

1 Teacher at Mountain View Elementary School; Debbie Hartman, 1st Grade Teacher at
2 Sacajawea Elementary School; Sasha Morre, Instructional Coach at Longfellow
3 Elementary School; Calli Ross, 2nd Grade Teacher at Riverview Elementary School;
4 Ashlee Hodke, 2nd Grade Teacher at Meadow Lark Elementary School; Charlene
5 Ammons, Technology Integration Coach at the District Offices; Joelle Lundy, 3rd Grade
6 Teacher at Whittier Elementary School; Brooke Knowles, 3rd Grade Teacher at Lincoln
7 Elementary School; Stevie McNamee, 4th Grade Teacher at Meadow Lark Elementary
8 School; Amanda McCarvel, 4th Grade Teacher at Riverview Elementary School;
9 Miranda Murray, Instructional Indian Education Coach at Paris Gibson Education
10 Center; Kassandra Harmon, 5th Grade Teacher at Chief Joseph Elementary School;
11 Ryan Faulk, 6th Grade Teacher at Riverview Elementary School; Toree Johnson, 4th
12 Grade Teacher at Giant Springs Elementary School; Samantha Caouette, 5th Grade
13 Teacher at Valley View Elementary School; Sandy Harrington, 6th Grade Teacher at
14 Lewis and Clark Elementary School; Arika Hagel and Shannon Taylor, Instructional
15 Coaches at the District Offices; Shannon Boyer, 6th Grade Teacher at West Elementary
16 School; and Erin Houtz, 6th Grade Teacher at Meadow Lark Elementary School.

17

18 Chairperson Johnson congratulated the Good Apple Award recipients.

19

20 **D. Montana School Bus Drivers Certificates – OPI TR-35’s** – The Board approved
21 the Montana School Bus Drivers Certificates – OPI TR-35’s for the individuals listed in
22 the agenda.

23

24 **E. Transitional Kindergarten Student Attendance at the Early Learning Center for**
25 **the 2023-2024 School Year** – The Board approved the students listed in the agenda to
26 attend the Early Learning Center for the 2023-2024 school year due to exceptional
27 circumstances per Board Policy 3100.

28

29 **F. C.M. Russell High School Student Activity Account Closure** - The Board
30 approved the closure of the Student Activity Account *Spirit Club* at C.M. Russell High
31 School as it is no longer being used and the balances have been cleared.

32

33 **G. C.M. Russell High School “Rustler Pride” Student Activity Account** - The Board
34 approved C.M. Russell High School to open a *Rustler Pride* Student Activity Account.

35

36 **H. Great Falls High School Advanced Placement Studio Art National Portfolio Day**
37 **Travel Request** - The Board approved the Advanced Placement Studio Art students
38 travel request to attend the National Portfolio Day in Phoenix, AZ from October 19 – 22,
39 2023.

40

41 **I. C.M. Russell High School Advanced Placement Government Students Close-Up**
42 **Travel Request** - The Board approved the Advanced Placement Government students
43 travel request to attend the *Close-Up* program in Washington D.C. from March 10-16,
44 2024.

45

46 **J. C.M. Russell High School and Great Falls High School Student Council Trip for**
47 **the Montana Association of Student Councils Conference Travel Request** - The
48 Board approved the request from the Student Council students from C.M. Russell High

1 School and Great Falls High School to attend the Montana Association of Student
2 Councils Conference in Helena, MT from October 15-17, 2023.

3
4 **K. Student Activity Accounts for July 2023** - The Board approved the Student Activity
5 Accounts for July 2023.

6 7 8 **COMMUNICATION**

9 10 **A. Superintendent's Report –**

11 Superintendent Moore introduced Sherri Clark who will become the new Executive
12 Assistant to the Superintendent. She is replacing Cindy Gordon who is retiring.
13 Superintendent Moore reported that West Elementary School teacher Britney Gebhart
14 won a Scheels \$500 Scavenger Hunt shopping spree. She spent the money purchasing
15 backpacks for her students. Scheels recognized this effort and donated another \$500 to
16 West Elementary School.

17 *Three Churches. One Mission* collected food for three school food pantries in which
18 3,150 items will be distributed to the pantries for families in need.

19 Superintendent Moore reported that Governor Gianforte toured Great Falls High School
20 on Thursday, September 14, 2023, visiting a Civics Class, Digital Academy, Welding,
21 and Auto Classes. The Great Falls High School Culinary Arts class provided lunch as
22 students shared their experiences they are having in Career & Technical Education
23 classes. Governor Gianforte also attended the High School House Ribbon Cutting. High
24 School House Teacher Pete Pace received the Spirit of Montana Award from Governor
25 Gianforte. This award recognizes Montanans for their accomplishments, dedication,
26 and/or service to our communities.

27 Superintendent Moore stated that teachers who are in their first and second-year of
28 teaching, along with student teachers, are welcome to enjoy a reception at the Dark
29 Horse on October 7, 2023, and hear from Symphony Conductors Grant Harville and
30 Gordon Johnson.

31 Superintendent Moore reported that an on-site job fair is scheduled for October 17,
32 2023 at Paris Gibson Education Center.

33 Central Montana Works program *Worlds of Work* is taking place on Tuesday,
34 September 26, 2023, at Great Falls College - Montana State University and the
35 University of Providence. Students will participate in hands-on activities to engage
36 students in a variety of educational pathways.

37 Congratulations and thanks were given to Cindy Gordon who has been an excellent
38 employee of Great Falls Public Schools for thirty (30) years.

39 Dave Snuggs founder of *My Neighbor in Need* reported that the goal of \$10,000 was
40 met and an anonymous donor will match that amount. He stated that the majority of
41 requests are for warm clothing for the winter months. Dave recommended that everyone
42 spread the word that this program exists so we can make sure that student and
43 community members' needs are met.

44 45 **B. Audience Communication –**

46 Community Members Linda Madsen and Jeni Dodd expressed their concerns regarding
47 Great Falls Public Schools' request for the Cascade County Commissioner's Office to
48 run the election processes instead of the Cascade County Elections Office.

49

1 Jasmine Taylor stated that she may not always agree with the actions of the District and
2 its Board, however, she does agree with the request to remove the election duties from
3 Sandra Merchant and the Elections Office and request the process to be run by the
4 Cascade County Commissioner's Office.
5

6 7 **ACTION ITEMS**

8
9 **A. Second Reading of Revised Board Policy 3231** – Superintendent Moore stated
10 that he has not received any comments or suggestions to Board Policy 3231 since the
11 first reading at the September 11, 2023, Board meeting.
12

13 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to approve
14 revised Board policy 3231 as presented.
15

16 **B. Financial Report and Check Register for July 2023** – Superintendent Moore
17 presented the financial report and check register for July 2023.
18

19 Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to
20 approve the July 2023 Financial Report and Accounts Payable checks #129219 -
21 #129469 in the amount of \$661,146.46 and Payroll checks #79083 - #79137 in the
22 amount of \$54,601.57 as presented.
23

24 **C. Chief Joseph Fire Alarm Upgrade Project Award** – Superintendent Moore stated
25 that the project was advertised in the Great Falls Tribune on August 20, 2023, and
26 August 27, 2023. The low bid was received from Liberty Electric in the amount of
27 \$131,500. An add alternate for the project was to have the contractor paint all the new
28 conduit to match the color of the walls. The add alternate bid provided was \$5,000.
29

30 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to award the
31 base bid to Liberty Electric to replace the Fire Alarm System at Chief Joseph
32 Elementary in the amount of \$131,500 and not approve the Alternate Bid of \$5,000 as
33 presented.
34

35 36 **ACTION: OTHER**

37 38 39 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

40
41 **A. Staffing Update Report** – Director of Human Resources, Luke Diekhans explained
42 that Great Falls Public Schools is the third largest employer in Great Falls and currently
43 employs 1,903 staff members. Luke reported that the retirement rates along with the low
44 employment rates contribute to the hardship of recruitment. Great Falls Public Schools
45 (GFPS) has come up with innovative strategies such as job fairs, advertising, and
46 recruitment events to help with these challenges. Luke presented graphs representing
47 applications, hires and terminations for the previous five (5) years. He also reported on
48 the current employment openings.
49

1 Trustee Skornogoski thanked Luke Diekhans and the Human Resource Department
2 along with Becky Nelson for their work. She noticed that the turnover rate has increased
3 since Great Falls Public Schools suspended in-school instruction due to COVID-19. She
4 questioned if the rates would go back to normal or continue to spike. She also asked if
5 class sizes have been tracked. Luke stated that we will continue to monitor the turnover
6 and class size rates.

7
8 Trustee Bronson stated that one statistic that was not mentioned was that the number of
9 people entering colleges for educational purposes is rapidly declining.

10 11 **B. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments –**

12 Trustee Thompson stated that she is working with Luke Diekhans on creating another
13 recognition program for teachers. She stated that the District does not have a
14 recognition program until the 25-year mark and that it is scientifically proven that
15 positive affirmations increase performance and retention rates.

16 Trustees Bronson, Skornogoski, Finnicum all stated that they are excited for the *Worlds*
17 *of Work “WOW”* event scheduled for September 26, 2023. They believe that this is an
18 important event for students to get hands-on experience in different career paths. They
19 suggested that everyone get involved by attending and volunteering.

20 Trustee Bronson thanked the staff involved in creating unique recruitment activities.
21 They also thanked the churches involved in donating to the school pantries.

22 Chairperson Johnson attended a Great Falls Public Schools Foundation meeting and
23 reported that they are very creative and hard-working. He encouraged everyone to
24 purchase truck raffle tickets.

25 Trustees Sunchild and Finnicum thanked Trustee Thompson and Luke Diekhans for
26 their work to create another recognition program for the teachers.

27 Trustee Finnicum welcomed Sherri Clark as the new Executive Assistant to the
28 Superintendent and thanked Cindy Gordon for all her work throughout the year. He also
29 thanked Dave Snuggs for his work with *My Neighbors in Need*.

30 Trustee Turoski stated that she did not receive the email sent to fellow Trustees
31 regarding the decision to send the county commissioners a letter requesting they run
32 elections. She stated that if she had, she would have suggested bringing that decision
33 to the Board for a vote. She stated that the actions of the District could be considered as
34 borderline to violating the Open Meeting Laws.

35 Chairperson Johnson read the response from the County Commissioners’ Office and
36 Superintendent Moore apologized to Trustee Turoski for his mistake in not including her
37 in the email to the fellow Trustees regarding the letter. Superintendent Moore reported
38 that the letter was written by himself and Brian Patrick with the guidance of District
39 Counsel and was intended for consideration to amend the 2023-2024 Elections Office
40 contract due to lack of communication.

41 42 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

43
44 Chairperson Johnson said the next Regular Board Meetings are scheduled for Monday,
45 October 9, 2023, and Monday, October 23, 2023.

46 47 48 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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1 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to adjourn the
2 Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 6:46 p.m.

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Gordon Johnson, Chairperson

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Brian Patrick, Clerk

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