



## VARIANCES TO STANDARDS APPLICATION

March 2, 2015

Purpose: ARM 10.55.604.1. A local board of trustees may apply to the Board of Public Education through the Superintendent of Public Instruction to implement a variance to a standard or a section of standards, excluding standards stating statutory criteria, standards pertaining to educator licensure or endorsement, and content standards as defined by the Board of Public Education and provided in guidance from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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### DUE DATES

- First semester implementation; March 2, 2015
  - Second semester implementation; July 6, 2015
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**COUNTY:** Ravalli

**DISTRICT:** Corvallis School District #1

### LIST THE SCHOOL OR MULTIPLE SCHOOLS THAT ARE REQUESTING THE VARIANCE(S):

Corvallis Middle School (includes both the Edna Thomas 5/6 and the Corvallis 7/8 schools)

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- 1. Is this an initial application (2 years) or a Renewal application (3 years)?**  
Initial application (2 years)
- 2. Is this for first semester implementation or second semester implementation?**  
First semester
- 3. Standard(s) for which a variance is requested, i.e., 10.55.709. If there is a program delivery standard, be sure to list it as well. For example, 10.55.1801.**  
10.55.710 Assignment of Counseling Staff
- 4. Please attach evidence through official minutes of the board of trustees that local school community stakeholders were involved in the consideration and development of the proposed variance to standards. Stakeholder groups include trustees, administrators, teachers, classified school staff, parents, community members, and students as applicable.**  
Corvallis Board of Trustees meeting minutes and attendance sign-in sheets are attached.
- 5. Please provide evidence that the board of trustees adopted its application for variance at an official, properly noticed meeting of its board of trustees.**  
See attached Corvallis Board of Trustees meeting minutes.





**6. Describe the variance requested.**

Using current enrollment figures, we anticipate having 398 students in Corvallis Middle School (CMS) next year. For reporting purposes, CMS includes both the Edna Thomas 5/6 and Corvallis 7/8 “schools”. Accreditation standard 10.55.710 requires a minimum equivalent of one full-time counselor for each 400 students. We will have a 0.9 FTE counselor in place for CMS, with duties split equally between the Edna Thomas 5/6 and Corvallis 7/8 schools. Consequently, we will be 0.1 FTE short of the required counseling standard. It is very difficult in our rural community to find licensed school counselors who are both qualified and willing to work in a part-time position, and hiring a 0.1 FTE counselor would be particularly challenging. Consequently, we are requesting a variance to standard 10.55.710 (Assignment of Counseling Staff) that allows us to address our counseling needs with the available 0.9 FTE counselor.

**7. Provide a brief statement of the mission and goals of this proposed variance.**

The mission and goals of this variance are to continue to provide a quality school counseling program that addresses ALL required school counseling standards utilizing the 0.9 FTE counselor.

We intend to continue to full comply with the School Counseling Program Delivery Standards (10.55.1901). Specifically, we will continue to provide a comprehensive developmentally appropriate program that:

- a) Addresses academic, career, and personal/social development needs of the student body.
- b) Incorporates a quality guidance program presented through classroom presentations and small groups.
- c) Provides supports/interventions for individual students using assessment, advisement, placement, and follow-up.
- d) Delivers responsive services through individual and/or group counseling, consultation, and referrals.
- e) Provides support through the close collaboration with staff, community resources, and other relevant stakeholders

**8. List at least one specific measurable objective(s) that demonstrates that the proposed variance will meet or exceed the results under the current standard(s).**

Our counselor collaborates closely with students, parents, school staff, and outside resources. Furthermore, the goals and objectives of the counseling program are most effectively addressed when school staff are on the “same page” and able to effectively take steps to support the counseling standards. In particular, additional support will be provided by school staff in an effort to support the work of the counselor and delivery of the counseling program standards. This will include but is not limited to the following:



- 1) Establishment of a Student Support Program where identified “at risk” students receive additional support to succeed at both behaviorally and academically. To ensure this program’s effectiveness, a 0.5 FTE teacher will be hired to coordinate appropriate academic/behavioral interventions for these at-risk students. Plans for students will be carefully designed so that interventions and supports provided are pro-active in nature with a focus on increasing student success. The Student Support Program will focus specifically on the following two objectives:
  - a. Academic Objective: Identified “at-risk” students will demonstrate improvement in academic performance as indicated by: a) grades in core classes (math, language arts, science, social studies); and b) growth on MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) assessments.
  - b. Behavioral Objective: Identified “at-risk” students will demonstrate improvement in behavior through: a) a reduction in overall discipline referrals as indicated in the SWIS database; and b) improvement in responsible classroom behavior as measured by individual student checklists, behavior plans, and class responsibility grades.
  
- 2) Support of the guidance program by classroom advisory teachers. In addition to individual and small group work, our counselor will spend a full day in classrooms of every grade level each month to teach a guidance lesson that addresses a monthly school-wide theme. Advisory teachers will then provide follow-up “booster lessons” for their classes at least twice a month that enhance the counselor’s guidance lesson. The booster lessons will be developed in collaboration with the counselor, grade level teams, and our PBIS/MBI committee.

**9. What data or evidence will be gathered to document progress toward meeting the measurable objectives?**

The following measures will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the alternative:

- A school-wide climate survey will be administered to the student body. Results will be evaluated by our Support Team (which includes the principal, counselor, school psychologist, and special education director) and our PBIS/MBI team.
- All 5-8 students are assessed three times each year using the MAP tests in reading and math. The growth of identified at-risk students will be compared to the growth of the overall student population and national norms.
- Academic and responsibility grades will be tracked and reviewed for all at-risk students.
- The SWIS database is used to collect information about referrals for both major and chronic minor behavior issues. We will use SWIS to track and report changes in both major and chronic minor behavioral issues for at-risk students.



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

Our counselor will continue to be responsible for the addressing the Counseling Program Delivery Standards for our entire student body, with close collaboration and support from our school staff.

**11. Variance to Standard: Outline how and why the proposed variance would be:**

**a. Workable. (Sufficient district resources are available for the success of the variance.)**

The Corvallis School District is committed to providing the resources necessary to maintain a 0.9 FTE school counselor at Corvallis Middle School, with duties to be split between the Edna Thomas 5/6 and Corvallis 7/8 “schools”. We are also committed to maintaining a school-wide advisory program, monthly guidance lessons, and a 0.5 FTE teacher for our Student Support Program.

**b. Educationally sound. (Applicant has relied on sound research as a rationale for the variance.)**

Our school counselor will continue to provide a comprehensive school counseling program, with close collaboration and support from our school staff. The majority of our at-risk students also tend to live in poverty and the counseling needs of these students and their families can be significant. There is a substantial body of research that this population will benefit from: a) establishing a strong relationship with a trusted adult, b) developing realistic short and long term goals for success, c) receiving ongoing support and encouragement as they work to achieve their goals, and d) engaging in frequent progress monitoring so that schools can respond to their changing needs. Research-based strategies from the following resources will be used in conjunction with our already established goals for the counseling program (addressed in Section 12).

Glasser, William. *The Quality School: Managing Students without Coercion*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1992.

Jensen, Eric. *Teaching with Poverty in Mind: What Being Poor Does to Kids' Brains and What Schools Can Do about It*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2009. Print.

Louis, Karen Seashore, and Molly F. Gordon. *Aligning Student Support with Achievement Goals: The Secondary Principal's Guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2006.

Payne, Ruby K. *Research-based Strategies: Narrowing the Achievement Gap for Under-resourced Students*. Highlands, TX: Aha! Process, 2010.

**c. Where applicable, aligned with program standards under ARM 10.55.1101 through 10.55.1901.**

The School Counseling Program Delivery Standards 10.55.1901 are the standards that guide delivery of our counseling program. We will continue to meet or exceed these standards.



**12. Designed to meet the content standards for this area of the curriculum (only applies to those standards which also have related curriculum content standards).**

The Corvallis K-12 comprehensive counseling program is available to all students. The program is designed to reduce barriers to learning and encourage enjoyment of learning in the school environment. The school counselors, in collaboration with families, staff and colleagues will advocate for the success of all students by meeting their developmental needs through activities in the areas of academic, personal/social and career development. The counseling program will aid students in becoming productive, caring citizens by providing skills for life, encouraging life-long learning and promoting a realistic sense of self. The school counselors will consult and collaborate with families, staff and colleagues to understand student development and needs. Counselors will embrace and consider multi-cultural needs of students. A quality research-based program will be maintained through participation in professional development activities and data-driven decision making. The counseling program will at all times uphold ethical integrity.

The counseling program at Corvallis School District is aligned to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) *National Standards for School Counseling Programs*. Our counselors provide a planned, sequential program of guidance and counseling services based upon our students' developmental and special needs.

The National Standards for School Counseling Programs are what the ASCA believes to be the essential elements of a quality and effective school counseling program. The standards address program content and the knowledge, attitudes, and skill competencies that all students will develop as a result of participating in a school counseling program.

**I. Academic Development**

- Standard A. Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.
- Standard B. Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide variety of substantial postsecondary options, including college.
- Standard C. Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work, and to life at home and in the community.

**II. Career Development**

- Standard A. Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.
- Standard B. Students will employ strategies to achieve future career success and satisfaction.
- Standard C. Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education and training, and the world of work.

**III. Personal/Social Development**

- Standard A. Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.



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- Standard B. Students will make decisions, set goals, and take appropriate action to achieve goals.
- Standard C. Students will understand safety and survival skills.

The 0.9 FTE Counselor will continue to provide a comprehensive program for the students that is aligned to the above ASCA standards and the Corvallis School District Counseling Curriculum, which is available at the link below:

<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=Y29ydmFsbGlzLmsxMi5tdC51c3xjb3J2YWxsaXMtc2Nob29sLWRpc3RyaWN0LWN1cnJpY3VsdW18Z3g6N2NjNTcyNDcwNTNhYmI2OQ>

The variance request will NOT change our counseling program or its delivery.

**RENEWAL APPLICATION ONLY:** Please attach a summary of the data gathered to demonstrate that the variance cycle ending June 30, met or exceeded the standard. State the measurable objective for the initial or previous application.

**Required school district signatures:**

Board Chair Name: Tonia Bloom

Board Chair Signature: Tonia Bloom Date: 3/10/15

Superintendent Name: Tim Johnson

Superintendent Signature: [Signature] Date 3-10-15



Montana  
Office of Public Instruction  
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

opi.mt.gov

Mail your 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:

*Denise Juneau*

Date 5/14/15

Approve  Disapprove

Board of Public Education Chair

*Suzanne Carroll*

Date 5/7/15

Approve  Disapprove



# Corvallis School District #1

P.O. Box 700 / 1045 Main  
Corvallis, MT 59828

The purpose of the Corvallis School District is to achieve excellence in educating the whole child in a safe environment so that students are prepared to succeed in life and become productive members of society.

**Tim Johnson**  
Superintendent  
961-4211

**Jason Wirt**  
High School Principal  
961-3201

**Tyson Tucker**  
High School  
Assistant Principal  
Athletic Director  
961-3201

**Rich Durgin**  
Middle School Principal  
961-3007

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Maintenance Director  
207-2527

**Kathy Martin**  
Food Service Director  
961-3201

**Vannesa Bargfrede**  
Business Manager  
District Clerk  
961-4211

March 12, 2015

Ms. Effie Benoit, Accreditation Data Specialist  
Accreditation and Educator Preparation Division  
Office of Public Instruction  
P.O. Box 202501  
Helena, MT 59620-2501

RE: Variance to Standards Application – Edna Thomas 5/6 and Corvallis 7/8

Dear Ms. Benoit:

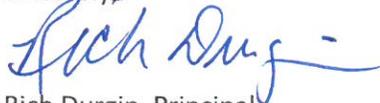
Please find attached our updated Variances to Standards Application. We are requesting approval of a variance to the assignment of counseling staff standards at Corvallis Middle School (CMS), which includes both the Edna Thomas 5/6 and Corvallis 7/8 schools.

Next year, we will have a 0.9 FTE counselor in place, with duties split equally between the Edna Thomas 5/6 and Corvallis 7/8 schools. We anticipate that enrollment at CMS will be such that we will be 0.1 FTE short of the minimum required counseling staff, per standard 10.55.710. This variance is requested due to the fact that it will be extremely difficult to find a qualified licensed school counselors in our rural community who is willing to work in a 0.1 FTE position. The attached application addresses how we plan to fully comply with the counseling standards utilizing our 0.9 FTE counselor.

The Corvallis Board of Trustees approved the variance request at a special board meeting on February 26, 2015. After consulting with you and Ms. Muir regarding our initial submission of materials, we made a few adjustments to the application. These were approved at our March school board meeting. Attached you will find the updated application, agenda for the March 10 meeting, and official minutes from our February 26 meeting where the trustees approved the initial variance request. We will email you minutes from the March 10 meeting on Monday, March 16.

Thank you for considering our application. If you need any additional information, please contact me at (406) 961-3007 or [richd@corvallis.k12.mt.us](mailto:richd@corvallis.k12.mt.us).

Sincerely,



Rich Durgin, Principal  
Corvallis Middle School

Phone: (406) 961-4211 Fax: (406) 961-5144

HOME OF THE BLUE DEVILS

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2/26/2015

1. *Called to order at 5:05 p.m. by Chairman Wilbur Nisly*

The School Board Trustees of Corvallis School District #1 met at a duly constituted and properly noticed meeting Thursday evening in the Handley House.

*Trustees* Present: Wilbur Nisly, Tonia Bloom, Jennifer Channer, Kathy Harder-Brouwer and Adam Sangster.

Absent: Dan Wolsky and Ginny Hoffman

The Superintendent (arrived at 5:10pm) and the District Clerk was present throughout the entire proceedings.

*Others Present* Middle School Principal, Mr. Rich Durgin, Middle School Counselor, Jo Johnson, and Kimber Smith was a community member

2. *Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items* None.

3. *Discussion and Action for variance application for Middle School counselor accreditation standard*

Middle School Principal, Rich Durgin, stated that he is asking for the Boards approval for the Variances Standards Application as a safety net. The Middle School currently has 1.5 FTE for counselors, with part of the FTE (.1) being shared at the high school level. The .5 FTE counselor just gave verbal notice that she will be leaving the district at the end of school year. That may leave the middle school having a .9 FTE counselor, which does not meet accreditation standards of the 1.0 FTE.

In the past it has been challenging to fill a .5 FTE counselor position. This Variance Request if approved will allow the district options if that vacancy is not filled. The goal is to advertise for a .5 FTE counselor. If it is not filled, then to be able to advertise for Dean of Students with a Montana K-8 teaching endorsement. The Dean position would support the counselor position and be responsible for identifying at-risk students who are struggling academically, and working with them and the parents.

The Board asked Mr. Durgin if OPI may have any concerns in approving this type of variance. And, if he knew what the turn-around time was for OPI to approve such a variance.

Mr. Durgin stated that he did not know if OPI would approve the variance request. He hopes they would approve it in case he is not able to fill the vacated position. And he did not know what OPI's time limit was to approve a variance request.

**Trustee Bloom moved to approve the Variance Standards Application for the Middle School counselor accreditation standard as recommended.**

**Trustee Channer seconded the motion.**

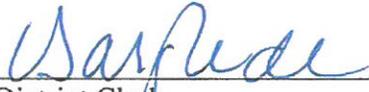
There was no additional discussion.

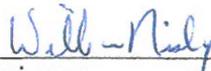
**All voted in favor of the motion.**

*Adjournment*

**Trustee Harder-Brouwer moved to adjourn.**

Adjournment – 5:16 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
District Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

# Corvallis School District #1

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March 5, 2015 (revised)

TO: Corvallis Board of Trustees  
FROM: Tim Johnson

SUBJECT: **SPECIAL SESSION**

Tuesday, March 10, 2015

6:00 P.M. Corvallis High School Library

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items
3. Presentation by Sonny LaSalle – Daly Hospital (10 Minutes)
4. Drama/Speech presentation-Rachel Devine (10 Minutes)
5. Update from 5 year planning committee work
6. Strength Finder 2.0 results; PD perspective

SUBJECT: **REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

Tuesday, March 10, 2015

7:00 P.M. Corvallis High School Library

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items
3. General Reports
4. Personnel
  - Certified Employment
  - Classified Employment
  - Extra-Contracts
  - Resignations
  - Transfers
  - Leaves of Absence
  - Substitute Teachers
5. Requests for Credit Approval
6. Nonresident requests for student attendance
7. Discussion and possible action regarding first reading of the following policies:
8. Discussion and possible action regarding second reading of the following policies :
9. Request Approval for New Bus
10. Request approval for a Trustee Resolution Calling for an Election to be held on May 5, 2015
11. Request Approval for Out of State Travel
12. Middle School Counselor Variance Application
13. Discussion of the February 2015 *Board and Administrator* publication
14. Correspondence
15. Approval of Minutes
16. Approval of Bills
17. Adjournment

Phone: (406) 961-4211 Fax: (406) 961-5144

HOME OF THE BLUE DEVILS

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March 13, 2015

Accreditation and Educator preparation Division  
Office of Public Instruction  
PO Box 20251  
Helena, MT 59620-2501

## **RE: Variances to Standards Application Middle School Counselor Variance Application**

To Whom it may Concern:

This is to inform you that the Corvallis School Board of Trustees approved for a revised variance application request for the Corvallis Middle School.

This approval was made at a publicly held Regular Board Meeting on March 10, 2015, in the Corvallis High School Library.

The variance application asks for evidence of the board action through "official" minutes. The "official" minutes of the meeting will not be Board approved until the April 14, 2015, Board meeting. Therefore, I am providing you with some information and the actual action taken by the Board at the meeting. The "official" minutes will be sent to after they are Board approved.

The following agenda item:

### **Agenda Item #12. Middle School Counselor Variance Application**

Superintendent, Mr. Johnson, informed the Board that a member of OPI's accreditation department, called to speak with him regarding the variance application approved by the Board on February 26, 2015. OPI recommended that the District make some revisions to the application and resubmit it.

Phone: (406) 961-4211 Fax: (406) 961-5144

HOME OF THE BLUE DEVILS

Middle School Principal, Mr. Durgin, informed the Board that OPI asked for the application to be revised, and he modified the application to focus in more depth on the plan for how we would meet the counseling standards with the 0.1 FTE shortage, instead of focusing on an additional position that we will be hiring to support our counselor.

**Board Action Taken:**

**Trustee Bloom moved to approve the revised Variance Standards Application for the Middle School counselor accreditation standard as recommended.**

**Trustee Channer seconded the motion and all voted in favor.**

All Board Members were present, and I took the minutes of the Board Meeting.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

  
Vannesa Bargfrede  
Business Manager / Clerk