

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
HELD MARCH 11, 2024**

A duly called Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Great Falls Public Schools was held at the District Offices Building, 1100 4<sup>th</sup> Street South, on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of March 2024.

**ROLL CALL:** Brian Patrick took roll call.

**Trustees Present:** Gordon Johnson - Chairperson  
Kim Skornogoski – Vice Chairperson  
Bill Bronson  
Mark Finnicum  
Marlee Sunchild  
Amie Thompson  
Paige Turoski

**Others Present:** Tom Moore, Superintendent; Brian Patrick, Director of Business Operations; Lance Boyd, Heather Hoyer, and Jackie Mainwaring, Executive Directors for Student Achievement; Luke Diekhans, Director of Human Resources; and Stephanie Becker, Great Falls Public Schools Foundation Director.

Also present was Tom Cubbage, Great Falls Education Association President.

At 5:30 pm, Chairperson Johnson called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees and asked Trustee Thompson to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ADOPT AGENDA**

Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to adopt the agenda as presented.

**APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Paige Turoski.  
Trustee Turoski recognized and thanked Mr. Brown for the donation of the baby grand piano listed in the Consent items. Motion passed unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

**A. Minutes of the February 26, 2024, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved the minutes of the February 26, 2024, Regular Board Meeting as presented.

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

**C. Good Apple Awards** – The Board approved the nominations for Good Apple Awards for Briana Midkiff, Andrea Seigrist, Lindsey Dagsen, and Brienne Jamieson,

1 Core Teacher Aides, all from Loy Elementary School; Amy Burke, Satellite Kitchen  
2 Lead, Loy Elementary School; Sue Feller, Food Service Employee, Loy Elementary  
3 School; and Rachel Packer, Attendance Aide, Charles M. Russell High School.  
4

5 **D. Montana School Bus Drivers Certificates – OPI TR-35's** – The Board approved  
6 the Montana School Bus Drivers Certificate – OPI TR-35's for the individual listed in the  
7 agenda.  
8

9 **E. Transitional Kindergarten Student Attendance Agreements at the Early**  
10 **Learning Family Center for the 2023-2024 School Year** – The Board approved the  
11 students listed in the agenda to attend the Early Learning Family Center for the 2023-  
12 2024 school year due to exceptional circumstances per Board Policy 3100.  
13

14 **F. Request to Call for 2024-2025 Instructional and Office Paper Supply Order** –  
15 The Board approved the request to call for bids for the 2024-2025 Instructional and  
16 Office Paper Supply order.  
17

18 **G. Request to Call for Dairy Product Bid** – The Board approved the request to call for  
19 bids on dairy products.  
20

21 **H. Charles M. Russell High School Chanteur Choir Tour Travel Request** – The  
22 Board approved Charles M. Russell (CMR) High School Chanteur Choir student travel  
23 request to Seattle, Washington April 17-21, 2024.  
24

25 **I. Great Falls High School (GFHS) Health Occupations Students of America**  
26 **(HOSA) Travel Request to the State Leadership Conference** - The Board approved  
27 GFHS HOSA students travel to the HOSA State Leadership Conference in Billings, MT  
28 April 3-4, 2024.  
29

30 **J. Great Falls High School Skills USA State Conference Travel Request** – The  
31 Board approved Great Falls High School Skills USA students and advisors to travel to  
32 the State Skills USA competition in Helena, MT March 25-27, 2024.  
33

34 **K. Charles M. Russell High School Skills USA State Conference Travel Request** –  
35 The Board approved Charles M. Russell High School students and advisors to travel to  
36 the State Skills USA competition in Helena, MT March 24-27, 2024.  
37

38 **L. Resolution to Dispose of Unsuitable District Property** – The Board approved the  
39 items listed in the agenda as surplus property.  
40

41 **M. Acceptance of Completed Donor-Funded Building Projects through Great Falls**  
42 **Public School Foundation** – The Board approved to accept the funding and  
43 completion of improvements made at Lincoln, Whittier, and Chief Joseph Elementary  
44 School Libraries and the Skyline Early Learning Family Center Playground with thanks  
45 to the donors.  
46

47 **N. Donation of a Baldwin Baby Grand Piano** – The Board approved to accept the  
48 donation of a Baldwin Baby Grand Piano from Dan Brown to be used at Charles M.  
49 Russell High School with thanks.

## 1     **COMMUNICATION**

### 3     **A. Superintendent's Report -**

4     Superintendent Moore congratulated Charles M. Russell (CMR) High School boys' and  
5     girls' basketball teams on their state basketball performances in Missoula. Winter  
6     sports have now concluded and Spring sports will begin.

7     Superintendent Moore recognized and thanked Dugan Coburn, Great Falls Public  
8     Schools Director of Indigenous Education, and his staff. Dugan was the 2024 recipient  
9     of the Teresa Veltkamp Advocacy Award for Excellence in Indian Education. The  
10    award, which honors individuals demonstrating exceptional dedication and passion in  
11    advocating for Indian Education, was presented to Dugan at the 2024 Indian Education  
12    For All (IEFA) Best Practices Conference in Billings, Montana. Dugan addressed the  
13    Board and audience, thanking his staff and commenting on how well his staff  
14    collaborates with one another and other school districts as they advocate for all Native  
15    American students, heritages, and cultures. Dugan stated thirty-two (32) students will  
16    be competing at the State Archery competition next week. He also invited everyone to  
17    attend the next bison hunt in May.

18    Student artwork was on display at the Young Masters Art Reception last weekend at  
19    Horizon Credit Union and the same group will have their art displayed at the Heritage  
20    Inn this coming weekend leading up to Russell Art Auction week. Many musical  
21    concerts are still on the horizon for Music in our Schools Month (MIOSM). The  
22    community is invited and encouraged to attend all events.

23    Superintendent Moore thanked Heather Hoyer, Executive Director for Student  
24    Achievement, for initiating the great partnership between the District and Touro Medical  
25    School.

26    Superintendent Moore encouraged all to attend "Night Without a Bed" on March 23<sup>rd</sup>  
27    and learn why homelessness is a growing crisis. He commented on a former GFPS  
28    student who experienced homelessness while in school and is now helping transport  
29    current homeless students to school to make sure they have the opportunity to receive  
30    an education.

31    Several students who spoke at the "Live the Dream" event a couple of weeks ago will  
32    use their voices to engage in a panel discussion during "Women's Day" at the Great  
33    Falls Public Library on March 19<sup>th</sup>. All the community is encouraged to attend.

34    Montana Credit Union held a bake sale and made a generous donation to Whittier  
35    Elementary School. Superintendent Moore greatly appreciates the community's support  
36    of all our schools.

37    Raffle tickets for a shed built by GFPS students will be available for purchase at the  
38    upcoming Home and Garden Show.

39    The community is encouraged to attend one of the CORE School parent information  
40    meetings coming up at the end of March.

41    Superintendent Moore stated the District is still hiring and is in need of a variety of  
42    positions filled. Another Job Fair, with hiring on the spot, will be held on March 26<sup>th</sup> at  
43    Paris Gibson Education Center.

### 45    **B. Audience Communication –**

46    Chairperson Johnson called upon Terry Thompson, who had requested to speak. Ms.  
47    Thompson was representing the Cascade County Elections office. She stated this was  
48    day sixteen of her job and their office was working diligently to make sure the upcoming  
49    GFPS Board election ran smoothly. She stated her two goals are to get into schools to

1 teach students the importance of being a voter and provide internships with the college  
2 to train students to help in the election process.

## 3 4 5 **ACTION ITEMS**

6  
7 **A. Lowest Qualified Bidder – E-Rate Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) Battery**  
8 **Backup Devices** – Director of Business Operations, Brian Patrick, presented  
9 information in Tom Hering's absence. He explained that in the event of a power outage,  
10 GFPS telephones do not work. Current UPS devices do not restart when power is  
11 restored, thereby causing delays in restoring network and phone services throughout  
12 the District. The newer UPS battery backup devices will restart automatically when  
13 power is restored, very important for safety in our schools.

14  
15 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to approve the  
16 lowest qualified bidder, MicroK12, for twenty-two (22) battery backup devices and  
17 extended battery modules for replacements in all buildings. The total project cost is  
18 \$61,820.00. As the project and bids were run through the E-Rate program, Great Falls  
19 Public Schools will pay twenty percent of that cost, or \$12,364.00, from the District  
20 Technology Fund.

21  
22 **B. Action to Establish 2025-2026 School Year Calendar** – Director of Human  
23 Resources, Luke Diekhans, explained the process of creating a calendar for the  
24 upcoming school years. A committee is assembled with representatives from GFPS  
25 Administration, Board, staff, parents, and community members. The committee meets  
26 and reviews all calendars submitted and narrows the field down to three. The three  
27 calendars are sent out for public survey and comments, and the final choice is  
28 presented to the Board for approval.

29  
30 Trustee Finnicum asked how many parents completed the survey; to which Mr.  
31 Diekhans replied approximately 750.

32  
33 Trustee Skornogoski stated she served as a member of the committee and has seen  
34 community involvement grow. The survey responses were higher this year than in the  
35 past.

36  
37 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to  
38 approve Calendar Option B for the 2025-2026 school year as presented.

39  
40 **C. Second Reading of Revised Board Policies 1240, 1610, 3210, and 3310P** –  
41 Superintendent Moore stated he has received no requests for changes to Board  
42 Policies 1240, 1610, 3210, and 3310P since the first reading of the policies at the  
43 February 26, 2024 regular Board meeting.

44  
45 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve  
46 revised Board Policies 1240, 1610, 3210, and 3310P as presented.

47  
48 **D. Approval of Charter School Contract with the Montana Board of Public**  
49 **Education** – Executive Director for Student Achievement, Jackie Mainwaring,

presented the contract with the Montana Board of Public Education for approval. The contract is a detailed logistical document that explains the terms of operation, course of framework, and general contract plan.

Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to approve the contract for charter between Great Falls Public Schools and the Montana Board of Public Education as presented.

**E. Acceptance of Donor-Funded Building Projects for West Elementary School and Lewis and Clark Elementary School Libraries through Great Falls Public Schools Foundation**

Great Falls Public School Foundation Director, Stephanie Becker, explained the Foundation had received estate funds from Nancy A. Cameron that were earmarked for elementary media centers. The funds will be directed to West Elementary School and Lewis and Clark Elementary School Libraries.

Ms. Becker explained the Board will receive two notifications for future donated funds – the first to inform the Board that funds have been donated and second to inform the Board when the project has been completed.

Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson and Mark Finnicum, approved unanimously to accept the funding for improvements to West Elementary School and Lewis and Clark Elementary School libraries, with thanks to the donors.

**ACTION: OTHER**

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

**REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

**A. Annual Data Report from the Career and College Readiness Center (CCRC) -**

Director of CCRC, Jodi Hicks, presented information on programs available at CCRC and the students they serve. The CCRC offers paths to: High School Equivalency - General Education Diploma (GED) and High School Equivalency Test (HSET); Higher Education and Training; Employment; and Citizenship and English Language Acquisition. Ms. Hicks stated the age range of students being served has been getting younger, with 48 new sixteen-year-old students so far this year. Sixteen is the youngest age of admittance and special permission from the Office of Public Instruction is needed. Collaboration amongst community organizations is key to CCRC success.

Community member Judy Mortenson asked how the CCRC is funded. Ms. Hicks stated funding is provided through permissive levies and the Workforce and Innovations Opportunity Act (WIOA).

**B. First Reading of New and Revised Board Policies 2500 (New), 3310P2(New), 3413F2, and 5121** – Superintendent Moore reviewed the adoption of new policies 2500 – *English Learner Program* and 3310P2 – *Academic Honesty and Responsibility Use of Resources*. He reviewed a name change needed on policy 3413F2 – *Religious Exemption Statement* and reviewed new language recommendations in policy 5121 –

1 *Applicability of Personnel Policies.* He asked that comments or concerns about any of  
2 the policies be directed to him prior to the next Board meeting.

### 3 **C. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments**

4 Trustee Sunchild said the CORE School Advisory Committee has worked tirelessly in  
5 making sure the start-up of the new CORE School is a success. She stated most of the  
6 staff has been hired, they have addressed solutions for parking, and a celebration of the  
7 new school will be forthcoming while still honoring Morningside Elementary School staff,  
8 parents, and students as they finish out the current school year strong.

9 Trustee Finnicum congratulated Dugan Coburn for his advocacy award for Indian  
10 Education. He recently attended the Consortium of State School Boards Association  
11 (COSSBA) Conference and attended artificial intelligence (AI) breakout sessions, to  
12 which he will discuss more with Board and administration in the future.

13 Trustee Thompson stated she was currently working on her AI certificate for use in  
14 communications. She commended the CORE School Advisory panel and Jodi Hicks for  
15 their work and commitment to their respective educational programs and opportunities.

16 Trustee Turoski thanked Ms. Hicks and stated the CCRC program provides  
17 opportunities for all ages and is great for democracy. She was pleased with the input  
18 provided from the community on the selection of the school year calendar and  
19 encouraged everyone to attend the Budget Committee meetings to obtain a better  
20 understanding and to provide input and insight into the District budget for next school  
21 year.

22 Trustee Bronson thanked Trustee Finnicum for attending the conference and focusing  
23 on AI. He and Chairperson Johnson were honored to attend the 83<sup>rd</sup> presentation of  
24 Heisey Awards at Great Falls High School.

25 Trustee Skornogoski stated there is a slate of PIR (Pupil Instruction Related) learning  
26 opportunities available for teachers. She is looking forward to the Board Work Session  
27 on March 19<sup>th</sup> regarding student achievement and hopes the community attends to see  
28 the trends in student achievement.

29 Chairperson Johnson stated he had the opportunity to read through thirty-one grant  
30 applications and was extremely impressed with innovative ideas that were submitted  
31 from teachers.

### 34 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

36 Chairperson Johnson reminded everyone of the following upcoming events:

37 Monday, March 18 Board Work Session on Student Achievement;

38 Tuesday, March 19 Board Budget Committee Meeting;

39 And Monday, March 25 for the next regular Board Meeting.

### 42 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

44 Motion – Chairperson Johnson, Seconded – Vice Chairperson Skornogoski, passed  
45 unanimously to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 6:48 p.m.

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Gordon Johnson, Chairperson

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2 Brian Patrick, Clerk