

**VARIANCES TO STANDARDS APPLICATION**  
Renewal Application (three years)

**Purpose:** [ARM 10.55.604\(4\)](#) "Following the second year of implementation of a variance to standards, the school district shall provide evidence to the Superintendent of Public Instruction that the methods selected by the district implement, meet, or exceed results that could have been achieved under established standards."

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**DUE DATE:**

First Monday in March

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**COUNTY:** Big Horn County

**DISTRICT:** Hardin Elementary

**LIST EACH SCHOOL THAT IS REQUESTING THE VARIANCE:**

**Fort Smith Elementary**

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1. Standard(s) for which a variance is requested, e.g., 10.55.709. If there is a program delivery standard, be sure to list it as well, e.g., 10.55.1801.

10.55.709

- 2. Provide evidence that local community stakeholders were involved in the consideration and development of the proposed renewal variance application. Community stakeholder groups include parents, community members, and students as applicable.**

The PTO at Ft Smith Elementary School has always been a constant and positive support for the students. This committee helped to write and implement the River of Knowledge grant for the school library. This grant allowed the library to update it's reading materials and it's technology. The PTO continues to support the library with donations of books or funds to purchase books. A meeting of the PTO took place on Thursday the 4th of January. At this meeting the data from the report and the request for the renewal of the Library variance was shared with the parents.

- 3. Provide evidence local school stakeholders were involved in the consideration and development of the proposed renewal variance application. School stakeholder groups include trustees, administrators, teachers and classified school staff.**

- 1) The PTO was informed of the Variance renewal process on Thursday, January 4th. A letter of support is attached.

- 2) The staff met multiple times to determine and collect the data that would best represent the students growth in reading.

- 3) The student data and the renewal plan was then presented to the Hardin School Board on Feb. 9th. The Board Minutes from this meeting, with approval of the renewal, are attached.

4. **Attach Board of Trustee meeting minutes that show the Board of Trustees approved the application for a renewal variance at an official, properly noticed meeting.**
  
5. **Reflection upon initial variance:**
  - a. **Describe the specific measurable objectives that were listed in the initial variance application that demonstrated how the proposed variance was to meet or exceed the results under the current standard(s).**
    - 1) Maintain a .5 Library Aide that provides weekly services for our students.
    - 2) Schedule two classes per week for each classroom that will consist of Literature appreciation, book checkout, and covering content from the Library Media Standards.
  
  - b. **Provide a summary of the evidence or data gathered to demonstrate that the initial variance meets or exceeds results that could have been achieved under the established standard.**
    - 1) Class structure continues as one class dedicated to exploration of literature through read alouds and selection of books for checkout. The second class will be for skill building activities in research, with 4th and 5th graders completing a research project. All students are encouraged to check out 3-5 books per week and many of the students check out additional books for AR reading challenges that are set for each quarter. The 20/21 Library Schedule is attached.
    - 2) Mrs. Miller attends all meetings with the District Librarians which will include working on implementing the 2021 Library Media Standards.
    - 3) Looking at academic data for our students, we chose three to demonstrate student growth in reading. Data Attached A) ISIP Reading Percentile Rank - this data shows that students making yearly improvements in reading and they are making growth in their percentile ranking overall. B) ISIP Lexile scores, showing yearly growth in reading levels. C) Average AR points attained yearly.

- c. **After reflection on the initial variance, describe any adjustments that need to be made to meet the specific needs of the students in the school(s).**

At this time we see no adjustments that need to be made to this variance. Mrs. Miller is doing an excellent job maintaining the Library. She has attended training on the newer version of software used for check out and she consults frequently with the district Librarians on issues that arise. We have made a renewed effort to update books in the Library and with a focus on informational texts and chapter books that appeal to our 4th and 5th grade boys. Mrs. Miller still works as a .5 Library aide with 2 classes weekly for each classroom. She develops lessons that are in alignment with the MT Standards and collaborates with classroom teachers to support other curricular areas.

6. **Provide a statement of the mission and goals of this proposed renewal variance.**

The goal of the renewal variance is to continue to provide high quality Library services and materials for the students of Ft. Smith Elementary.

7. **List specific measurable objectives that demonstrate the proposed renewal variance will meet or exceed the results under the current standard(s).**

- 1) The Library will continue with a yearly schedule that meets the requirements in the variance.
- 2) The Library aide will continue to attend all meetings with the District Librarians and work with them on implementing the new standards for Library Media.
- 3) We will continue to monitor the academic data that has been identified for student growth in reading. -ISIP Reading Percentile Rank - this data shows that students making yearly improvements in reading and they are making growth in their percentile ranking overall. -ISIP Lexile scores, showing yearly growth in reading levels. -AR Points, showing student reading of materials checked out.

**8. What data or evidence will be gathered to document progress toward meeting the measurable objectives of the renewal variance?**

- 1) The 20/21 Library schedule
- 2) The Librarian will keep notes from meetings attended with district Librarians.
- 3) We will continue to collect data in the academic areas that have been identified for showing student growth in reading.
  - ISIP Reading Percentile Rank
  - ISIP Lexile scores
  - AR points

**9. In what way does this variance meet the specific needs of the students in the school(s)?**

This variance will allow Ft Smith Elementary to maintain its Library and to continue to provide all services for students that are required by the state. With only 25 students and the remote location, the district is not able to hire a certified Librarian due to availability and cost. By maintaining an open library with a .5 Library aide we are providing our students with a classroom and resources that are beneficial for their education.

**10. Describe how and why the proposed variance would be:**

**a. Workable**

This variance is workable because the district is committed to supporting this small school with the necessary staff to support all areas of instruction. The position of the Library aide is given a .5 time slot to fulfill the requirements as needed. Full time positions are desirable in this location so by dedicating .5 of a full time aide position to the Library we are able to keep it staffed with an employee that has experience in the school, in the Library, and in the community.

**b. Educationally sound.**

Ft Smith Elementary will continue to provide library services to our students. With this plan we guarantee that the students will continue to receive instruction that meets and exceeds the state accreditation standards.

- c. **Where applicable, aligned with program standards under ARM 10.55.1101 through 10.55.2101.**

10.55.1101 Communication Arts Program Delivery Standards

This standard is integrated in the Library instruction that the students receive at Ft Smith Elementary. With a focus on:

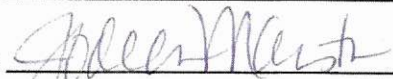
1. a. ii. Make available a variety of print and non-print materials encompassing fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works, and diverse perspectives including Montana American Indian works.

- d. **Where applicable, aligned with contend standards under ARM Chapters 53 and 54.**

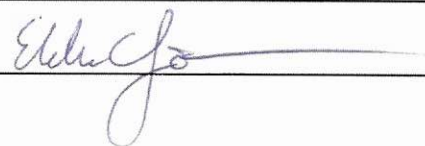
Mrs. Miller collaborates with our classroom teachers to identify resources that are needed in the library. The classroom teachers have the background and instructional knowledge of all the elementary educational standards set for their grade levels. Information is shared with Mrs. Miller on what resources are needed and if additional resources are needed to supplement the current collections. These would include curriculum specific and Montana American Indian primary sources.

**Required school district signatures:**

Board Chair Name: Jodeen Marston

Board Chair Signature:  Date: 2/9/21

Superintendent Name: Eldon C. Johnson

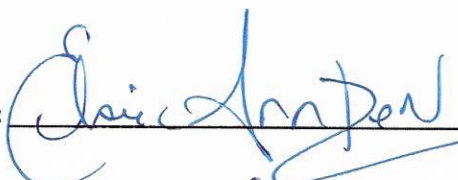
Superintendent Signature:  Date: 2/9/21

**Mail the signed form to:**

**Accreditation and Educator Preparation Division  
Office of Public Instruction  
PO Box 202501  
Helena, MT 59620-2501**

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**OPI USE ONLY**

Superintendent of Public Instruction:  Date: April 13 2022

Approve  Deny

Board of Public Education Chair:  Date: 5/13/22

Approve  Deny

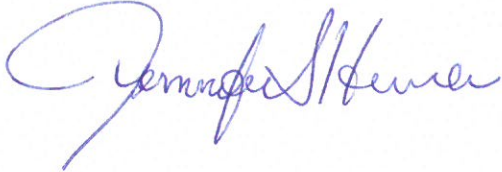
February 4, 2021

Hardin School District and School Board,

On behalf of Fort Smith PTO, we have discussed the Library variance needs and requirements of our school. We all feel that Mrs. Miller is doing a fabulous job for our school and is providing an enriching library environment for our students. We would very much like things to continue and grow in the proceeding school year to come. At this time you have all of our PTO support.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Herman  
Fort Smith PTO President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer Herman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "H".



Average Lexile score from beginning of year to end of year.						
Year	Kindergarten	1st Grade Standard Lexile Score 25-350	2nd Grade Standard Lexile Score 350-550	3rd Grade Standard Lexile Score 550-700	4th Grade Standard Lexile Score 700-800	5th Grade Standard Lexile Score 800-900
16-17		BR400 - 500	BR305 - 240	BR30 - 380	740 - 1030	950 - 1100
17-18		BR395 - 230	325 - 705	170 - 600	600 - 770	990 - 1145
18-19		BR400 - BR185	160 - 610	740 - 945	590 - 730	675 - 935
19-20 Aug-Mar COVID		BR400 - 30	BR400 - 75	620 - 890	745 - 980	720 - 890
Average Percentile Rank in ISIP from beginning to end of year.						
Year	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
16-17	33% - 45%	40% - 75%	13% - 42%	9% - 30%	61% - 76%	76% - 84%
17-18	4% - 11%	28% - 56%	55% - 80%	19% - 44%	25% - 28%	90% - 90%
18-19	16% - 26%	6% - 15%	53% - 68%	75% - 81%	23% - 32%	42% - 53%
19-20 Aug - Mar COVID	50%-69%	42% - 62%	4% - 31%	62% - 72 %	79% - 70 %	33% - 36%
Average Points Earned in Accelerated Reader						
Year	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
16-17	Data not available					
17-18		50.3	54.6	47.4	43.3	55.7
18-19		48	47.9	66.5	41.4	58.8
19-20 Aug - Mar COVID		16	26.8	39.2	42.2	46.9
Library Schedule	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
20-21	Library Prep 11:45-12:05		Library Prep 11:45-12:05			
	Library Prep 1:00 - 1:30	Library Prep 1:00 - 1:15	Library Prep 1:00 - 1:15	Library Prep 1:00 - 1:15		
	K-1 Grades 1:30-2:00	4-5 Grades 1:15-1:45	K-1 Grades 1:15-2:00	4-5 Grades 1:15-2:00		
	2-3 Grades 2:15-3:45	Library Prep 1:45-2:00 2:15 - 2:30	2-3 Grades 2:30-3:00	Library Prep 2:15 - 2:30		

## REGULAR MEETING – February 9, 2021

The Board of Trustees of the County of Big Horn Big Horn Co School District 17H & 1 met in regular session on Tuesday, February 9, 2021, via ZOOM.

The Boardroom was set up to follow the guidelines of social distancing protocol for the following who attended on-site: Board Chair Jodeen Marston; Trustee Crystal Uffelman; Superintendent E. Chad Johnson; and District Clerk Kym Kern. Those in attendance via ZOOM: Vice Chair Cori Watson; Trustee Newton Old Crow, Jr.; and Trustee Jordan Straley. Trustee absent: Darwin Spotted, Sr – no reason provided.

Also, in attendance: Kathi Kerr-Taylor and Thor Torske were on-site. Guests attending via ZOOM: Sasha Schuman, Mark Schoen, Kelsey Torske, Travis Krieger, Jenny Krieger, Lindsey Ramsey, Riley Ramsey, Teri Wagner, Sandra Francis, Jennifer Baumann, Sheri Koyama, Roxanne Not Afraid, and Zorana Other Medicine.

Chairman Marston called the meeting to order at 5:38 pm and the meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

### MINUTES / CLAIMS

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Chairman Marston asked if there was any objection to approving the minutes of the January 26, 2021, regular meeting, without being read. There being no objection the minutes were approved.

Mrs. Uffelman reviewed claims in the amount of \$212,231.22 and \$5,259.68 for student activities and recommended approval. Chairman Marston asked if there was any objection to approving the claims; there being no objection, the claims were approved.

### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

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Superintendent Johnson provided a copy of the information from OPI stating Crow Agency Public School was awarded the Indian Language Immersion Program Grant, one of two schools who received the grant. The Board and Superintendent Johnson congratulated Mr. Cummins and his school.

The Montana School Counselor Association recognized Haley Pardy, counselor at Hardin Primary School. Superintendent Johnson and the Board congratulated Ms. Pardy.

Superintendent Johnson provided Legislative updates with many items still out there being considered.

Superintendent Johnson provided enrollment numbers as of today: (O)=Onsite; (R)=Remote

FSES – 25 (O), 0 (R)	HPS – 203 (O), 48 (R)	HIS – 202 (O), 75 (R)
HMS – 373 (O), 99 (R)	HHS – 400 (O), 100 (R)	CAPS – Not Reported

Superintendent Johnson reported that Polson was awarded the State swim meet and discussion followed. He provided information from MHSA regarding winter activities in the packet.

## STAFFING ISSUES

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The following staff changes were presented for approval:

### CLASSIFIED – RETIREMENT

- Patricia Schaff, Paraprofessional – Hardin Primary School *Retirement-44 years*

### CLASSIFIED – NEW HIRES

- Raheem Red Star, Assistant Cook – School Nutrition Department Hardin/Crow Agency
- Daniel Lowe, Vegetable Prep/Kitchen Assistant (temporary COVID position) – School Nutrition Department Hardin/Crow Agency

### TRANSFER/REASSIGNMENT

- Francesca Galaz, Assistant Cook – School Nutrition Department Hardin/Crow Agency  
*(Reassignment: Applied, Interviewed and Hired for this position – Previous position: Meal Server/Custodian – Kindergarten Readiness Center)*

Superintendent Johnson and the Board recognized and thanked Patti Schaff for her 40 plus years of service to the District.

Mr. Straley, made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Uffelman, to approve the staffing changes as presented. Chairman Marston called on each Trustee and asked them to vote aye or nay. All voted aye; the motion carried unanimously.

Overtime for the payroll dated 1/28/2021 was reviewed by Superintendent Johnson. He stated the reasons for the OT remains the same, custodial shortages and soon it will be affected by the additional hours for snow removal.

## BUILDING ISSUES

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Superintendent Johnson presented a Trustee Resolution Calling for an Election by Mail Ballot for the purpose of electing two (2) trustees for a three-year term for Zone 1 and 5, and one (1) trustee for a two-year term for Hardin High School District No. 1 – Decker. A separate Trustee Resolution Calling for an Election by Mail Ballot for the purpose of electing one (1) trustee for a three-year term to serve on the 17HK Decker-Kirby Cooperative School Management Board. Superintendent Johnson explained the reason for the separate resolutions, why the one trustee position is for two years, and the rotation of the trustees on the Management Board.

Superintendent Johnson recommended the Board approve the Trustee Resolution Calling for an Election by Mail Ballot as presented for Hardin School Districts 17H & 1. Mrs. Uffelman made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Watson, to approve the Resolution as recommended by Superintendent Johnson. Chairman Marston called on each Trustee and asked them to vote aye or nay. All voted aye; the motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Johnson recommended the Board approve the Trustee Resolution Calling for an Election by Mail Ballot as presented for 17HK Decker-Kirby Cooperative School Management Board. Mrs. Watson, made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Uffelman, to approve the Resolution as recommended by Superintendent Johnson. Chairman Marston called on each Trustee and asked them to vote aye or nay. All voted aye; the motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Johnson talked to the Board about touring the buildings and the possibility of scheduling a spring board meeting at Crow Agency School and one at Fort Smith School. It was determined that a building tour and board meeting could not be done the same evening at the Crow Agency School; however, this has been done at Fort Smith. Superintendent Johnson asked the trustees to provide him with dates they are available for building tours and he will schedule them.

Superintendent Johnson presented the letter from ARETE Design Group dated February 4, 2021, recapping the bid opening on 2/3/21 for the Hardin Community Activity Center. One bid was received from TW Clark with the Base Bid at \$3,550,000.00 and the Alternates totaling an additional \$655,650.00. It was ARETE's recommendation to decline the bid due to cost and lack of other bids. Superintendent Johnson stated the project is back out for bid and discussion followed. March 4<sup>th</sup> is the pre-bid and there may possibly be 2-3 additional bidders this time. The timeline was reviewed.

Superintendent Johnson recommended following ARETE's advice NOT to award the bid to TW Clark and rebid the project. Mrs. Watson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Straley, to follow the recommendation of Superintendent Johnson based on the advice of ARETE Design Group. Chairman Marston called on each Trustee and asked them to vote aye or nay. All voted aye; the motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Johnson welcomed Thor Torske and he provided a brief history on the new playground planned for Hardin Primary School. He stated that in 2018 he wrote a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant which was awarded in 2019. The \$150k matching grant was delayed due to an emergency situation; however, the new playground is expected to be installed this summer. He thanked Mayor Joe Purcell and County Commissioners Real Bird, Fitzpatrick and Vandersloot for all writing letters. He explained the playground will have to be available to the public as this is part of the grant.

Superintendent Johnson stated we will have to be mindful of the playground that is currently there as he is aware of how the community came together to create the playground. He also said a new generation will have a say in the schematics of the new playground. Discussion followed.

Roxanne Not Afraid thanked Mr. Torske and the Board, stating the students and staff are excited.

The Variances to Standards Renewal Application for Fort Smith Elementary School Library Media Specialist was presented to the Board. Superintendent Johnson reviewed that the school does not have a Librarian but they do have a Library Aide and discussion followed.

Superintendent Johnson recommended approving the Variances to Standards Renewal Application for Fort Smith Elementary School Library Media Specialist as presented. Mrs. Watson made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Uffelman, to accept Superintendent Johnson's recommendation. Chairman Marston called on each Trustee and asked them to vote aye or nay. All voted aye; the motion carried unanimously.

## **BUDGETING ISSUES**

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Superintendent Johnson reviewed the budget as of December 2020. He stated the School Nutrition budget has struggled this year due to the demands of COVID.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

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There were no transportation issues to report.

PAC / PTO / COMMUNITY MEMBERS

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There were no requests to comment.

OTHER

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With no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Marston adjourned the meeting at 6:51 pm.

  
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Jodeen K. Marston, Board Chair

ATTEST:

  
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Kym Kern, District Clerk