



## **September 17, 2025 Agenda Regular Meeting of Trustees**

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of School District #35 has been scheduled for **September 17, 2025** at 5:15 p.m. in the library and via [Google Meet Link](#).

**Call to Order**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Annual Facility Walkthrough (5:15pm)**

**Presiding Trustee's Explanation of Procedures**

**Public Comment- Non Agenda Items**

**GUESTS:**

**Consent Agenda**

**Minutes:** August 20, 2025 Regular Meeting and August 27, 2025 Special Committee Meeting; **Finance:** Warrants; Operational Budget by Object Code; Cash Reconciliation; Extra-Curricular Expenditure and Reconciliation Report; **Personnel:** No personnel reports

**Superintendent Report**

**District Clerk Report**

**Old Business**

Discussion Items:

- Facilities Walk Through (Further Discussion)
- Open Education Update
- Committee Update
- Compensated Absences Worksheet

Action Items:

- National Register Nomination Status
- Window Restoration Project
- Discuss and Consider Amendment - Policy 2335

**New Business**

Discussion Items:

- Think Tank Funding Tied to Innovation and Flexibility
- New Bus/Mini Bus (how many students ride the bus, number of field trips)

Action Items:

- Superintendent's Evaluation
- Leave Pay Out at End of Year
- Stipend of Spanish Translation
- August Policy Review - Reading #1

**Adjournment**

The Core Purpose of Gallatin Gateway School is to embrace an engaging learning culture in a safe, nurturing environment where each student thrives now and into the future.

## Excerpt from GGS Policy #1441- Audience Participation

### Audience Participation

The Board recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of involving members of the public in its meetings. The Board also recognizes the statutory and constitutional rights of the public to participate in governmental operations. To allow fair and orderly expression of public comments, the Board will permit public participation through oral or written comments during the “public comment” section of the Board agenda and prior to a final decision on a matter of significant interest to the public. The Chairperson may control such comments to ensure an orderly progression of the meeting.

Individuals wishing to be heard by the Chairperson shall first be recognized by the Chairperson. Individuals, after identifying themselves, will proceed to make comments as briefly as the subject permits. The Chairperson may interrupt or terminate an individual’s statement when appropriate, including when statements are out of order, too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant. The Board as a whole shall have the final decision in determining the appropriateness of all such rulings. It is important for all participants to remember that Board meetings are held in public but are not public meetings. Members of the public shall be recognized and allowed input during the meeting, at the discretion of the Chairperson.

Cross Reference:        1420    School Board Meeting Procedure

Legal Reference:        Article II, Section 8, Montana Constitution – Right of participation  
Article II, Section 10, Montana Constitution – Right of privacy  
§§ 2-3-101, et seq., MCA        Notice and Opportunity to Be Heard



**AUGUST 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2025 MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES, GALLATIN GATEWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT #35**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The Board of Trustees of the Gallatin Gateway School District #35 met at 6:00 P.M. on August 20th, 2025, in the Gallatin Gateway School Library and via Google Meet. Trustee Time Melton presided and called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

**TRUSTEES PRESENT**

Aaron Schwieterman, Board Vice Chair, Tim Melton, Board Chair, Brian Nickolay, Luke Hancox

Google Meet: Carissa Maus

**TRUSTEES ABSENT**

None

Google Meet: None

**STAFF PRESENT**

Kelly Henderson, Superintendent; Hannah Hancox, District Clerk.

Google Meet: None

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Lesley Gilmore, Lain Kay; Jacki and Erik Yager  
none on Google Meet

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The meeting attendees recited the *Pledge of Allegiance*.

**PRESIDING TRUSTEE'S EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES**

Board Chair Tim Melton explained the public comment process to be followed for addressing the Board in accordance with Gallatin Gateway School policy. He noted: 1) that prior to a vote the public may comment on agenda items; 2) there will be time for public comment on non-agenda items; 3) public comment periods are not intended to be a question and answer session.

**PUBLIC COMMENT - NON AGENDA ITEMS**

- **Public Comment**

- Lain Kay requested more communication from the board.

- She suggested that GGS should pursue a levy.
- She expressed concern that the board has not been transparent with the community regarding finances.

- **Historic Register Discussion**

- Lesley Gilmore began the process to have Gallatin Gateway School considered for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
- In 2023, Lesley submitted a draft National Register form to SHPO.
- SHPO returned the draft, noting the nomination may not be approved due to additions made to the building.
- SHPO suggested the school emphasize information about the school's growth rather than focusing solely on architecture.
- Even without applying for the National Register, the school would remain eligible for state grants.
- The board decided to place this topic on the next meeting agenda for a decision.

Motion: Trustee

Seconded: Trustee

Public Comment: None

For: Hancox, Maus, Nickolay, Schwieterman, Melton

Opposed: None

Motion passed unanimously 5-0

- **Gallatin Gateway School Window Project**

- Lesley Gilmore presented options for addressing the school's windows.
- Two recommendations were provided:
  - Window restoration
  - Window replacement
- The project would be divided into three phases, with about 11 windows addressed per phase to spread costs across multiple years.
- The windows need attention soon.
- This topic will be added as an **action item**.

Motion: Trustee

Seconded: Trustee

Public Comment: None

For: Hancox, Maus, Nickolay, Schwieterman, Melton

Opposed: None  
Motion passed unanimously 5-0

- **Superintendent Report**

- 117 students are currently enrolled.
- 162 Open Ed students are waiting to be enrolled.
- An additional 25 Open Ed students were emailed to Kelly on August 20, 2025.
- At this time, OPI noted that Open Ed had not completed the proper application process to become a distance learner.
- Open Ed was working to finalize approval at the OPI meeting scheduled for Tuesday, August 26, 2025.

- **Old Business**

- The board discussed adjusting the number of community committee meetings.
  - Decision: All community committees will move to **quarterly meetings**.
- The school walkthrough will be moved to the September board meeting, with both the Board and Facilities Committee required to attend.
- Kelly introduced a packet outlining school finance roles and responsibilities.
  - The board agreed the packet provides adequate delineation of duties.

Motion: Trustee  
Seconded: Trustee  
Public Comment: None  
For: Hancox, Maus, Nickolay, Schwieterman, Melton  
Opposed: None

- **MTSBA Policy Review**

- Motion made by Luke Hancox and Brian Nickolay to review MTSBA policies.
- Policy changes were presented, with deletions shown as crossed out and additions in lighter font.
- Most changes involved language updates.
- The board agreed to **amend Policy No. 3**, excluding it from board policy practices.
- **Policy 2234** changes regarding language options were adopted.

- **MTSBA Poll**

- Kelly read the vote options and the board was asked to cast their votes.
- Results were largely consistent with last year's votes.
- Kelly reviewed the MTSBA principles; all were approved except one.
- The board chose to **abstain** from voting on the principle regarding MTSBA's revenue and expenditure choices, citing insufficient information to make an informed decision.

Motion: Trustee

Seconded: Trustee

Public Comment: Lain Kay does not approve of religious content

For: Hancox, Maus, Nickolay, Schwieterman, Melton

Opposed: None

Motion passed unanimously 5-0

- **Trustees Financial Summary & 2026 School Budget**

- The board reviewed the Trustees Financial Summary and the 2026 School Budget proposal.
- **Decision:** Both the TFS and budget proposal were approved.
- Reports were signed by **Tim Melton** and **Hannah Hancox**.

Motion: Trustee

Seconded: Trustee

Public Comment: None

For: Hancox, Maus, Nickolay, Schwieterman, Melton

Opposed: None

Motion passed unanimously 5-0

- **Adjournment**

- Chair Tim Melton adjourned the meeting at **7:58 p.m.**

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## Action Items

- Historic Register nomination discussion to be added to the next board meeting agenda.

- Window Project to be listed as an action item for follow-up.
- School walkthrough rescheduled for September board meeting with Facilities Committee present.



**AUGUST 27, 2025 MINUTES  
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES, GALLATIN GATEWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT #35**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The Board of Trustees of the Gallatin Gateway School District #35 met at 8:00 A.M.. on August 27th, 2025, in the Gallatin Gateway School Library. Board Chair Tim Melton called the meeting at 8:02.

**TRUSTEES PRESENT**

Lucas Hancox; Tim Melton, Board Chair; Brian Nickolay; Carissa Paulson

**TRUSTEES ABSENT**

**Aaron Schwieterman**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

Kelly Henderson, Superintendent; Hannah Hancox, District Clerk

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT**

None

**OTHERS PRESENT**

None

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

Discuss and Consider Updated Trustees Financial Report

TFS was amended to adjust for the budget amendment made in April, 2025.

Motion: Trustee

Seconded: Trustee

Public Comment: None

For: Hancox, Maus, Nickolay, Melton

Opposed: None

Motion passed unanimously 4-0

**ADJOURNMENT**

Board Chair Tim Melton called the meeting at 8:10 A.M.





## **September 5, 2025 Minutes Special Committee Meeting of Trustees AGENDA SETTING**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The Governing Board of the Gallatin Gateway School District #35 met at 8:00 a.m. on September 5, 2025, in the Gallatin Gateway School Library. Governing Board Chairperson Tim Melton presided and called the meeting to order at 8:00 am.

### **TRUSTEES PRESENT**

Tim Melton, via phone  
Aaron Schwieterman

### **NON-COMMITTEE STAFF PRESENT**

Hannah Hancox, Business Manager/District Clerk  
Kelly Henderson, Superintendent

### **PUBLIC**

No public in attendance

### **PUBLIC COMMENT - NON AGENDA ITEMS**

No public comment

### **NEW BUSINESS**

The proposed agenda for the September 17th regular board meeting was reviewed and approved with the addition of reviewing Policy Amendments to 2335, addition of the Business Office update, and moving the Facilities Walkthrough to 5:15pm.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Chairperson Tim Melton adjourned the meeting at 8:10 am.

The Core Purpose of Gallatin Gateway School is to embrace an engaging learning culture in a safe, nurturing environment where each student thrives now and into the future.



**GALLATIN GATEWAY SCHOOL**  
**PO BOX 265, GALLATIN GATEWAY, MT 59730**

Fund	County	BMS
General 101-	\$17,594	\$16,251
Transportation 110-	(\$37,027)	(\$34,760)
Bus Dep 111-	\$182,784	\$180,748
Food Service 112-	\$6,799	\$5749
Tuition 113-	\$23,487	\$23,332
Retirement 114-	\$78,557	\$21,944
Misc 115-	\$9,070	(\$28,487)
Adult Education 117-	\$17,952	\$16,013
Compensated Abs. 121-	\$565	\$581
Technology 128-	(\$38,576)	(\$38,576)
Flex 129-	\$4,591	\$4,524
Debt Service 150-	(\$95)	(\$33)
Building 160-	\$140	\$3,261
Building Reserve 161-	\$63,598	\$57,436
Endowment 181-	\$1,314	\$4,408
Student Activities 184-	\$54,229	\$88,557
Payroll 186-	(\$7224)	\$26,214
Claims 187-	\$94,310	\$119,673
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$289,284</b>	<b>\$382,611</b>

09/11/25  
13:57:08

GALLATIN GATEWAY ELEMENTARY  
Statement of Expenditure - Budget vs. Actual Report  
For the Accounting Period: 9 / 25

Page: 1 of 1  
Report ID: B100F

Fund	Committed Current Month	Committed YTD	Original Appropriation	Current Appropriation	Available Appropriation	% Comm.
101 GENERAL	7,991.86	111,619.71	1,403,371.00	1,403,371.00	1,291,751.29	8%
110 TRANSPORTATION	4.09	12,501.65	91,322.00	91,322.00	78,820.35	14%
111 BUS DEPRECIATION	0.00	0.00	8,996.00	8,996.00	8,996.00	0%
112 FOOD SERVICE	510.88	3,331.61	56,684.00	56,684.00	53,352.39	6%
113 TUITION	0.00	0.00	246.00	246.00	246.00	0%
114 RETIREMENT	0.00	3,590.53	196,201.00	196,201.00	192,610.47	2%
115 MISC. PROGRAMS	0.00	9,202.46	92,271.00	92,271.00	83,068.54	10%
117 ADULT EDUCATION FUND	6.03	2,470.07	17,559.00	17,559.00	15,088.93	14%
128 TECHNOLOGY FUNDS	140.00	28,169.27	29,256.00	29,256.00	1,086.73	96%
150 DEBT SERVICE	0.00	0.00	198.00	198.00	198.00	0%
160 BUILDING	0.00	316.53	1,643.00	1,643.00	1,326.47	19%
161 BUILDING RESERVE	6,085.44	9,064.01	98,235.00	98,235.00	89,170.99	9%
184 STUDENT ACTIVITY/EXTRACURRICUL	0.00	-28.03	80,445.00	80,445.00	80,473.03	0%
<b>Grand Total:</b>	<b>14,738.30</b>	<b>180,237.81</b>	<b>2,076,427.00</b>	<b>2,076,427.00</b>	<b>1,896,189.19</b>	<b>9%</b>

Page: 1 of 2  
Report ID: AP100

Claim Warrant	Vendor #/Name	Invoice #/Inv Date/Description	Amount	Line Amount	PO #	Fund Org	Acct/Source/Prog-Func	Obj	Proj
Line #									
4592	E	2052 Omni	*** Claim from another period ( 7/25) ****						
1		26443 07/01/25 Annual Fee	750.00	750.00		101 80	100-2300	810	
4638		2030 ODP Business Solutions	139.56						
Dar supplies									
1		4311481780 08/26/25 Scouring Pumice Stick		56.68*		101 80	100-2300	433	
2		4387549750 09/03/25 Bath Tissue		49.49*		101 80	100-2300	433	
3		4387660550 09/03/25 Soap/Lotion		33.39*		101 80	100-2300	433	
4639		377 ENERGY LABORATORIES, INC.	285.00						
1		H25080933 09/08/25 Lead/Copper Test		279.30		101 80	100-2600	421	
2		H25080933 09/08/25 Lead/Copper Test		5.70		117 80	610-2600	421	
4640		2064 NetDiverse	140.00						
AD Hoc Support									
1		2025/00675 07/17/25 Billable Labor Support		140.00*		128 80	100-2230	682	170
4643		441 GALLATIN GATEWAY WATER & SEWER	2,770.66						
Monthly Sewer Services									
1		8953 08/31/25 Monthly Sewer Service		2,770.66		101 80	100-2600	420	
4644		1976 POWER TRAIN PLUS	747.42						
Plow Truck									
1		7995 09/02/25 Plow Truck Fix		747.42*		101 80	100-2600	610	
4645		806 MTSBA - MONTANA SCHOOL BOARD	1,000.00						
Services									
1		0018022 06/15/25 Strategic Planning Service		1,000.00		101 80	100-2300	810	
4646		349 DRAKE IRRIGATION	1,616.00						
1		4317 07/03/25 Sprinkler		1,073.00		101 80	100-2630	440	
2		4418 08/27/25 Sprinkler		543.00		101 80	100-2630	440	
4647		1337 CORE CONTROL	6,085.44						
Service									
1		125-470 08/28/25 Preventative Maintenance		4,781.88*		161 80	100-2600	350	613
2		125-530 08/29/25 Replacement of equipment		1,303.56		161 80	100-2600	440	613

09/11/25  
13:33:11

GALLATIN GATEWAY ELEMENTARY  
Claim Approval List  
For the Accounting Period: 9/25

Page: 2 of 2  
Report ID: API00

\* ... Over spent expenditure

Claim Warrant	Vendor #/Name	Amount	Invoice #/Inv Date/Description	Line Amount	PO #	Fund Org	Acct/Source/ Prog-Func	Obj	Proj
4648	577 KELLEY CREATE	377.10							
1	2072837 09/03/25 Pitney Ink	137.99				101 80 100-2300		550	
2	2001522 06/20/25 Printer Work	239.11				101 80 100-2300		550	
4649	1402 SCENARIO LEARNING LLC	510.40							
1	Employee Training								
1	123983 08/24/25 Vector Training	510.40*				101 80 100-2213		320	
4650	420 US FOODS	510.88							
1	Food Service Order								
1	3173352 09/05/25 Food Order	510.88				112 80 910-3100		630	
4651	229 CENTURYLINK	16.36							
Internet									
1	748744634 09/19/25 Internet Services	11.94				101 80 100-2300		531	
2	748744634 09/19/25 Internet Services	4.09				110 80 100-2300		531	
3	748744634 09/19/25 Internet Services	0.33				117 80 610-2300		531	
4652	609 KENYON NOBLE	334.48							
1	841409 08/25/25 Open Statements	334.48*				101 80 100-2300		433	
4653	1990 PITNEY BOWES GLOBAL FINANCIAL	195.00							
Rental									
1	3321176668 08/20/25 Rental	195.00				101 80 100-2500		310	
4654	1018 SCHOOL SPECIALTY INC.	10.00							
1	96526 08/21/25 Squeeze Bottle	10.00				101 82 100-1000		610	

# of Claims 16 Total: 15,488.30 # of Vendors 15

Total Electronic Claims 750.00

Total Non-Electronic Claims 14,738.30

Ok

Henderson

9-11-25

# Superintendent's Report

September 17, 2025



## Strategic Goals

### Individual Student Success

- Special Education students - 9
- Students with 504's - 19
- Gifted students - 7
- ELL students - 10
- Check In/Check Out - no students on formal check in check out process
- No disciplinary actions to report
- Current Enrollment - 122
- Attendance - Pre-K - 6 98.49%/7-8 99.12% attendance rates
- Open Ed enrollment - 186 students

### Staff and Volunteers

- PLC meeting topics: Processes and Procedures/Q&A; EPAS training; Standards based grading/instruction; MS meeting focusing on grades 6-7th; PLC Processes with Data/Analysis

### Student Events

- Planning the Middle School field trip to West Yellowstone to include the Grizzly Discovery Center and IMAX Theater for September 26th.

### Discussion Points:

### Business Office Accomplishments, Challenges, and Projects

- IRS Reconciliation
- Leave Accumulation and the Compensated Absence Spreadsheet
- Monthly Reconciliation
- Contract Set Up in BMS for all employees

### Upcoming Events:

# coalition of advocates FOR MONTANA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MASBO | MREA | MTSBA | MQEC | SAM

TO: School Funding Interim Commission Members  
FROM: The Undersigned Executive Directors of the Organizations  
Partnering in the Coalition of Advocates for Montana's Public Schools  
RE: Follow-Up Proposal: A Bold Step Toward Transforming Montana's School  
Funding System  
DATE: September 8, 2025

Dear Members of the School Finance Interim Commission,

Montana's public schools are at a critical juncture. As highlighted in our previous memorandum, the current funding formula falls short of addressing the diverse needs of our districts, leaving many students underserved and schools trapped in a cycle of scarcity and budget cuts. This proposal outlines a detailed and actionable plan to address these challenges, ensuring every Montana student has access to quality education while alleviating the burden of property taxes statewide.

Building on the principles of equity and adequacy, this plan introduces a revised funding structure, a sustainable revenue source, and adjustments to outdated mechanisms. By simplifying the funding formula, generating consistent revenue, and empowering districts with discretionary funding, we can stabilize school funding, address poverty-related challenges, and enable districts to deliver excellence for all students.

## **Replacing an Outdated Model with a New Funding Structure for Montana's Schools**

Montana's public schools have long operated under a general fund budget framework that has seen little significant alteration in over three decades. While the underlying formula has undergone valuable refinements, particularly in the past 15 years, the essential structure—a rigid 80% BASE minimum and a 100% maximum—has remained largely intact, proving increasingly outdated. Originally designed to elevate underfunded districts and temper over-expenditures in wealthier areas, these constraints were predicated on the flawed assumption that per-pupil spending was the singular indicator of both adequacy and equity in education. As this memo will demonstrate, this assumption is no longer tenable.

The BASE has fostered a misleading depiction of the financial parameters necessary for delivering a quality educational experience. In fact, recent trends reveal that over two-thirds of Montana's students attend districts spending 97% of the maximum or more, while a mere 5% of the state's student population is educated in districts operating at the BASE level. Moreover, when one considers districts at the BASE that are supplemented by

federal impact aid to fulfill their funding needs, the percentage of students in such districts diminishes to just 2.5%.

It has become increasingly apparent that the BASE does not correlate with educational quality; rather, the existing maximum budget constraints are hindering the provision of an excellent education. Many rural districts find themselves stymied above the maximum, grappling with declining student enrollment due to demographic shifts, all while struggling to maintain funding levels from previous years.

Our proposal seeks to eliminate both the BASE and the maximum altogether, advocating instead for a single guaranteed funding level that accurately reflects the resources necessary for ensuring quality education—one that is not dependent on the contingency of voter approval of burdensome levies by property taxpayers, who are understandably weary. By establishing funding for each district that enables them to fulfill their role in providing a system of high-quality, free schools, we can ensure that every school district is equipped to genuinely pursue the goal of unlocking each individual's full potential in an environment that guarantees equal educational opportunity.

At the core of our proposal is a unified “Quality Assurance” (QA) funding amount, under which each school district would receive full funding for quality education. This would be complemented by a “Discretionary Funding Enhancement” (DFE) of 10%, subject to voter approval, to foster innovation and excellence beyond the established QA amount. This approach will uphold local control and maintain flexibility, ensuring that the educational needs of all Montana students are met with the utmost regard for quality and equity.

### **The Details of Our Proposal**

Our revised funding formula reflects the realities of Montana’s educational landscape, balancing resources to meet the needs of both rural and urban districts. The key components used to fund each district at the Quality Assurance line are as follows:

#### **1. Revised ANB (Average Number Belonging) – Fair Per-Pupil Funding (52% of Total)**

We propose a flat per-pupil funding rate with no decrement applied:

- \$5,000 per student grades P-5
- \$6,300 per student grades 6-12

#### **2. FUND Assistance – Addressing Unique Needs (12% of Total)**

To better serve students facing challenges, we recommend consolidating and enhancing multiple at-risk and related funding streams into a single block grant called the **Funding for Unique Needs and Development (FUND) Payment**, derived from:

- 3X the current American Indian Achievement Gap.
- 2X the current Indian Education for All (minimum \$5,000).
- 15X the current At-Risk Payment.
- 2X the current State Special Education funding.



### **3. Enhanced QEP (Quality Education Payment) – Investing in Educators (24% of Total)**

Educators are the backbone of our schools. This payment structure incentivizes compliance with STARS (Standards for Teachers and Resources for Students):

- \$30,000 if STARS compliant.
- \$15,000 if not compliant.
- STARS Incentive at 3X QEP (\$45,000 Base Teacher Salary).

### **4. Revised Basic Entitlement – Supporting Learning Environments (12.5% of Total)**

We propose eliminating arbitrary thresholds in the current law and ensuring full funding for all entitlements:

- \$100,000 for every group of 100 elementary students.
- \$150,000 for every group of 200 middle school students.
- \$400,000 for every group of 400 high school students. This approach aligns funding with actual student group sizes and operational needs, enabling schools to create effective learning environments.

### **Discretionary Funding Enhancement (DFE) – Driving Innovation and Transformation**

The **Discretionary Funding Enhancement (DFE)**, capped at 10% beyond the Quality Assurance (QA) line, empowers districts to:

- Pilot cutting-edge educational programs.
- Invest in supplemental technology and infrastructure for transformational learning.
- Conduct research and development to address unique challenges and opportunities.
- Develop innovative teaching and learning approaches that can serve as models for other districts.

This mechanism ensures that the QA line covers all operational necessities, while the DFE fosters creativity, growth, and excellence in education, subject to voter approval.

**Fund Schools Adequately:** Total Funding for the QA is anticipated to be \$204.5 million higher than FY28 Projected Maximum Budgets under current law (\$1.687 overall funding). This approach balances the need for sustainable school funding with significant property tax relief, benefiting all Montana residents.

### **Exploring Alternative Revenue Sources for Montana's Public Schools**

It is imperative for the Legislature to explore and establish alternative tax revenue sources that alleviate the financial burden currently placed on residential property taxpayers in Montana. The responsibility to implement comprehensive tax reform lies within the legislative body, which has the authority to appropriate funds and make significant changes to the state's tax structure.

Recent legislative sessions have successfully passed transformative tax policies, including notable reductions in income tax rates—specifically lowering the top rate from 6.9% to 4.9% between 2021 and 2025. Additionally, the Legislature has enacted reforms that

significantly reduce property tax rates for primary residences and long-term rentals. These actions demonstrate that the Montana Legislature has both the authority and the capability to create sustainable solutions to the funding challenges facing our public schools.

The pivotal question the State must address is whether the objectives of adequately funding education and ensuring fairness in tax revenues can coexist harmoniously. We firmly believe that with proactive planning and strategic initiatives, these goals can not only align but also support one another, fostering a more equitable and stable funding environment for Montana's public schools. It is time for a collaborative approach to ensure that both our educational institutions and taxpayers thrive.

### **Preserving and Enhancing Strategic Programs Fostering Quality**

In addition to the proposed reforms, we strongly advocate for the continuation and enhancement of existing programs that incentivize innovation and strategic alignment in public schools. These programs, akin to research and development initiatives in private business, provide valuable opportunities to test and refine promising educational strategies. Key programs include:

1. Charter Schools under HB 549 (2023 – Anderson).
2. Advanced Opportunities under HB 387 (2019 – Jones) and HB 252 (2025 – Jones).
3. Future Ready Payment under HB 252 (2025 – Jones).
4. Shared Resource Incentive under HB 252 (2025 – Jones).
5. Targeted Interventions for literacy and numeracy under HB 352 (Barker) and HB 338 (2025 – Romano).
6. Transformational Learning Grants, Phase 2 under HB 573 (2025 – Bedey).
7. Countywide Resource Sharing Incentive under HB 567 (2025 – Barker).
8. Work-Based Learning under HB 246 (2023 – Bertoglio).
9. Other personalized learning initiatives authorized under § 20-7-1601.

These programs represent strategic investments by the State in Montana's educational future, fostering innovation and addressing the unique needs of students across the state.

### **Why This Plan Works**

This proposal is more than a funding formula—it is a commitment to Montana's values of equity, excellence, and opportunity for all. By shifting from a one-size-fits-all model to a balanced formula that prioritizes quality, we can ensure that the formula:

- **Supports Rural Schools:** Provide stable funding for small districts with high fixed costs and teacher shortages.
- **Empowers Urban Schools:** Prevent overcrowding and ensure adequate resources for underserved communities.
- **Promotes Equity:** Address achievement gaps and ensure all students, including those with disabilities and those in poverty, receive the support they need to succeed.

- **Drives Innovation:** Enable districts to pursue transformational projects that elevate education statewide.

Investing in our schools today is an investment in Montana's future. Let's work together to make this vision a reality.

Sincerely,



Shelley Turner  
MASBO

Doug Reisig  
MQEC

Larry Crowder  
MREA

Lance Melton  
MTSBA

Rob Watson  
SAM

Old Business  
DISCUSSION ITEM

**Facilities Walkthrough - Discussion**

Presented by: Kelly Henderson

Background: (Include funding sources as appropriate)

☰ 25-26 Facility Walk-Through Notes

## Facility Walk-Through Notes

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location	Description/Issue	Recommendation
Entire School	Classrooms, Hallways, Entry, Commons, Gym, Cafeteria	9.5.25: We have one classroom, the gym, and the metal doors left to be painted.
	Camera System	9.5.24: Camera update and installation complete
	Replace all carpet and tile	Not completed
	HVAC System replacement	Not completed
	Cafeteria: Replace hallway doors for safety issues	Not completed
	Cafeteria: Replace windows	Not completed
	Cafeteria: Barrier for kitchen area	Not completed, recommend a garage style door or find a gate that fits the opening
	Fire Suppression Hood	9.5.24: While this is an antiquated system, the system does work. It will only work one time and then we will need to replace it.
	Locker Rooms: Cap off shower heads and close the drain	Not completed
	Security System	9.8.2025 We have completed the cameras and access control.
Front Office/Commons/Entry	New interior vestibule and waiting area	9.8.2025 Shatterproof Film installed June 2025.
	Keyless Entry: Inside doors are still not working with the existing system to allow emergency access by fire, police.	9.8.2025 We are continuing to work on this with TEST.

Basement	<p>Remove all storage and access</p> <p>Plastic sheet the crawl space as there is no vapor barrier</p> <p>Organic materials removed from the crawl space</p> <p>Remove board with mold growth</p> <p>Brick chimney needs cleaning and evaluation by engineer</p> <p>Air samples collected regularly - run air scrubber as needed</p>	<p>9.5.24: Completed</p> <p>Not completed</p> <p>9.5.24: Completed</p> <p>9.5.24: Completed</p> <p>Not completed</p> <p>9.5.24: Completed</p>
Outside	<p>Painting of eaves, steps, and other weather worn areas</p> <p>Broken letters replaced</p> <p>Gaps under sidewalks</p> <p>Holes where drainage projects into the grass</p> <p>Replace timbers by swings</p> <p>Resurfacing the walking track</p> <p>Repair tire tracks in the grass</p> <p>Roof - mold deteriorating cover</p> <p>Roof - areas of standing water</p> <p>Gaps in the cinder block</p>	<p>9.5.24: Not completed</p> <p>9.5.24: Completed</p> <p>Not completed</p> <p>Not completed</p> <p>Not completed</p> <p>Not completed</p> <p>9.5.24: Completed</p> <p>Not completed</p> <p>Not completed</p> <p>Not completed</p>

Classrooms	Primary: Replace sinks and cupboards Primary: Remodel bathrooms	Not completed Deep cleaning, light replacement completed. Painting and updating the room completed.

Old Business  
DISCUSSION ITEM

Open Education Update

Presented by: Kelly Henderson

Background: (Include funding sources as appropriate)

We are currently awaiting the state to approve the distance learning application for Open Ed. This takes place on September 23, 2025. All the students and teachers are entered into Infinite Campus. We are waiting for the state to approve and then we will enroll everyone and put them into classes before October 1. We currently have 184 students entered.

156 K-6 Students, ANB for Elementary is  $\$6,496 \times 139 = \$1,013,376$

28 7-8 Students, ANB for MS is  $\$8,317 \times 24 = \$232,876$

Total \$1,246,252

Per law, we only receive 80% of this funding (-\$249,250.40). This leaves us with \$997,001.60. Open Ed receives 80% of this funding \$797,601.28 for our total of \$199,400.32.



Old Business  
DISCUSSION ITEM

Committee Updates

Presented by: Tim Melton, Kelly Henderson

Background: (Include funding sources as appropriate)  
We had several parents sign up at Open House.

Facilities Committee	Meet quarterly, and as needed Board Members: Aaron Schwieterman, Tim Melton Superintendent: Kelly Henderson District Clerk: Hannah Hancox Staff Members (2): Mike Coon, Jacki Yager, Melissa Sharpe Parents/Community (2): Jeff Krogstad, Philip Eykelbosch, Ben Van Dyke, Cassandra Elwell
PDAC Committee	Three meetings (review current year PD, survey of needs, development of topics based on need). Board Member: Luke Hancox Superintendent: Kelly Henderson K-2 certified staff member (1): Madeline Herron 3-5 certified staff member (1): Neal Krogstad 6-8 certified staff member (1): Madeline Barry Specialist (1): Maddie Phelps/Marie Welch
Safety Committee	Meet Quarterly Board Member: Brian Nickolay Superintendent: Kelly Henderson Staff members (3): Ashley Davis, Margaret Campbell Community member, if possible:
Whole Child	Meet four times per year Board Member: Carissa Maus Superintendent: Kelly Henderson School Counselor: Marie Welch Classroom Teacher: Spencer Kirkemo, Nickie Barnes, Mariel Warren, Jacki Yager Administrative Secretary: Kaitlyn Brown Two parents/guardians: Jeff Krogstad

Old Business  
DISCUSSION ITEM

**Compensated Absences Worksheet**

Presented by: Kelly Henderson, Hannah Hancox

Background: (Include funding sources as appropriate)

This is the Compensated Absences projection for 25-26.

■ 25-26 Compensated Absences Worksheet.xls



Compensated Absence Worksheet & Non-Teaching Staff Worker's Comp 8868										Administrative		Enter rates here: (use rates effective June 30 of the current year)		FICA		PERS		TRS		8868 Unemploy WorkComp							
School District Name/No.				Gallatin Gateway School #35										For fiscal year ended:		June 30, 2026		7.6500%		6.8000%		9.4700%		0.3200%		8.0000%	
Enter pay-out rate for vacation and sick leave:														25%													
Employee Name	PERS or TRS? (Enter "P" or "T")	1	2	Accum Vacation Hours or Days	Total Vacation Liability	Accum Sick Leave Hours or Days	Total Sick Leave Liability	Total Vacation and Sick Leave Liability	3 + 5	1 x 2 x pay-out rate	100%	1 x 2 x pay-out rate	1 x 4 x pay-out rate	Rate times Column 6													
														7	8	9	10	11	12								
														Employer FICA	Employer PERS	Employer TRS	Employer Unemploy-ment	Employer Workers' Comp	Compensated Absence Liability								
TOTALS														3,291.37	695.96	3,105.21	137.67	3,441.96	53,696.77								
Hannah Hancock	P	32.81	185.07		6,072.15	178.30	1,462.51	7,534.86	576.40	512.36	0	24.11	602.77	9,250.30													
Kelly Handerson	T	60.25	369.34	274.95	22,252.74	274.95	4,141.43	26,394.17	2,019.15	0	2,499.53	84.46	2,111.53	33,106.84													
Claudia Inman	T	17.23	151.32	177.83	2,607.24	177.83	786.00	3,373.24	258.05	0	319.45	10.79	269.86	4,231.39													
LaDonna Quarters	T	17.23	138.45	147.89	2,385.49	147.89	637.04	3,022.53	231.22	0	266.23	9.67	241.80	3,791.45													
Kaitlyn Brown	P	20.00	112.50	90.00	2,250.00	90.00	450.00	2,700.00	206.55	0	183.60	8.64	216.00	3,314.79													
														0.00	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00								

Compensated Absence Worksheet & Non-Teaching Staff: Worker's Comp 9101																
Administrative				Enter rates here: (use rates effective June 30 of the current year)		FICA		PERS	TRS	Unemploy	9101 WorkComp					
						7.6500%		6.8000%	9.4700%	0.3200%	8.0000%					
School District Name/No.		Gallatin Gateway School #35														
Enter pay-out rate for vacation and sick leave:				100%		25%		For fiscal year ended: June 30, 2026								
				1 x 2 x pay-out rate		1 x 4 x pay-out rate		3 + 5		Rate times Column 6						
PERS or TRS? (Enter "P" or "T")				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Employee Name		Hourly or Daily Rate	Accum Vacation Hours or Days	Accum Sick Leave Hours or Days	Total Vacation Liability	Total Sick Leave Liability	Total Vacation and Sick Leave Liability	Employer FICA	Employer PERS	Employer TRS	Employer Unemploy-ment	Employer Workers Comp	Compensated Absence Liability			
TOTALS						17,552.67		3,494.25		21,046.92		1,610.09		1,683.75		25,839.30
Jeffrey Bennett	P	31.00	116.08	3,598.48	51.78	401.30	3,999.78	305.98	271.99	0	12.80	319.98	4,910.53			
Darwin Stoner	P	34.63	286.54	9,922.88	264.18	2,287.14	12,210.02	934.07	830.28	0	39.07	976.80	14,990.24			
Shelby Taylor	P	20.39	197.71	4,031.31	158.08	805.81	4,837.12	370.04	328.92	0	15.48	386.97	5,938.53			
						0.00		0.00		0	0.00	0.00	0.00			

School District Name/No.	Gallatin Gateway School #35						
For Fiscal Year Ended:	2026 Projection						
COMPENSATED ABSENCES WORKSHEET - RECAP	Total Vacation and Sick Leave	Employer FICA	Employer PERS	Employer TRS	Employer Unemployment	Employer Workers Comp	Total Compensated Absence Liability
Administrative & Non-Teaching Staff	64,071.52	4,901.46	2,127.15	3,105.21	205.02	5,125.71	79,536.07
Teaching Staff	39,839.62	3,047.74	0.00	3,772.81	127.51	3,187.19	49,974.87
TOTALS	103,911.14	7,949.20	2,127.15	6,878.02	332.53	8,312.90	129,510.94

COMPENSATED ABSENCE LIABILITY FUND LIMIT (see 20-9-512, MCA below):	
Total Liability for Administrative & Non-Teaching Staff	79,536.07
	X 30%
	23,860.82
	565.00
	23,295.82

Maximum amount allowed in Compensated Absences Liability Fund (21)  
**Enter Cash Balance in Fund 21 as of June 30**  
Amount allowed to transfer (if negative, must transfer back to General Fund, if positive, may transfer up to this amount from General Fund)

Accounting Entries:

To move money from Compensated Absence Liability Fund (21) to General Fund (01)  
Debit: X21-999-9999-971 Operating Transfer to Other Funds (Compensated Absence Liability Fund)  
Credit: X21-101 Cash (Compensated Absence Liability Fund)  
Debit: X01-101 Cash (General Fund)  
Credit: X01-9710 Operating Transfer from Other Funds (General Fund)

-----OR-----

To move money from General Fund (01) to Compensated Absence Liability Fund (21)  
Debit: X01-999-6100-910 Operating Transfer to Other Funds (General Fund)  
Credit: X01-101 Cash (General Fund)  
Debit: X21-101 Cash (Compensated Absence Liability Fund)  
Credit: X21-5300 Operating Transfer from Other Funds (Compensated Absence Liability Fund)

**20-9-512, MCA. Compensated absence liability fund.** (1) The trustees of a school district may establish a compensated absence liability fund for the purpose of paying: (a) any accumulated amount of sick leave that a nonteaching or administrative school district employee is entitled to upon termination of employment with the district in accordance with the provisions of 2-18-618; and (b) any accumulated amount of vacation leave that a nonteaching or administrative school district employee is entitled to upon termination of employment with the district. (2) The compensated absence liability fund may be used only for the stated purpose of this section. (3) The trustees may transfer money from the general fund, within the adopted budget, to establish and maintain the compensated absence liability fund. (4) The maximum amount in a reserve fund established under the provisions of subsections (1) and (3) may not exceed 30% of: (a) the total school district liability for

accumulated sick leave of nonteaching and administrative school district employees on June 30 of the current school fiscal year, and (b) the total school district liability for accumulated vacation leave of nonteaching and administrative school district employees on June 30 of the current school fiscal year. (5) For the purposes of this section, "administrative school district employee" means a school district employee who is employed in an administrative position and who accrues vacation leave as part of the employee's contract with the school district.

Old Business  
ACTION ITEM

**National Register Nomination Status**

Presented by: Tim Melton

Background: (Include funding sources as appropriate)

Lesely Gilmore presented information about the National Register at the August Board Meeting. The board should discuss and determine the best course of action for either moving forward with the National Register or stop the process. Here are notes from Ms. Gilmore:

“This discussion focuses around the board discussing whether to proceed with the National Register nomination or not. Ms. Gilmore would update the memo I provided at the last board meeting. This would essentially authorize her to update the form as much as possible to beef up the social history aspects (of the community growth that necessitated/increased the value of the school - and, I have some thoughts about how to swing that with the removal of the Amberson barn that was the community center until demolished in the 1970s) and downplay the architecture. Then I can review this with the state, to see if they think it is more likely. Then review with the board again. So, it isn't a huge commitment on the part of the board.”

Recommendation:

Option 1: Administration recommends advancement of the application for National Register Status with Ms. Gilmore assisting in the completion of the application.

Option 2: Administration recommends not advancing with the National Register nomination.

Old Business  
ACTION ITEM

**Window Restoration Project**

Presented by: Tim Melton

Background: (Include funding sources as appropriate)

Discuss and consider options for window replacement in the 1915 building. Discuss the options of replacement versus restoration with restoration estimate cost of \$1,000 per window for 11 windows. The cost of replacement has not been determined (as of this writing, the vendors have not returned messages).

Ms. Gilmore provided grant opportunities that she could assist with from the following organizations:

1. History Foundation of Montana (only up to \$10,000 though).
2. Consider the big grant from the state, for up to \$500,000.
3. And the County grant - up to \$1000-2000. Probably only \$1,000. But it would be good to ask them, since they helped with the first restoration mock-up. This would only be for restoration. They have said they would not support replacement.

Recommendation: Administration recommends moving forward with the window restoration with the assistance of Ms. Gilmore in writing grants to assist with funding the project.



Old Business  
ACTION ITEM

**Amendment to Policy 2335**

Presented by: Kelly Henderson

Background: (Include funding sources as appropriate)

MTSBA missed one section of language to meet Federal requirements. The policy amendment removes gender identity and sexual orientation and replaces the language in the policy with the following statement:

*"Human sexuality instruction" means instruction that has the goal or purpose of studying, exploring, or informing students about any of the following human sexuality topics: intimate relationships, sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, sexually transmitted infections, sexual acts, abstinence, contraception, or reproductive rights and responsibilities.*

Recommendation: Administration recommends approval of the amendments made to policy 2335 on first reading.

**Policy 2335: Human Sexuality Instruction and Identity Instruction**

**Status: ADOPTED**

**Original Adopted Date:** 09/09/2022 | **Last Revised Date:** 09/04/2025 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 09/04/2025

**Definitions:**

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

- (a) "Human sexuality instruction" means instruction that has the goal or purpose of studying, exploring, or informing students about any of the following human sexuality topics: intimate relationships, sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, sexually transmitted infections, sexual acts, abstinence, contraception, or reproductive rights and responsibilities.
- (b) "Identity instruction" means instruction that has the goal or purpose of studying, exploring, or informing students about gender identity or gender expression, or sexual orientation.
- (c) "Instruction" means the conduct of organized learning activities, including the provision of materials, for students in a public school, whether conducted by a teacher or other school staff or guests invited at the request of the school or district and regardless of the duration, venue, or method of delivery.

Neither "human sexuality instruction" nor "identity instruction" includes or applies to a teacher's response to an unexpected student-initiated inquiry related to the topics under each term to the extent necessary to resolve the inquiry or to maintain civility and decorum in the classroom.

**Annual Notice to Parents:**

1. Using contact information most recently provided by the parent or guardian, the District shall annually notify in advance the parent or guardian of each student scheduled to be enrolled in a course that includes units or lessons on human sexuality instruction or identity instruction of:

- (a) the basic content of the district's or school's human sexuality instruction or identity instruction intended to be taught to the student and the option to review all curriculum materials related to human sexuality instruction or identity instruction; and
- (b) the parent's or guardian's right to withdraw the student from the District's human sexuality instruction; and
- (c) the requirement that the parent or guardian provide written permission to allow the child to attend identity instruction.

The annual notice shall include an electronic link to materials or summaries of materials consistent with copyright laws for the District's health enhancement curriculum including lesson plans or other materials used for human sexuality instruction or identity instruction and a calendar of events or assemblies at which human sexuality instruction or identity instruction will be provided.

**Additional Notice to Parents:**

In addition to the annual notice required above, the District will provide notice to parents no fewer than 5 school days or more than 14 school days prior to holding an event or assembly or first introducing materials for instructional use.

**Parental Permission**

The District will not require or permit a student to attend or participate in identity instruction without the prior written permission of the parent or guardian. Written permission may be provided

by the parent following the annual notice to parents, but parents or guardians shall have the right to cancel or rescind permission by providing written notice to the Superintendent at any time.

#### Excused Absence

Any student whose parent or guardian has withdrawn the student from human sexuality instruction or has not provided prior written permission for participation in identity instruction will be excused from attending such instruction, and the absence will be an excused absence in accordance with § 20-5-103, MCA.

#### Summary of Curriculum

The District shall prepare a summary of the district's health enhancement curriculum and shall review and prepare any updates to the summary each year. The summary is public information and is subject to the public's right to access information pursuant to § 2-6-1003, MCA.

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#### **Montana Code Annotated**

20-5-103

#### **Description**

Compulsory Attendance and Excuses

20-7-120

Excused Absences from Curriculum Requirements

#### **Cross References**

#### **Code**

2132

#### **Description**

Student and Family Privacy Rights

2158

Parent and Family Engagement and Educational Involvement

3120

Compulsory Attendance

New Business  
DISCUSSION ITEM

**Innovation and Flexibility Funding**

Presented by: Kelly Henderson  
Background: (Include funding sources as appropriate)

**Overview of Funding Opportunities**

Montana school districts have multiple innovative strategies to maximize educational funding and flexibility. The Montana Digital Academy offers an exciting opportunity for districts to expand curricular access, with even a single unit course generating approximately \$1,600-\$2,000 in Average Number Belonging (ANB) funding. Districts can leverage programs like work-based learning, which counts as classroom instruction time, and pursue future-ready payments that provide financial incentives for student credit achievements. The potential annual statewide funding for these initiatives can reach up to \$51,104,850, making it a significant opportunity for educational enhancement.

**Funding and Levy Strategies**

School districts can strategically use various funding mechanisms to support their educational goals. Nonvoted levies provide opportunities for addressing specific needs, such as major maintenance, special education, transportation, and adult education. Districts can also increase their over-BASE general fund levy without a vote by reducing other nonvoted property tax levies. Additionally, innovative approaches like multidistrict agreements can provide substantial flexibility in fund allocation, allowing boards to determine the most efficient use of transferred funds. The current legislative environment also supports these efforts, with recent homeowner tax relief measures creating a favorable context for strategic financial planning in education.

**Key Recommendations**

School leaders are encouraged to:

- Explore Montana Digital Academy course offerings
- Pursue work-based learning opportunities
- Investigate future-ready payment incentives
- Carefully examine nonvoted levy options
- Consider multidistrict agreements
- Develop comprehensive communication strategies about district achievements and financial status



## Handout for Thinktank Thursday, July 10, 2025

### Assessing your District's options for funding tied to innovation and flexibility.

#### 1. Personalize Learning:

- a. Montana Digital Academy to expand curricular access.
  - i. Even one full unit course generates  $\frac{1}{4}$  ANB for the district, which is about \$1,600 for elementary and \$2,000 for high school ANB.
    1. Annual cost for an MTDA one unit course is \$256.
  - ii. Encourage/recruit home school enrollment on a part time basis, including remote learning through the Montana Digital Academy.
- b. Recognize that proficiency-paced, time-variable education is authorized and encouraged, aligned both to standards of the Board of Public Education (ARM 10.55.906), the goals of the Legislature (20-7-1601) and the funding formula (20-9-311(4)(d)).
- c. Provide work-based learning opportunities for students. Time spent in work based learning is treated the same as classroom instruction time for ANB purposes. 20-7-1510.
- d. Pursue the future ready payment as part of your strategy for course offerings.

#### Future Ready Payment Incentive

Level	ANB Amount	15 credits	30 credits	AA Degree
Elementary	\$6,496	\$650	\$1,299	\$1,949
High School	\$8,317	\$832	\$1,663	\$2,495
	Total	\$1,481	\$2,963	\$4,444
Potential Annual Statewide Funding		\$17,034,950	\$34,069,900	\$51,104,850

- e. Continue to serve those interested in value added programming after graduation until they age out for ANB purposes. 20-5-101(3).
- #### 2. Qualify for the STARS Act and protect ongoing qualification to preserve funding.
- a. There is a double QEP payment at stake, \$50 million per year statewide and typically about 7% of your adopted general fund budget.
  - b. Resource sharing can further enhance funding for districts sharing staff.
  - c. Future ready payment, plan now for FY28 look back to FY26 credits.

3. Impose nonvoted levies as authorized for costly programs.

- a. Major Maintenance, GTB subsidized, now with \$40,000 per district and \$115 per ANB amounts.
- b. Special Education levy for unfunded costs of special education. Levy authority = total cost of IEP minus general fund budget per ANB and minus state and federal special education payment. Do not unnecessarily fund special education costs out of your general fund. Access the tuition fund to the full amount authorized by law. The law in question was passed on a strong bipartisan vote in the 2013 session, 45-5 in the Senate, 93-7 in the House. See 20-5-324(4)(a)(iii) for details.
- c. Now is the time to consider these moves, when the Legislature has just passed significant homeowner tax relief. Even a million dollar home will see a double digit percentage reduction in taxes and public school advocates helped make that happen.

Taxes per Mill for Various Homes	Current Law	SB 542	Difference	% decrease
\$500K	\$6.90	\$4.66	(\$2.25)	-32.54%
\$750K	\$10.35	\$7.53	(\$2.82)	-27.25%
\$ 1 million	\$13.80	\$10.53	(\$3.27)	-23.70%
\$1.25 million	\$17.25	\$14.03	(\$3.22)	-18.67%
\$1.5 million	\$20.70	\$17.53	(\$3.17)	-15.31%
\$1.75 million	\$24.15	\$22.26	(\$1.90)	-7.85%
\$2 million	\$27.60	\$26.98	(\$0.62)	-2.25%

4. Maximize, customize and transform your funding:

- a. Major maintenance funding can be used to service debt on renovations. You can take out a loan from the board of investments without a vote as long as you have a budgeted fund (major maintenance qualifies) and you have sufficient annual funds to service the debt on the loan. See 20-9-471.
  - i. This can increase your access to funds for renovations by 10-12 times what your annual allocation is depending on rates. An annual allocation of \$80,000 for a K-12 district (between elementary and high school), for example, would be enough to service debt on a loan of \$800,000 based on a 15-year term at 5% APR.
- b. Major maintenance funding can be used for, among other items, school safety as defined in 20-9-236(1). See 20-9-525 for further information. The

definition of school safety in 20-9-236 includes the operational costs of enhancing school and student safety and security, including funding for school resource officers, counselors, and other staff assisting the district with improvements to school and student safety and security, and programs and training for school employees, students, parents, and community members to support school and student safety and security, including but not limited to active shooter training, threat assessment practices pursuant to 20-1-401(3)(b), and restorative justice.

- c. Enter into a multidistrict agreement (SB 329, 2011 Legislature, updated by HB 567, 2025 Legislature) with at least one or more other districts and you will have substantial additional flexibility in how you spend funds, based on the board's determination regarding the best and most efficient use of funds. The changes to law clarify that the silos on funds transferred to support a multidistrict agreement come down and the board has full authority to determine how best to spend funds transferred to support a multidistrict agreement.

*20-3-363 "Expenditures from the interlocal cooperative fund under this section may include any expenditures that are considered by the board of trustees of the district to be reasonable and necessary to efficiently and effectively finance the expenditures pursuant to the terms of the multidistrict agreement, not to exceed the total expenditures approved by the board of trustees for the budgeted fund from which the transfer was made, including expenditures pursuant to any budget amendment adopted pursuant to 20-9-165."*

- 5. Determine where your levy authority best serves the district.
  - a. School districts operate on the basis of a combination of voted and nonvoted local property tax levies.
    - i. Nonvoted:
      - 1. 20-5-324 – Tuition, both for regular and special education.
        - a. Regular tuition levy, capped at 20% based on over BASE levy as % of general fund. Must be used for tax relief.
        - b. Special education tuition levy, limited to actual cost of service, proceeds can be used to serve the student(s) on behalf of whom the levy was imposed.
      - 2. 20-9-471 – For repairs and renovations.
        - a. Must be able to service the debt with funds from a budgeted fund.

3. 20-10-141 - 144 Transportation
4. 20-10-147 - Bus Depreciation
5. 20-9-525 – Major Maintenance (also eligible for use for school safety)
6. 20-7-205 - Adult Education (eligible for HISET for any student 16+ who is not regularly enrolled on a fulltime basis for ANB purposes)

ii. Voted:

1. 20-9-353 - Over BASE general fund
  2. 20-9-403 - Bonds/Building Fund
  3. 20-9-502 –
    - a. (2) Building Reserve (20 year limit)
    - b. (4) Transition
    - c. (5) School Safety
  4. 20-9-533 - Technology
- b. School Districts have the authority to increase their over BASE general fund levy without a vote by any amount by which the district decreases a

**20-9-308. BASE budgets and general fund budget limits.**

(2)(b) The intent of this section is to increase the flexibility and efficiency of elected school boards without increasing school district property taxes. In furtherance of this intent and provided that budget limitations otherwise specified in law are not exceeded, *the trustees of a district may increase the district's over-BASE budget levy without a vote if the board of trustees reduces nonvoted property tax levies authorized by law to be imposed by action of the trustees of the district by at least as much as the amount by which the over-BASE budget levy is increased.* The ongoing authority for any nonvoted increase in the over-BASE budget levy imposed under this subsection (2)(b) must be decreased in future years to the extent that the trustees of the district impose any increase in other nonvoted property tax levies.

6. Advocate for the necessary resources for quality education in your community. There are limits on spending resources for the specific purpose of passing a levy. There are no prohibitions on spending resources to effectively communicate the hard work and successes of your district every day of the year and of your financial status. Advocacy for a levy should occur as a natural evolution from the communications plan of the district underway every day of the year.



New Business  
DISCUSSION ITEM

**Bus Purchase**

Presented by: Kelly Henderson

Background: (Include funding sources as appropriate)

Regular Bus Riders: 27

Montana law dictates school bus purchases must follow bidding procedures outlined in the Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 20-10-110, although trustees can use installment contracts within a 3-year period. A cost-effectiveness analysis is required before purchasing small school buses (designed for 10 or fewer passengers) to ensure it is the most cost-effective option compared to larger vehicles or contracts. Districts can also fund future bus purchases through a bus depreciation reserve fund, with specific budgeting rules detailed in MCA 20-10-147 and the Montana Administrative Rules.

Key Regulations

**MCA 20-10-110:**

This statute governs school bus purchases, stipulating that school districts must solicit bids for new school buses.

**Installment Contracts:**

Trustees are permitted to use installment contracts for purchasing school buses, provided the contract is completely executed within three years of the purchase date.

**MCA 20-10-148:**

Before a district can purchase and operate a small school bus (defined as one carrying 10 or fewer passengers), the trustees must conduct and adopt a written finding that the small bus is the most cost-effective option for transporting eligible students on its assigned route compared to larger buses or contracts.

Funding and Reserve Accounts

**Bus Depreciation Reserve Fund:**

Districts can establish a fund to set aside money for future bus purchases, replacements, or related safety equipment.

**Annual Budgeting:**

The amount budgeted for the reserve fund each year can be up to 20% of the original cost of the bus, but the total accumulated amount cannot exceed 150% of the original cost.

Bidding and Contracts

- **MCA 20-10-125:** This section of the law requires districts to advertise for bids for transportation services provided by a private party. The contract must then be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder.

Total in Bus Depreciation fund: \$189,000

Regular Bus: Approximate cost of a new bus is \$139,900 for a 77 passenger bus.

[https://nationalbus.com/product/000pvh3791-2026-thomas-c2/?gad\\_source=1&gad\\_campaignid=20930724898&category=school](https://nationalbus.com/product/000pvh3791-2026-thomas-c2/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=20930724898&category=school)

We could trade or sell the Blue Bird as it is our oldest bus.

Mini Bus/Activity Bus. Approximate cost is \$70,000 for a 14 passenger bus.

<https://www.model1.com/inventory/2025-trans-tech-ct-aero-activity-bus-1712171/>

Mini Bus/Activity Bus. Approximate cost is \$\_\_\_\_\_ for a 20 passenger bus.

<https://www.midwesttransit.com/auto/new-2025-ford-c450-kankakee-il/75447017/>

Larger minibuses are generally available with 16 to 30+ seats, though offerings vary by provider and region, often including 19, 20, 24, 25, and 28-seater models. Size depends on the provider's fleet, but the upper range for what might still be considered a "minibus" extends into the low 30s in seat capacity, providing significant space for groups and luggage.

#### Common Larger Minibus Sizes

##### **16-Seater:**

A standard size in many regions, offering ample luggage space for its capacity.

##### **19-Seater:**

A variation of the larger size, providing a few more seats.

##### **20-Seater & Up:**

Available in some areas, with options reaching 24, 25, and 28-seater models to accommodate larger groups.

##### **30-Seater & Up:**

Some providers offer models that can reach 30 or more seats, providing "extra large" luggage space.

#### Activities/Events/Field Trips:

We could use the mini bus for athletics, field trips such as swimming, end of year class field trips, Butte Mining, Expedition Yellowstone. You may remember that parents driving students to school related activities is not encouraged by MSGIA (insurance provider) as it makes the district liable for accidents or issues. While we are still liable with the mini-bus, the variables are more easily controlled.

CDL Requirements: You need a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) to operate any vehicle weighing over 26,000 pounds (26,001 lbs) or any vehicle designed to carry 16 or more people.

New Business  
ACTION ITEM

**Review Superintendent's Evaluation**

Presented by: Tim Melton, Kelly Henderson

Background: (Include funding sources as appropriate)  
Review and discuss the superintendent's evaluation document for changes or updates.

Dates: Due by January 21st Board Meeting  
November 17, 2025 - send out survey to the Governing Board members  
November 28, 2025 - survey responses due back to the District Clerk  
December 3, 2025 - complete Superintendent's evaluation at Work Study Session  
December 17, 2025 - approve results of the evaluation at the Governing Board meeting to include contract discussion

Recommendation: Option 1: Administration recommends approval of the Superintendent's evaluation with discussed changes.  
Option 2: Administration recommends approval of the Superintendent's evaluation as written.

# Superintendent Evaluation - GB 24-25

This evaluation is conducted to provide the superintendent with the trustee's assessment of work for the school district. As well, it is conducted to provide the trustees with the superintendent's self-evaluation and goals for the future. A further intent of the evaluation is to strengthen the working relationship between the trustees and the superintendent for the achievement of their Core Purpose: To embrace an engaging learning culture in a safe, nurturing environment where each student thrives now and into the future.

## **Process**

Each trustee shall complete their part of this evaluation form individually, and each form shall be electronically submitted. After the public discussion and evaluation of the superintendent, the trustee chair or designee shall prepare a composite evaluation form. This evaluation form, after being signed by the superintendent and the trustees, shall be placed in the personnel file of the superintendent. Each trustee's evaluation responses will be used as the source documents for the composite and shall be given to the superintendent for information and use toward continual improvement.

**Performance Standards** The ten performance standards are the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders.

## **Standard 1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values**

Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and the academic success and well-being of each student.

## **Standard 2. Ethics and Professional Norms**

Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

## **Standard 3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness**

Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

## **Standard 4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**

Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

## **Standard 5. Community of Care and Support for Students**

Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.

## **Standard 6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel**

Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

## **Standard 7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff**

Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

## Standard 8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community

Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

## Standard 9. Operations and Management

Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

## Standard 10. School Improvement

Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

### 1. Goal Area 1: Individual Student Success

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Statement of Intended Outcome, five years: We have successfully enhanced our expectations of students, the exposure of our students to learning opportunities, and our individualized approach to education. As a result, our students are literate and enthused about their education, are enjoying their experiences, and are thriving. *Standards 1, 4, 5, 10*

**Reflecting on the Superintendent's strengths and weaknesses, rank the progress toward the Five-Year Outcome: \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5	
<hr/>					
Nee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Exceptional
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### 2. Goal Area 1: Individual Student Success

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### 3. Feedback

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#### 4. Goal Area 2: Staff and Volunteers

Statement of Intended Outcome, five years: Our staff are highly valued and supported and because of our positive work environment, our staff flourish in their respective positions. Our staff, with our volunteers, collaborate in a cohesive manner that fully supports the individual needs of our students. Our staff and volunteers have positively impacted each student enrolled in our school. *Standards 1, 6, 7, 8*

**Reflecting on the Superintendent's strengths and weaknesses, rank the progress toward the Five-Year Outcome: \***

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
	<hr/>					
Nee	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Exceptional
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#### 5. Goal Area 2: Staff and Volunteers

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#### 6. Feedback

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7. **Goal Area 3: Facilities**

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: We have successfully integrated

environmentally friendly initiatives into our school and enhanced the current and future use and efficiency of our facilities to ensure that our school meets the contemporary needs of our students, staff, and the community we serve. *Standards 1, 9, 10*

**Reflecting on the Superintendent's strengths and weaknesses, rank the progress toward the Five-Year Outcome: \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1   2   3   4   5

Nee ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Exceptional

8. **Goal Area 3: Facilities**

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9. **Goal Area 4: Leadership, Communication, and Collaboration**

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: Through our efforts in enhancing our leadership roles, the quality and effectiveness of our communications and collaboration with parents, staff and the community, we operate in a cohesive manner that has significantly improved our District operations, programs and services and enhanced individual student success. *Standards*

**Reflecting on the Superintendent's strengths and weaknesses, rank the progress toward the Five-Year Outcome: \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1   2   3   4   5

Nee ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Exceptional

10. **Goal Area 4: Leadership, Communication, and Collaboration**

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11. **Feedback**

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12. **Goal Area 5: Safety**

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Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years: We have enhanced the safety and security of our facilities to minimize the risk and harm to our students and staff in the event of a safety or security breach. We have effectively enhanced our emotional support services for students. We have further experienced a significant decline in student discipline as a result of our restorative justice initiative.

**Reflecting on the Superintendent's strengths and weaknesses, rank the progress toward the Five-Year Outcome: \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1   2   3   4   5

Nee ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒ Exceptional



13. **Goal Area 5: Safety**

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14. **Feedback**

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15. **Relationship with Trustees**

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The following items serve as examples to illustrate our collective understanding of the superintendent's responsibilities in relation to the Board of Trustees.

31. **Proposes and implements policies of the school board. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5		
<hr/>						
Nee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Exceptional

16. **Reports to the school board about the status of programs, personnel, and operations \* of the district. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5		
<hr/>						
Nee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Exceptional

\*

17. **Facilitates the decision-making process for the board by making sound recommendations for board action that are consistent with the district's vision, mission statements, and board goals. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5

Nee ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Exceptional

18. **Communicates as liaison between the school board and school personnel. \* \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5

Nee ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Exceptional

19. **Informs the school board about statutes and rules of the State of Montana, federal laws, and current trends and developments in education. \***

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*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5

Nee ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Exceptional

20. **Collaboratively prepares agendas of meetings for the school board. \* \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5

Nee ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Exceptional

21. **Keeps the school board adequately informed of the superintendent's activities, particularly those activities affecting the functioning of the school district. \***

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*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Nee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Exceptional

22. **Attends meetings of the board and takes part in deliberations, but does not vote. \* \***

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Nee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Exceptional

23. **Ensures the filing of all reports required by statute or regulation. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Nee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Exceptional

24. **Please provide comments/goals for the Superintendent in relation to the Board/Superintendent Relationship**

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New Business  
ACTION ITEM

**End of Year Leave Payout**

Presented by: Kelly Henderson

Background: (Include funding sources as appropriate)

Per the Master Agreement, staff may request to have their leave paid out at the end of the school year.

Madeline Barry - pay out of 327.14 hours (less any leave taken during the year) = \$2,496.50

Marie Welch - pay out of 208 hours (less any leave taken during the year) = \$1,817.28

Per the Master Agreement, staff should be compensated for hours over 640 allowed accumulation of personal leave. The approximated amounts are below.

Jacki Yager - 223 hours over 640 = \$1,494.59

Mike Coon - 65 hours over 640 = \$955.21

Ashley Davis - 70 hours over 640 = \$817.51

Recommendation: Administration recommends approval of the leave payouts for the staff listed above.

New Business  
ACTION ITEM

**Spanish Translation Services**

Presented by: Kelly Henderson

Background: (Include funding sources as appropriate)

Mrs. Inman has had to work double time to also be our translator for our spanish speaking families. She comes to Open House, Parent Teacher Conferences, and other important meetings. She has also been translating the forms and facilitating parent conversations to complete registration processes.

Nationally, Spanish translators make \$27.65 an hour. I would like to give her a stipend for the extra work she is doing to assist our families. We are up to 5 families that do not speak English and her services are incredibly valuable.

Recommendation: Administration recommends approval of a stipend for Mrs. Inman in the amount of \$1,000.

New Business  
ACTION ITEM

**August Policy Review - First Reading**

Presented by: Kelly Henderson  
Background: (Include funding sources as appropriate)

**■ August Policy**

Recommendation: Administration recommends approval on first reading of the August Policy amendments.