

VARIANCES TO STANDARDS APPLICATION
**Initial Application (two
years)**

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."

DUE DATES (check one)

First semester implementation; first Monday in March
Second semester implementation; first Monday in July

COUNTY: Missoula

DISTRICT: Hellgate Elementary

LIST EACH SCHOOL THAT IS REQUESTING THE VARIANCE:

Hellgate Elementary Early Childhood Building and Hellgate Elementary Primary Building

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.

Standard 10.55.709 - Library Media Services (K-12)

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

At the January 13, 2020 regularly scheduled school board meeting for the Hellgate Elementary Board of Trustees, in an open meeting format, school trustees, school administrators, and local community stakeholders (parents as well as taxpayers) were provided the opportunity to hear the school district's position on why the variance request was being put forth as well as given the opportunity to engage in conversation on the merits of that request. See the attached school board meeting agenda as well as the unofficial school board meeting.

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

At the January 13, 2020 regularly scheduled school board meeting for the Hellgate Elementary Board of Trustees, in an open meeting format, school trustees, school administrators, and local community stakeholders (parents as well as taxpayers) were provided the opportunity to hear the school district's position on why the variance request was being put forth as well as given the opportunity to engage in conversation on the merits of that request. See the attached school board meeting agenda as well as the unofficial school board meeting.

4. Attach Board of Trustee meeting minutes that show the Board of Trustees adopted the application for a variance at an official, properly noticed meeting.

See attached school board meeting unofficial minutes as well as the January 13th school board meeting agenda.

5. Describe the variance requested.

Hellgate Elementary is asking the Montana Office of Public Instruction and the Montana Board of Public Education to grant the school district a variance to standard 10.55.709 (Library Media Services K-12).

Currently, the school district, for its 1,535 K-8 students, has two certified librarians on staff (both are Master's degree professional educators) and two library para-professionals. One of the paraprofessionals has been a long-time 2nd grade teacher in the school district who requested an opportunity to step back from the rigors of the day-to-day responsibilities of teaching 2nd grade students. The other paraprofessional is a long-time paraprofessional with the school district that has held several classified employment positions in the school district.

Hellgate Elementary does understand that, when looking at the face of standard 10.55.709, our current library staffing arrangement is not what the standard states. However, the school district also believes that Hellgate Elementary is unique compared to other Montana school districts and other school building configurations. Currently, all four educational buildings that house students are located on a 43 acre campus, with most of the campus area being devoted to green space. All four buildings that house children for educational purposes are separated by no more than 100 to 150 yards. Theoretically, if the buildings were connected by a walkway, a breeze way, or by brick and mortar, the school district could conceivably look at standard 10.55.709 and be much closer to meeting the standard because the standard suggests that 2 licensed and endorsed librarians would be needed for schools that have between 1001-1500 students. Conversely, if only two schools were connected via a walkway system on the campus and the other two were connected via a different walkway system, the school district might only need 3 licensed and endorsed librarians (1.5 for schools with 5001 to 1000 students).

Hellgate Elementary acknowledges that it is not meeting standard 10.55.709 as written. The school district asking, because of its unique physical demographic characteristic of having all of its educational buildings located on one campus, much in the pattern of a community college or small college schematic design, that a variance to standard 10.55.709 be granted.

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

As with all things that Hellgate Elementary embarks on with respect to the education of its K-8 students, it is the mission of the school district to provide an educational learning environment that supports and sustains academic achievement, academic excellence, and life-long learning for all students. In partnership, is the vision of the school district that each student be actively involved in their learning, motivated for the future, and prepared to successfully embrace future opportunities and meet future academic, social, and emotional challenges.

Hellgate Elementary believes that its current library staffing configuration with two licensed and endorsed librarians working hand-in-hand with two library paraprofessionals, all on one campus, and collaboratively helping each other in all buildings whenever the need arises, keeps the school district true to its mission and vision.

Because we are an independent elementary school district, we have the ability to be flexible in space and staff utilization as well as be supportive of staff collaboration, integration of content, and application of new concepts in a safe and inviting space for students. We have a robust technological infrastructure in place in each school, as well as in each school library, that allows for the quality of instruction to become the constant quantity and for time to become the variable quantity through smaller, more intimate learning environments.

Hellgate Elementary does not believe that its current library staffing configuration, placed into service because of our unique campus design, deters in any way from our successful educational philosophy of instruction. We begin each school year with an end product in mind in how we can best serve the need of students. Though our library solution may not fit the “one size fits all” mold contained in standard 10.55.709, our library solution has helped support two of the school district’s non-negotiable core beliefs – (1) every child must meaningfully graduate from Hellgate Elementary, and (2) all of our students must have the skill set to find ways to succeed in the ever-changing global society and economy.

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

I believe that the accreditation standards, including those involving the library media services standard per enrollment numbers, have been put in place to maximize opportunities to enhance student achievement. Hellgate Elementary certainly does not object to the rationale behind the standards as they have been crafted. However, from time to time, the “one size fits all” approach to standard creation does not take into account the unique features that exist from Montana school district to Montana school district. That is true especially for a school district like Hellgate Elementary where all of its educational units are located on one campus, much like a small college and/or a community college schematic design. Thus, the reason the school district is asking for a variance to the library media services standard.

By any reasonable measure, Hellgate Elementary students compete and compare favorably with other Montana students in terms of academic, social, and emotional achievement and development. On the academic side, Hellgate Elementary students achieve at a high rate in comparison to other Montana students whether the comparisons be on the Smarter Balanced Assessment or on local assessments, such as the NWEA “Measurement of Academic Progress”, Dibels, Frontline “Freckle” assessments, FastForward program assessments, and/or the Montana Digital Academy “EdReady” program assessments.

On the social and emotional learning front, Hellgate Elementary, with its current professional educator staffing program, has been a leader in developing and promoting an educational delivery system that takes into account three non-negotiable principles to assist our students in developing into emotionally healthy and productive human beings: (1) we believe that equality of educational opportunity is a fundamental right for all children; (2) we demonstrate, on a daily basis, the moral and political will to do the right thing by children, all children; (3) we strive to understand both the science of teaching and the art of teaching by building positive connections and relationships with our students.

Hellgate Elementary is not asking for the variance in perpetuity. The school district understands why standards are in place and the probability that abuses to the Montana K-12 educational system could and, at times, do occur. However, that is not the impetus for the Hellgate Elementary request. The school district is looking for a two year variance to the standard in order to continue with its current library staffing pattern, which allow the school district time to assess its staffing input patterns in relations to its student’s academic, social/emotional development outputs and adjust accordingly based on its quantitative and qualitative student data.

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

Hellgate Elementary will use quantitative data gathered from a plethora of assessment programs to document progress toward meeting measurable objectives in terms of student academic achievement. Assessments such as Smarter Balanced Assessment and/or local assessments, likes the NWEA “Measurement of Academic Progress”, Dibels, Frontline “Freckle” assessments, Fast Forward program assessments, and/or the Montana Digital Academy “EdReady” program assessments, and authentic classroom assessments will be used to gather the necessary documentation to indicate whether or not the school district is meeting its district measureable goals. In addition, on the qualitative side, the school district will gather necessary data from the administration of the school district’s “Student School Community Perception” survey which will seek to measure student feelings, perceptions, and comfort levels as a student in the school community.

Again, the school district is looking for a two year variance to the standard in order to continue with its current library staffing pattern, which allow the school district the time to assess its staffing input patterns in relations to its student academic and social emotional development outputs and adjust accordingly based on the results of its quantitative and qualitative student data.

9. Describe how and why the proposed variance would be:

a. Workable.

The school district, for its 1,535 K-8 students, has two certified librarians on staff (both are Master's degree professional educators) and two library para-professionals. One of the paraprofessionals has been a long-time 2nd grade teacher in the school district who requested an opportunity to step back from the rigors of the day-to-day responsibilities of teaching 2nd grade students. The other paraprofessional is a long-time paraprofessional with the school district that has held several classified employment positions in the school district. At this point in time, the school district believes that the staffing arrangement has, anecdotally for the purposes of this section of the variance request, proven to be manageable, effective, and efficient in meeting the school district's library specialist needs.

Respectfully, Hellgate Elementary does understand that, when looking at the face of standard 10.55.709, our current library staffing arrangement is not what the standard states. However, the school district also believes, as previously stated, that Hellgate Elementary is unique compared to other Montana school districts and other school building configurations. Currently, all four educational buildings that house students are located on a 43 acre campus, with most of the campus area being devoted to green space. All four buildings that house children for educational purposes are separated by no more than 100 to 150 yards. Therefore, Hellgate Elementary is asking for the variance to standard 10.55.709 not because it objects to the accreditation standard for library specialists, but because of its unique physical demographic characteristic of having all of its educational buildings located on one campus, much in the pattern of a community college or small college schematic design.

b. Educationally sound.

On its face, again anecdotally, the school district believes that its current library specialist staffing configuration is educationally sound for those students in grades K through 3, which are the grades most impacted by the staffing pattern.

As previously stated, Hellgate Elementary will use quantitative data gathered from a plethora of assessment programs to document progress toward meeting measurable objectives in terms of student academic achievement. Assessments such as Smarter Balanced Assessment and/or local assessments, like the NWEA "Measurement of Academic Progress", Dibels, Frontline "Freckle" assessments, Fast Forward program assessments, and/or the Montana Digital Academy "EdReady" program assessments, and authentic classroom assessments will be used to gather the necessary documentation to indicate whether or not the school district is meeting its district measurable goals. In addition, on the qualitative side, the school district will gather necessary data from the administration of the school district's "Student School Community Perception" survey which will seek to measure student feelings, perceptions, and comfort levels as a student in the school community.

The school district is looking for a two year variance to the standard in order to continue with its current library staffing pattern, which allow the school district the time to assess its staffing input patterns in relations to its student academic and social emotional development outputs and adjust staffing accordingly, if necessary, based on the results of its quantitative and qualitative student data.

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

If the school district (more specifically, if the superintendent is reading the intent of this question correctly), outside of the variance request for standard 10.55.709, Hellgate Elementary is in compliance with all other Montana Office of Public Instruction and Montana Board of Public Education program accreditation standards under ARM 10.55.1101 through 10.55.2101. Moreover, the school district is committed to ensuring that its library media services staffing configuration not diminish a non-negotiable core value that district curriculum be aligned with state content program standards and state content-specific grade level learning progressions.

d. Where applicable, aligned with content standards under ARM Chapters 53 and 54.

Again, if the school district (more specifically, if the superintendent is reading the intent of this question correctly), outside of the variance request for standard 10.55.709, Hellgate Elementary is in compliance with all other Montana Office of Public Instruction and Montana Board of Public Education content accreditation standards under ARM Chapter 53 (Content Standards) and 54 (Content Standards and Performance Descriptors) and is committed to ensuring that its library media services staffing configuration positively interfaces across all curriculum areas to provide the necessary educational support to maximize opportunities for Hellgate Elementary students to be academically, socially, and emotionally successful.

Required school district signatures:

Board Chair Name: TOM McLAUGHLIN

Board Chair Signature: Tom McLaughlin Date: January 13, 2020

Superintendent Name: DOUGLAS REISIG

Superintendent Signature: Douglas Reisig Date: January 13, 2020

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: Elsie Arntzen Date: 4/20/2020

Approve Deny

Board of Public Education Chair: Schottle Date: 5/7/2020

Approve Deny

Hellgate Elementary Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
January 13, 2020
7:00 p.m.

OPENING

The Board of Trustees of Hellgate Elementary School District #4 met in regular session on Monday, January 13, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the administration board room. The meeting was called to order by Board Chairman, Tom McLaughlin. Trustees in attendance were: Tom McLaughlin, Jack Babon, Rich Thornock, Lori Christensen, Kate Walker, Diane Beck and Rod Sharkey. Superintendent Doug Reisig and Business Manager/Clerk Noreen Anderson were present for the meeting. Guests in the audience were: Hellgate Elementary Principals Chris Clevenger, Jamie Courville, Julia McCarthy McClaverty, and Damian Droessler, Hellgate Elementary Dean of Students/Vice-Principal Greg Harrison; Special Services Director Brent Heist; Curriculum Coordinator/Instructional Coach Molly Blakely; Hellgate Employees Shara Blair and Willow Timothy; and Ben Goehner, Hellgate parent, along with his son.

HEEA

Willow Timothy reported on behalf of the HEEA that officer elections were held and the following members were elected as representatives for the Hellgate Elementary Education Association:

President – Katy Reddy	Representative Building #1 (2-3): Jake Gochis
Vice-President-Willow Timothy	Representative Building #2 (PK-1): Open at this time
Treasurer – Dawn Deden	Representative Building #3 (4-6): Kacey Criswell
	Representative Building #4 (7-8): Jamie Blixt

This is the first change in leadership for the group in several years and Ms. Timothy stated they look forward to working with the board and administration on behalf of the union group.

BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

Trustees reviewed the monthly newsletters from OPI and MSPLIP and other correspondence. Supt. Reisig noted that the summer Literacy camp in association with the University of Montana will be held again this 2020 summer.

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the minutes from the December 9, 2019 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Jack Babon. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Jack Babon, Lori Christensen, Kate Walker, Rod Sharkey, Diane Beck and Rich Thornock. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF THE WARRANTS

A motion was made by Jack Babon to approve the December 2019 claims. The motion was seconded by Rod Sharkey. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Jack Babon, Lori Christensen, Kate Walker, Rod Sharkey, Diane Beck and Rich Thornock. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF BUDGET REPORTS

Trustees reviewed the budget reports for December 2019.

REVIEW OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES

A motion was made by Lori Christensen to approve the Student Activities Report. The motion was seconded by Rod Sharkey. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Jack Babon, Lori Christensen, Kate Walker, Rod Sharkey, Diane Beck and Rich Thornock. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVE SUBSTITUTE LIST

A motion was made by Rod Sharkey to approve the substitute list. The motion was seconded by Kate Walker. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Jack Babon, Lori Christensen, Kate Walker, Rod Sharkey, Diane Beck and Rich Thornock. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

NON-RESIDENT STUDENT ENROLLMENT REQUEST: Chairman Tom McLaughlin noted that this issue dealt with a Hellgate Elementary student and ask the parent, Ben Goehner, if he wished to have the board enter into closed session to discuss the request for non-resident student enrollment of his son. Mr. Goehner waived his right to the closed session and the discussion was held in open session concerning the enrollment status of his son, Goldmund Goehner, a 7th grade student at Hellgate Middle School. Goldmund has attended school at Hellgate Elementary since the 2nd grade.

A motion was made by Rod Sharkey to waive the district's discretionary non-resident student policy, and allow Mr. Goehner to maintain the enrollment of his son, Goldmund Goehner, at Hellgate Elementary beyond the 1st semester of the 2019/2020 school year. The motion was seconded by Jack Babon. Mr. Goehner addressed the board as to the reasons for his request: 1) Improper school boundary maps which he reviewed when determining the purchase of the home which showed the home in the Hellgate SD4 district; 2) The music opportunities that his son has available at Hellgate Elementary, which would not be available at the district of residence (DeSmet Elementary); and 3) the previous homeowners had students who attended Hellgate Elementary.

It was noted by Superintendent Reisig that the previous homeowners are employees of Hellgate Elementary and under board policy employees of the district are allowed to have their children attend Hellgate Elementary regardless of their district of residence. The policy in question states that a student, whose parents move to a residence outside of the district boundaries, may remain enrolled for the remainder of the current school year IF the move occurs after the end of the 1st semester. In this instance, that move occurred before the end of the first semester which is January 17th.

District Business Manager Noreen Anderson reported for verification of residency, the district uses the actual property tax payment information available online through the Missoula County website. The school district taxes for the property in question are paid to DeSmet Elementary. Trustee Diane Beck noted that the district cannot control what some realtor websites list as the district of residence, but also recognized that the area in which this residence is, bordering Hellgate and DeSmet, is very confusing as houses next to each other can be

in different districts. Trustee Rod Sharkey and Jack Babon stated they felt the longevity of enrollment of Goldmund at Hellgate Elementary should be taken into consideration and 'what is in the student's best interest'.

Trustee Diane Beck motioned to amend the previous motion to allow Goldmund Goehner to finish the 2nd semester of this 2019-2020 school year at Hellgate Elementary. The amendment was seconded by Lori Christensen. Voting in favor of the amendment were: Diane Beck, Rich Thornock, Lori Christensen, and Tom McLaughlin. Voting against the amendment were: Jack Babon, Kate Walker, and Rich Thornock. The motion carried on a 4-3 vote.

Board Chairman Tom McLaughlin called for a vote on the original motion as amended. The motion read "to waive the district's discretionary non-resident student policy, and allow Mr. Goehner to maintain the enrollment of his son, Goldmund Goehner, at Hellgate Elementary beyond the 1st semester of the 2019/2020 school year and, as amended, to allow Goldmund Goehner to finish the 2nd semester of this 2019-2020 school year at Hellgate Elementary." Chairman Tom McLaughlin reminded trustees and Mr. Goehner that this motion does not extend the student's enrollment beyond this 19-20 school year. Voting in favor of the motion were: Diane Beck, ~~Rich Thornock~~^{Red Sharkey}, Lori Christensen, and Tom McLaughlin. Voting against the motion were: Jack Babon, Kate Walker, and Rich Thornock. The motion carried 4-3.

DENY ACCESS TO SCHOOL DISTRICT PROPERTY:

A motion was made by Jack Babon to deny Mr. Darren Sisino access to school district property for the remainder of the 2019/2020 school year in accordance with school board policy #4015. The motion was seconded by Rod Sharkey. Discussion was held. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Jack Babon, Lori Christensen, Kate Walker, Rod Sharkey, Diane Beck and Rich Thornock. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

ACCEPT CLASSIFIED STAFF RESIGNATION:

A motion was made by Rod Sharkey to accept the resignation of Ms. Amanda Anderwald, special education paraprofessional, effective December 20, 2019. The motion was seconded by Jack Babon. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Jack Babon, Lori Christensen, Kate Walker, Rod Sharkey, Diane Beck and Rich Thornock. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL HIRES:

A motion was made by Rod Sharkey to approve the superintendent's recommendation to hire Ms. Hannah Hughes as a special education paraprofessional for the remainder of the 2019/2020 school year. The motion was seconded by Lori Christensen. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Jack Babon, Lori Christensen, Kate Walker, Rod Sharkey, Diane Beck and Rich Thornock. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR HIRES:

A motion was made by Jack Babon to approve the superintendent's recommendation to hire the following individuals for winter extra-curricular assignments: Girls Basketball – Head Coaches Taylor Nordby and Tom Keiser, Assistant Coaches – Derek Dungan and Bailey Vercruyssen; Wrestling – Head Coach Mike Plautz,

Assistant Coach Jason Brunner, ½ time Assistant Coaches Eric Forde and Nick Weller; Gymnastics – Head Coach Colleen Davies, and Assistant Coaches Sarah Williams, Page Walde, and Amanda Happney; Supplemental Education (SES) Program Instructors for 2nd Semester – Adelle Donohue, Kate Gundlach, Logan Hegedus, Kendra Hix, Melissa Morton, Kimberly Rudolph, Sarah Schuelke, and Deb Westrom. The motion was seconded by Kate Walker. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Jack Babon, Lori Christensen, Kate Walker, Rod Sharkey, Diane Beck and Rich Thornock. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

CERTIFIED STAFF RETIREMENT:

A motion was made by Rod Sharkey to accept the retirement of Mr. Brent Hathaway, 7-8 Math Teacher, in accordance to the district's recently approved Early Retirement Incentive offer. The motion was seconded by Lori Christensen. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Jack Babon, Lori Christensen, Kate Walker, Rod Sharkey, Diane Beck and Rich Thornock. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

ACCREDITATION VARIANCE REQUEST:

A motion was made by Rod Sharkey to authorize the superintendent to submit an accreditation variance waiver request to the Montana Office of Public Instruction Standard 10.55.709 (Library Media Services K-12). The motion was seconded by Lori Christensen. Supt. Reisig reviewed the variance request which, if approved, will allow Hellgate Elementary to continue to have two (2) full-time Librarians for all grades and two paraprofessional library aides supervised by the librarians and no longer receive a deviation finding in accreditation from OPI for not meeting the accreditation standard 10.55.709. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Jack Babon, Lori Christensen, Kate Walker, Rod Sharkey, Diane Beck and Rich Thornock. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2020-2021 School Calendar – Trustees reviewed the preliminary 2020-2021 school calendar with classes beginning September 2nd, 2020 and the last day of classes June 11th, 2021. The calendar will be sent to staff for comment and trustees will continue to review until final adoption in March.

Missoula Development Property – Supt. Reisig reported on the availability of the land up for sale to the north of the current school campus. The land is currently priced at \$105,000 per acre of which the district would be able to purchase a portion, if it is determined by trustees there is a need with the continuing development and growth in the Hellgate Elementary District. Trustees reviewed possible purchase options and discussed those needs. After further discussion, trustees instructed the superintendent to schedule a meeting with the realtor at the February meeting and to obtain a realtor representative on the board's behalf. Trustee Diane Beck stated that these parties are not representative of her or her firm, and if the board decides to move forward with any land purchase, she will abstain from any board actions on this matter.

Tax Increment Refund – District Business Manager Noreen Anderson reported that she received notification that the Hellgate Elementary School District will receive a portion of the Tax Increment Revenues being returned to the agencies by the Missoula Tax Increment Board. The district will receive a total of

approximately \$137,000 in two payment installments during this 19-20 year. The payments will go directly back to the district taxpayers for levy relief.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no committee reports.

PRINCIPALS' REPORTS

Trustees reviewed the principals' reports.

PUBLIC COMMENT:


There was no public comment.


NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next meeting regular meeting of the board will be February 10, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.


Tom McLaughlin, Board Chair


Noreen Anderson, Business Manager/Clerk

HELLGATE ELEMENTARY BOARD MEETING
SIGN IN SHEET
01-13-2020

Name

Community, Parent, or Employee
(Please List One)

Ben Goehner

Parent

Goldmund Goehner

Student

Willow Timothy

Employee
