reported that Leadership High students began the year with kickoff activities, where the focus for the year is learning more about themselves, building leadership skills, and finding ways to grow as individuals and leaders in the school and community. Students enjoyed classes with a variety of engaging, hands-on learning experiences, including archery, microscope labs, interactive history lessons, Montana geography, and a field trip to Morning Light Coffee Roasters. Students also participated in the Worlds of Work (WOW) career fair to explore local career opportunities. Homecoming Week was a success, promoting school spirit through dress-up days, a color run, and other activities. History was made with the crowning of two Homecoming kings. Some athletic teams completed their fall competitions while others continue their seasons. Art Club and Key Club members contributed to campus cleanup efforts and community service at *Jordan's Pumpkins for a Cause*. GFHS also welcomed Mr. John Armstrong, who returned to upgrade the printing press he originally built in 1973, and recognized three Teachers of the Week for their dedication. The presentation concluded with a historical review of a 1913 school board decision regarding smallpox vaccination requirements, highlighting the Board's consideration of public health, student vaccination records, community impact, and compliance with state directives.

Paris Gibson Education Center student representatives Adyson Baez, Jocelyn Salois, and Elizabeth Culberson shared that students engaged in a variety of hands-on learning experiences, including exploring statistical concepts with cookies, investigating velocity and momentum, and participating in a geology field trip to discover fossils, study rock

formations, and create cyanotype prints. Students and staff also celebrated the 2026 honey harvest, producing more than 2.5 gallons of honey, and enjoyed a Jobs for Montana Graduates-sponsored barbecue. The report highlighted the lasting friendships and supportive relationships formed at PGEC, recognized Pat Johnson for more than 35 years of service to the school community, and celebrated the accomplishments of three students attending Montana Youth Challenge Academy. Additionally, the Community Cleanup Crew continued its weekly efforts to maintain a welcoming campus, while students and staff built memories through educational field trips and everyday school activities.

C.M. Russell (CMR) High School student representatives Lydia Comstock, Addie Crist, and Kade Hobson highlighted favorite classroom activities across multiple subjects, including Spanish, Advanced Placement (AP) Statistics, AP Chemistry, AP English, French, and Music Theory. Student clubs were highlighted as well, with HOSA learning about occupational therapy careers and supporting healthcare workers, while BPA members attended a Fall Leadership Summit focused on business, leadership, and entrepreneurship. Students and staff recognized *Every Child Matters Day* (Orange Shirt Day) to honor Indigenous children who never returned home from boarding and residential schools. Homecoming week featured creative class decorations, themed dress-up days, the annual parade, coronation, athletic events, and a dance, with strong participation and school spirit throughout the week. Fall athletics celebrated the golf team's third-place state finish and an individual second-place finish, while other teams continued their seasons. The report concluded by congratulating two students recognized as National Merit Scholarship Program Finalists, an honor achieved by fewer than one percent of high school seniors nationwide.

B. **Superintendent Report –** Superintendent Hoyer presented an overview of her half-day Convocation substitute assignment she fulfilled in a fourth-grade classroom at Whittier Elementary school. She also discussed local control, funding budgets, and cost analysis for education K-12 and in the Montana University System with students in a US Government class at Great Falls High School. She provided many updates from the Fine Arts department, including staffing, upcoming festivals, the new CORPS Marching Band, museum tours, and progress on the C.M. Russell High School auditorium renovation. Superintendent Hoyer reminded all in attendance of the three (3) upcoming Career Technical Education (CTE) information sessions. She also reminded everyone that today, October 12th, is the State of Montana Civic Celebration Day, honoring Indigenous People's Day and Columbus Day. The GFPS Indigenous Education department invites everyone to celebrate Indigenous People's Day by wearing your items of cultural significance. Superintendent Hoyer said the process of rolling out the GFPS Three-Year Long-Range Strategic Plan Survey has begun. She encouraged everyone to take the ten (10) minute survey available, explaining data would be collected and analyzed after the holidays. She also stated that the Legislative committee is reviewing for any changes or edits to the GFPS Legislative Resolutions and will provide more information at the next regular board meeting, along with talking points for preschool. She concluded her report with discussion of child Medicaid / CHIP enrollment by state.

C. **Audience Communication** – None

ACTION ITEMS

A. **Request for Proposals for C.M. Russell High School Athletic Trainer** - Director of Business Operations, Luke Diekhans, stated that following notification from Alluvion Health that it will terminate its agreement to provide athletic trainer services for C.M. Russell High School effective October 31, 2026, the District issued an internal job posting that yielded no applicants. To ensure coverage, the District is issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to be advertised on October 18 and October 25, 2026, with proposals due October 28, 2026. Board approval for the selected vendor is scheduled for the November 9, 2026 meeting, at which time total fiscal implications will be determined.

Motion – Paige Henning, Seconded – Craig Duff, passed unanimously to approve the advertising of the Request for Proposal for the C.M. Russell High School Athletic Trainer position.

B. **Second Reading of Revised Board Policies 2410 – *High School Graduation Requirements;* 5321 – *Leaves of Absence;* and 5321R – *Conditions for Use of Sick Leave*** – Superintendent Hoyer reviewed the policies above and stated that no comments or recommendations for changes were received since the first reading of the policies at the September 21, 2026 regular Board meeting.

Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Henning, passed unanimously to approve revised Board Policies 2410 – *High School Graduation Requirements;* 5321 – *Leaves of Absence;* and 5321R – *Conditions for Use of Sick Leave* as presented.

ACTION: OTHER

There were no items extracted from the Consent Agenda to discuss.

REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES

A. **Review of Buildings & Grounds 2026 Summer Projects** – Facilities Director Brent Cutler highlighted the Buildings and Grounds Department's essential role in maintaining safe, clean, and functional learning environments across 1.9 million square feet of educational space and 380 acres of grounds, supported by 112 full-time employees. The department's custodial, grounds, and trades teams handle daily maintenance, cleaning, snow removal, safety systems, and facility repairs, completing 2,275 work orders over the past year. Efficiency improvements included the introduction of robotic floor scrubbers at both C.M. Russell and Great Falls High Schools. Major projects included replacing domestic water pipes at East Middle School following lead testing and securing grant funding through the Department of Environmental Quality, as well as addressing roof damage at Lincoln Elementary School and coordinating repairs and replacement with staff, volunteers, and community partners. Overall, the department

completed 67 projects during the 54-day summer period to prepare district facilities for the start of the school year.

Facilities Assistant Jack Norris reported on summer projects completed including, but not limited to, the Lincoln Elementary School roof replacement; removal of the old scoreboard at Memorial Stadium with delivery, fiber/electrical installation, and erecting of the new scoreboard; renovations in the C.M. Russell High School auditorium; playground improvements at various elementary schools; the addition of a door from the library to courtyard at East Middle School; the installation of the Junior Reserve Officer's Training Corp (JROTC) Raiders Course at Paris Gibson Education Center; remodeling of an interior area at Chief Joseph Elementary School to provide a secure office space; and the renovation of a new cosmetology studio at Paris Gibson Education Center.

Chairperson Johnson and Superintendent Hoyer both extended high praise to Brent and Jack for their supervision of their staff and their commitment to keeping GFPS facilities in great shape.

B. **First Reading of Revised Board Policies 3416** – ***Administering Medication to Students*****, 5227 –** ***Employee Substance Use,*** **and 8205 –** ***Food Service.***
Superintendent Hoyer reviewed the recommended language revisions from the Board Policy Committee to the board policies listed above, stating the proposed language changes bring policies into alignment with legislative directives and/or cleans up confusing language. She asked if anyone had questions or concerns about the revisions to contact her prior to the next regular Board meeting.

C. **Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments**
Trustees Duff and Henning commended the Buildings and Grounds Department for their hard work at all of the facilities. Trustee Duff also stated he was successful in completing his half-day convocation substitute assignment in a Spanish class, enjoying the experience.
Trustee Henning had the opportunity to observe a lockdown drill at Valley View Elementary School and reminded everyone of the upcoming Board Budget Committee meeting. She is looking forward to the Cross-Country City meet on Wednesday as her son is participating.
Trustee Bronson attended the CMR HOSA students' presentation on their summer trip to Ghana and was pleased to see the opportunity extended to students, noting that at least one student is pursuing a career path related to this type of work. He will be attending the Montana Council of Educational Leaders (MCEL) meetings this week to discuss the primary proposals that will be advancing through the Legislature.
Chairperson Johnson extended thanks to Superintendent Hoyer, Trustee Bronson, and the Kids Education Yes (KEY) organization for being proactive with the events happening in Helena, stating that Great Falls Public Schools is well represented. He attended East Middle School's presentation on *Rachel's Challenge* and emphasized the lasting impression it made regarding the importance of school safety.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Chairperson Johnson highlighted upcoming events to include the Board Budget Committee Meeting on October 21st, the MCEL Conference this week, and the next regular board meeting on October 26th.

ACTION TO ADJOURN

With no further comments or items to be discussed, motion by Chairperson Johnson and seconded by Trustee Henning to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 6:41 p.m.

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Gordon Johnson, Chairperson

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Luke Diekhans, Clerk