

VARIANCES TO STANDARDS APPLICATION

Renewal Application (three years)

Purpose 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."

DUE DATE:

First Monday in March

COUNTY: Yellowstone

DISTRICT: Independent School District #52

LIST EACH SCHOOL THAT IS REQUESTING THE VARIANCE:

1. **Standard(s) for which a variance is requested, e.g., 10.55.709. If there is a program delivery/content standard, be sure to list it as well, e.g., 10.55.1801.**
10.55.704 and 10.55.705
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.**
See attached documentation.
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.**
See attached documentation.
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 goals, measureable objectives, and rationale that describe the initial variance and how the proposed variance was to meet or exceed the results under the current standard(s). Include how the variance was workable and educationally sound.**
See attached documentation.
 - b. **How were these goals and objectives met or exceeded? (Implementation)**
See attached documentation.

- c. 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. (Examples may include, but are not limited to: student performance trends, if applicable, specific goals being addressed through AdvancED, etc. Do not include lesson plans, library monthly checkout logs, or calendars).

See attached documentation.

- d. What evidence, do you anticipate, will be collected for the renewal application's goals/objectives?

See attached documentation.

6. After reflection of the evidence/data gathered on the initial variance, what is the status of your renewal application?

Continue with current goals and measurable objectives (state)

Propose new goals and measurable objectives for renewal application (state)

Adjustments to implementation need to be made to meet or exceed standard (state)

Required school district signatures:

Board Chair Name: Renee Scott

Board Chair Signature: *Renee Scott* Date: 2/23/22

Superintendent Name: SHEILA CHOUINARD

Superintendent Signature: *Sheila Chouinard* Date: 2/23/23

Mail the signed form to:

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

OPI USE ONLY

Superintendent of Public Instruction: _____

Approve Disapprove

Elsie Arntzen

Date _____

April 13 2022

Board of Public Education Chair _____

Approve Disapprove

Tony L. Day

Date _____

5/13/22

VARIANCES TO STANDARDS APPLICATION
RENEWAL APPLICATION

Due Date: March 7, 2022

County: Yellowstone

District: Independent School District 52

Independent School

1. Standard(s) for which a variance is requested. 10.55.704 and 10.55.705

2. This is a renewal of a variance that was previously approved. The initial process started with a determination that the district budget could not support the additional administrative requirement. The situation was described in newsletters during the lead up to the original application. Teachers, parents, and Trustees were invited to provide input, but the bottom line remains the same. State funding does not provide for the required administrative FTE, especially when other needs are factored in, such as class size and special education needs.

See attached Board minutes. No public comment was received.

3. See attached Board minutes and newsletter. No public comment was received.

5. a. The initial objectives are listed below. The reality is the district chose not to implement the variance until 2021-2022. Prior to 2021-2022, the district was able to contract with the previous administration at a significantly reduced amount to perform the duties of Superintendent at .5 FTE. However, the previous individual retired in June 2021. Therefore, an extension of the variance is desired by the district.

The most critical objective of this variance request is to reduce the cost of school administration. The current Standard requires 1.5 FTE administrators is estimated to cost, at a minimum \$160,400 assuming the district could find someone who would actually want to work the .5 FTE. Otherwise, this district would have to create a full-time position which would cost an additional \$40,000. In addition, there are numerous performance objectives that can be sited which can be carried out by one administrator.

A few of those are listed below:

1. The Superintendent/Principal shall attend 100% of School Board meetings serving the role of advisor as prescribed in School Board policy.
2. The Superintendent/Principal shall conduct at least one formal observation of each of the 23 FTE certified staff on an annual basis.
3. The Superintendent/Principal shall complete all reports required by the Office of Public Instruction.
4. The Superintendent/Principal shall monitor student behavior.

5. The Superintendent/Principal shall publish a periodic newsletter.

6. The Superintendent/Principal shall carryout all duties assigned by the Board of Trustees and the State of Montana.

5. b. As stated above, the variance was not implemented until 2021-2022. However, the principle data point of cost savings on unnecessary administration is still in play. This variance was requested in order to allow the district to provide a cost effective, bureaucratically efficient, and educationally sound administrative model. The goals of the variance were as follows: (1) provide cost effective administration, (2) reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, and (3) provide an educationally sound administrative model.

To that end, the district will save approximately \$30,000 to \$50,000 in unnecessary administrative costs.

5. c. None.

5. d. None.

6. The status of the renewal application is to continue with current goals and measurable objectives.

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 11, 2022**

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, Independent School District #52, Yellowstone County, Montana was held in the library. The meeting was called to order by Chair Renae Scott at 7:10 p.m.

Members present: Renae Scott and Amy Lierow. Jamee Wilson was absent. Jake Detling and Adam Zelka participated in the meeting via telephone. Also present were Superintendent/Principal Sheila Chouinard and District Clerk Debi Orelup.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*A motion was made to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2021 meeting as presented.
Motion – Jake Detling / Second – Amy Lierow Unanimous vote*

OLD BUSINESS

MTSBA Policy Services

Sheila reported MTSBA sent the draft policy manual for the District to her. The printed material fills two 3” binders. Kris Goss with MTSBA suggests one of three means to review the draft manual prior to the Board adopting it: review it together as a group, review it individually and meet as a group, or assign a committee to review it and then present it to the Board for their consideration. ***A motion was made to assign a committee to review the proposed district policies provided by MTSBA. The committee is to be comprised of Sheila, Renae and Debi.***

Motion – Amy Lierow / Second – Jake Detling Unanimous vote

Superintendent Evaluation

To assist the trustees with her evaluation, Sheila presented a list of her job standards and citing her responsibilities and accomplishments as Superintendent/Principal. Renae stated she would provide the trustees with the evaluation form and requested the completed forms be returned to her prior to the February meeting.

Consideration of the Safe Return to Schools and Continuity of Services Plan

This document will be updated as needed to reflect current policy and must be posted on the school website through June 2024. The Consideration of Safe Return to Schools and Continuity of Services Plan has been submitted to the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) as requested by the State. No changes need to be considered at this time.

YBGR Comprehensive School and Community Treatment Services (CSCT) Funding

Sheila reported OPI continues to revise the procedures to report and pay for CSCT school services.

COMMUNICATIONS

Building Use Request

Joe & Amy Lierow request approval to use the gym twice a week January-March for girls’ basketball practice. ***A motion was made to approve the request. The days and times of use are to be determined by school administration. Rental fees due per district policy.***

Motion – Adam Zelka / Second – Jake Detling Unanimous vote

Lane Change Request

Jurell Linford submitted a Lane Change Request form to the Board. Sheila explained the administration now acknowledges receipt of the lane change forms rather than the Board.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

News and updates are covered under agenda items.

NEW BUSINESS

Variance Renewal

Sheila recommends the Board seek renewal of the variance which would allow one individual to serve as the Superintendent/Principal of the District. **A motion was made to approve seeking renewal of the variance.**

Motion – Amy Lierow / Second – Jake Detling Unanimous vote

Hire Volleyball Coaches

Sheila recommends hiring Jennifer Larsen and Jerry Flannery as the 2022 girls' volleyball coaches. **A motion was made to approve hiring the coaches as recommended.**

Motion – Amy Lierow / Second – Jake Detling Unanimous vote

Building Use Approval Committee

Sheila recommends the creation of a committee to approve short term building use requests in between Board meetings. **A motion was made to give Sheila the authority to make a temporary approval of a building use request until the next Board meeting.**

Motion – Amy Lierow / Second – Adam Zelka Unanimous vote

CSCT Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Sheila explained MTSBA is presently reviewing the CSCT Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) provided by OPI. She recommends approval of the MOU once MTSBA affirms the current version of the MOU. **A motion was made to accept the MOU once it is approved by MTSBA.**

Motion – Amy Lierow / Second – Jake Detling Unanimous vote

Resolution Calling for School Election, May 3, 2022

The proposed election resolution states the School Election will be held Tuesday, May 3, 2022, for the purpose of electing one trustee for a three-year term. The term of office for Jamee Wilson expires in May. **A motion was made to approve the resolution as presented for the May 3, 2022, School Election of one trustee. The election will be conducted by the Yellowstone County Election office by mail ballot.**

Motion – Adam Zelka / Second – Amy Lierow Unanimous vote

The next School Board meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 15, 2022. Payroll checks 82371-82426 and warrants 29902-29959 were approved for payment as presented.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Motion – Amy Lierow / Second – Jake Detling Unanimous vote


Debi Orelup, District Clerk


Renae Scott, Chair

SKYHAWK TALK

It is with Skyhawk Pride, Respect, and Cooperation that We Achieve.

STUDENT-LED PARENT CONFERENCES

Mon, Feb 14 – Thurs, Feb 17

The Student-Led Conferences are a special event at Independent when we empower students to share their pride in their accomplishments with parents. Students in grades 4-6 will be bringing home materials and projects to share with parents. Most primary (k-2) grade teachers are scheduling virtual conferences with Zoom. Check ClassDojo for your child's teachers specific directions.

If you child's teacher has set up times for meeting, please sign up today!

Follow the directions below to sign up today!

1) Click this link to see our Teacher's SignUp Pages on SignUp.com:

<http://signup.com/go/fribtrx>

2) Select your child's teacher, review the dates and times listed and choose the one you like.

3) Sign up! It's Easy - you will NOT need to register an account or keep a password on SignUp.com.

4) For additional Teacher's SignUp Pages when on a computer, repeat the steps.

CALENDAR

Thurs, Feb 10 • PTA Meeting 3:15 PM

Mon – Thurs, Feb 14-17 • Home School Conferences

Tues, Feb 15 • Board Meeting 7PM

Fri – Mon, Feb 18-21 • No School

SPELLING BEE WINNERS

The Independent School Spelling Bee was held Friday, February 4. Congratulations to winner, James L. (grade 6), and alternate, Emma B. (grade 6). James will be representing Independent School at the Yellowstone County Spelling Bee held Saturday, March 5 at 9 AM at MSU-B's Petro Theater.

SPRING BASEBALL/SOFTBALL SIGNUPS NOW OPEN

Registration for the 2022 Heights National Little League Baseball/Softball season is now open!! For more information and to register, check out www.heightsll.com

Anyone Missing a Jacket?! Gloves?!

Please take the time to check the **Lost and Found** outside the main office for missing jackets, winter coats, hats, gloves, clothing and other items. It is easier to return lost items if there is a name on it!

PLEASE LABEL ITEMS!

Board Again Requests Accreditation Variance

Two years ago, the School Board requested and received an accreditation variance from the State. This variance gives permission for Independent School to have one administrator cover two positions: principal and superintendent. Although the variance was in place, Mr. Laurent served as the part-time superintendent while Ms. Chouinard has served as the principal. Since Mr. Laurent's retirement in June 2021, Ms. Chouinard has fulfilled the role of Superintendent/Principal.

It is now time to renew the variance. The School Board would like to renew that variance to continue to allow Ms. Chouinard to act as both the principal and superintendent if needed.

Individuals interested in commenting on this process are directed to contact either Ms. Chouinard, or submit, in writing, comments to the Board of Trustees.

Please check the Independent School website www.independent.k12.mt.us for the monthly lunch menu, calendar of events, classroom websites, District information and more.