

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: Big Horn County

DISTRICT: High School District #1

LIST EACH SCHOOL THAT IS REQUESTING THE VARIANCE:

Hardin High School

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.

See Attached document

**Variance to Standards Application
Initial Application (two years)**

Hardin High School - 2021 - 2022 School Year

Due Dates (check one)

First Monday in March (March 1st 2021)

County: Big Horn

District: High School District 1

List each school that is requesting the variance:

Hardin High School - 0037

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

The variance is being requested for 10.55.709 Library Media Services, K-12. The library shall be housed in a central location, and each school shall have a full-time or part-time licensed school library media specialist with a K-12 library media endorsement at the following ration: (c) 1.5 FTE for schools with 501- 1000 students.

At Hardin High School, we currently serve 496 students in grades 9 -12 (Spring Count 2021). Our Fall enrollment (2020) count of 517 students placed us in non-compliance with the OPI State Accreditation Standards. We currently have 1 FTE certified library/media specialist at the high school. The variance requested is outlined as follows:

*Hardin High School projected enrollment for the 2021-2022 school year is 547 students in grades 9-12. This projected student population requires 1.5 FTE Library Media Specialists. With this student population we will not meet the accreditation standard requirement.

(Criteria) -

*Parent/Guardian notification/letter (Fall of 2020 & February 2021)

*Student Surveys (February 2021) 67% of the students surveyed support the Administration's request to continue with the current staffing level in the HHS Library. This includes utilization of 1 Full-Time (Certified Library/Media Specialist), 1 half-time para-educator, and the utilization of student Library Assistants.

*Community Public Service Notice (February 2021)(Local Media) Notice that HHS is requesting a Variance to Standards for Accreditation (Library/Media Specialist) from the State Office of Public Instruction. The notice seeks comments on the school's plan to pursue staffing at current levels vs hiring 1 half-time Library/Media Specialist to supplement the current library staffing.

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.

The impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on schools in the Spring and Fall of 2020 created many issues with the ability of schools to meet with parents/guardians in typical settings and the ability present essential information. Normally at HHS we have a Spring and Fall gathering of students, staff, and parents/guardians (Open House). During the Open House Sessions, we introduce staff, programs, and issues impacting the high school, including accreditation issues, staffing issues, and etc. Our enrollment numbers continue to fluctuate at HHS. We began the current school year 20-21 with a fall enrollment of 517 students and currently have a spring enrollment of 496. In one respect we do not meet the standard (517) and in the other we meet the standard (496). This in itself has created an issue for adequately staffing the HHS Library to meet standards set forth by OPI.

(Criteria)

- *Parent/Guardian Letter seeking input (February 2021)
- *Staff Survey conducted (February 2021) 90% of the HHS Staff surveyed support the Variance to Standards Application. 78% of the staff surveyed support continuing the current staffing level in the Library/Media Center with 1 FTE Library Media Specialist, 1 half-time para-educator, and student library assistants.
- *Building Leadership Team meets on a monthly basis. The Variance to Standards Application has been presented to the Team and will be introduced again for approval on February 19th 2021. (This was approved by the BLT Team)
- *The HHS Student Council approved the administration's request to apply for a Variance to Standards for the Library/Media Services and to continue at current staffing levels. This was approved by a majority vote on February 10th 2021.
- *Hardin School Districts 17H & 1 Board of Trustees will review the application request at their regularly scheduled meeting on February 23rd 2021.

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

The HHS Staff were presented with the issues relating to the Variance to Standards Application. The staff completed surveys and were provided the opportunity for input and discussion. The application has also been addressed by the Building Leadership Team and the HHS Student Council representing the entire student body.

The proposed variance to standards request was presented to the Hardin School Districts 17H & 1 Board of Trustees at their regular board meeting on Tuesday, February 23rd 2021. The proposed variance to standards was presented and approved by the school board; the board minutes will be attached to this application.

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. See attached meeting notes

5. Describe the variance requested.

The enrollment numbers at Hardin High School fluctuate greatly during the beginning of each school year. Typically, initial enrollment numbers drop by 15 - 20 students at the beginning of the fall semester. Our fall enrollment for 2020 - 2021 was 517 students. This number indicated that to meet OPI Accreditation Standards, we needed an additional ½ time library/media specialist. This staffing shortfall creates a deficiency in accreditation standards for Hardin High School. We have established a pattern at HHS over the past few years of fall enrollments between 500 - 565 students. Within a few weeks that number is reduced to around 510 and then drops below 500 for 2nd Semester. We anticipate that this trend will continue at least for the next few years.

The Hardin High School Library/Media Center provides exceptional exceptional services to our students and staff. Our library was recently awarded a grant from the Laura Bush Foundation, which allowed our library to update and increase our Native American Library Collection. Our library also offers two well-equipped Apple Computer Labs for the use of our students and classroom teachers. The current library/media specialist provides services throughout the day with the assistance of student library aides each class period. This allows the library/media specialist the opportunity to provide services in classrooms as needed and the instruction of research skills for all students.

Operating in a rural community can make it difficult to hire a ½ time library/media specialist without the option of providing additional teaching assignments based on the individual's endorsement areas. To remain in good standing with the Office of Public Instruction, we would like to continue services in our library/media center with our current 1 FTE Library/Media Specialist considering our current enrollment of 496 students. We would like to supplement current staffing with the addition of one ½ time paraeducator and Student Library Assistants. This variance approval will allow us to continue to operate with the fall surge in student numbers (placing us out of compliance), as student numbers level off to within compliance requirements of fewer than 500 students.

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

Hardin High School Mission Statement - "To provide values, knowledge, and skills to succeed in a changing society."

*We will continue to compliment core classroom instruction with library/media center leveled resources and instruction, media arts, and technology.

*We will work to increase library/media center utilization among staff and students alike.

We will monitor to ensure that the support of a ½ time para-educator will adequately provide needed assistance to our library/media specialist, library services, and student needs.

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

*Increase student usage/awareness of library/media services available for their academic and recreational reading/research needs by 15%. This will continue to be measured by student/visitor logs for the library. We will also monitor the amount of resources being checked out over a specific time frame.

*Increase utilization of staff/classroom usage of HHS Library/Media Services by 15%. This will be measured by library usage logs, library reservations by class period and instructor, and amount of resources checked out.

*Increase the overall perception of the Library/Media Center by 20%. Student surveys will be conducted at the beginning of the term, mid-term, and again at the end of the term for the 2021-2022 school term. This will allow us to ensure that our 1 FTE Library/Media Specialist, student library assistants, and para-educator, are being used in the most effective manner to provide library services for all staff and students visiting the library.

*Research skills are taught to all students. We will ensure that all of our students receive an introduction to library/media services through a class orientation session. This will be conducted in conjunction with the HHS English Department and staff. The introduction sessions will be tracked and logged for reporting purposes.

*Increase

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

*Library/Media Center Staff, Student, and Visitor Log. Provide data updates to Building Leadership Team and Administrative staff.

*Resources (Books, CDs, Regularly Published Materials and etc.) will be tracked through library technology software to provide usage/checkout data of library resources. The goal is to see at least a 15% increase in usage.

*Classroom Library utilization. Data will be tracked via a scheduling calendar to show the number of classes utilizing the library services. The goal is to increase classroom usage by 15%.

Library Orientation - All Homeroom classes will be provided the opportunity for a Library/Media Center orientation session, showcasing the resources and services available in the Library Center. A checklist will be utilized to show class participation.

Computer Technology Services - The Library/Media Center contains two Mac Labs with printing capabilities. The computers are updated regularly and relevant educational software is available for student usage. This is tracked by a usage/sign-in log maintained in the labs. Utilization will be tracked by these logs.

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

a. Workable

Approval of the Variance to Standards will allow us to staff our library with 1 FTE Library Media Specialist, 1 ½ time Paraeducator, and at least 2 Student Library Assistants per class period. This allowed us to provide services without having to hire a ½ time certified Library/Media Specialist, which can be difficult to fill in rural Montana considering the current issues with teacher shortages across the state.

b. Educationally sound

In reviewing the data which provided the statistics for current usage of our Library/Media Center, it reveals that we are currently able to provide exceptional services to all students and staff at current staffing levels. Data shows that we have not had any significant issues with current staffing levels compared to overall utilization of the services.

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

The Hardin High School Library/Media Center meets or exceeds all of the Program Delivery Standards for Communication Arts. Our 1 FTE Library/Media Specialist is fully certified in Library/Media Services.

*The Library/Media Center makes available a variety of print and non-print materials encompassing fiction and non-fiction, classic and contemporary works, and diverse perspectives including Montana American Indian Works.

*The HHS Library/Media Center offers experiences in viewing, creating, and critically evaluating different types of media.

*Research work is encouraged and students are offered instruction in current research best practices, resources (print & non-print), and media literacy.

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

*The HHS Library/Media Specialist provides all services under Content Standards Chapters 53 & 54.

*The Library/Media Specialist is currently reviewing the recently released Montana Content Standards for Library Media and Information Literacy for 2021. OPI has released the new standards for Overview and Planning for Implementation. The release date is February 8, 2021.

*The Library/Media Specialist is currently reviewing the Montana Content Standards for Technology Integration. OPI has released the new standards for Overview and Planning for Implementation. The release date is February 8, 2021.

Required school district signatures:

Board Chair Name: Jodeen K Marston

Board Chair Signature: Jodeen K Marston Date: 2/23/21

Superintendent Name: Eldon C Johnson

Superintendent Signature: Eldon C Johnson Date: 2/24/21

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 Deny

Elsie Arntzen
[Signature]

Date: 5/3/2021

Board of Public Education Chair

Approve Deny

Date: 5/24/21

REGULAR MEETING – FEBRUARY 23, 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 23, 2001, 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, Superintendent Chad Johnson and District Clerk Kym Kern. Those in attendance via ZOOM: Vice Chair Cori Watson, Trustee Crystal Uffelman, Trustee Newton Old Crow, Jr, and Trustee Jordan Straley. Trustee absent: Darwin Spotted, Sr. – reason unknown.

Chairman Marston called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm and the meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Marston stated the matter to come before the Board is a student appeal to re-enter school and the demand of individual privacy in this matter clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Marston convened the Board of Trustees of Hardin School Districts 17H & 1 in Executive Session at 5:32 pm.

Chairman Marston called the meeting to open session at 5:52 pm.

Those in attendance: Kathi Kerr-Taylor attended on-site. ZOOM attendees: Sandra Francis, Mark Schoen, Travis Krieger, Jenny Krieger, Sasha Schuman, Lindsey Ramsey, Riley Ramsey, Kole Passes, Melvin Ware, Teri Wagner, Kelsey Torske and Jenny Millar.

Superintendent Johnson recommended Student 109175 be allowed to re-enter school effective 2/24/2021 based on the behavior contract as discussed. Mr. Old Crow, Jr, made a motion, seconded by Mr. Straley, to approve the recommendation as presented by Superintendent Johnson. Chairman Marston called on each Trustee and asked them to vote aye or nay. All voted aye; the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Watson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Old Crow, Jr, to approve the executive session minutes. Chairman Marston called on each Trustee and asked them to vote aye or nay. All voted aye; the motion carried unanimously.

MINUTES / CLAIMS

Chairman Marston asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the February 9, 2021, regular meeting. Mrs. Kern reported Thor Torske was added to the draft minutes as an on-site attendee. There being no other changes, the minutes were approved with the correction as presented.

Chairman Marston reviewed claims in the amount of \$317,422.37 and student activity claims in the amount of \$6,401.38 and she recommended approval. She asked if there was any objection to approving the claims; there being no objection, the claims were approved.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Johnson reviewed Senate and House bills which passed second and third readings by week eight of the Legislative Session. Information provided by MTSBA on additional Bills was included in the board packet.

Summer school plans are being discussed at each of the schools and Superintendent Johnson stated that transportation will need to be expanded and educational opportunities need to be creative. Discussion followed.

Both March meetings will be held by ZOOM and they are March 9, 2021 at 5:30 pm and March 23, 2021 at 5:30 pm. Superintendent Johnson proposed holding the April 13 meeting at Fort Smith Elementary School and touring the building the same evening. The May 11th meeting will be held at Crow Agency Public School with the building tour scheduled separately. The building tours are scheduled as follows: Friday, April 16, 2021 – CAPS, KRC, HPS; Friday, April 30, 2021 – HIS, HMS, HHS.

Superintendent Johnson reported the meeting for the Hardin Primary Playground is scheduled for tomorrow.

Superintendent Johnson provided the following student enrollment updates: CAPS 282 (+3); FSES 24 (-1); HPS 302 (-4); HIS 276 (+1); HMS 474 (+4); HHS 495 (+5) = 1,917 (+8).

Superintendent Johnson reported on the pre-bid walkthrough which took place today at HCAC and stated the pre-bid opening is scheduled for Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 1:30 at the Parent Center.

STAFFING ISSUES

The following staff changes were presented for approval:

CLASSIFIED – RETIREMENT/RESIGNATION

- Eileen Muhlbeier, Paraprofessional – Hardin Primary School *Retirement 20+ years*
- Clement Other Medicine, Custodian – Hardin High School

CLASSIFIED – NEW HIRE

- Lainey Butkey, Paraprofessional I – Hardin Primary School

TRANSFER/REASSIGNMENT

- C. Amberly Howe, Federal Program Director – District-Wide (*Reassignment: Applied, Interviewed and Hired for this position – Previous position: Assistant Principal – Hardin High School*)

Mr. Old Crow, Jr, made a motion, seconded by Mr. Straley, to approve the staffing changes as presented. Chairman Marston asked each Trustee to state their name and vote aye or nay. All voted aye; the motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Johnson reviewed the overtime report for the payroll dated 2/12/21, stating it was similar to last year. There were not any questions on the overtime.

BUILDING ISSUES

Superintendent Johnson stated the 2020 Fall Report showed student enrollment in Hardin High School exceeding five hundred (500) which put the school short .50 FTE for accreditation requirements for Library Media Services. When the student enrollment is 501-1,000, the requirement changes from one

full-time certified employee to one and one-half full-time certified employees. A Variance to Standards Renewal Application for Hardin High School for the 2021-2022 has been completed following the guidelines provided to show how HHS is accommodating for the additional half-time position.

Superintendent Johnson recommended the Board approve the Variance to Standards Renewal Application for Hardin High School for the 2021-2022 School Year for Library Media Services, K-12, as presented. Mrs. Uffelman made a motion, seconded by Mr. Straley, to accept Superintendent Johnson's recommendation as presented. Chairman Marston asked each Trustee to state their name and vote aye or nay. All voted aye; the motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Johnson stated that upon approval of the board minutes on March 9, they need to be sent immediately for the Variance application.

A Resolution of Intent to Impose an Increase in Levies for FY22 was presented to the Board. Superintendent Johnson stated that Senate Bill 307 requires the District to provide notice of potential intent to increase levies. He said these are permissive levies and do not need to be voted on. He reviewed the funds, the estimated change in revenues, mills and impact to home values.

Superintendent Johnson recommended the Board approve the Resolution of Intent to Impose an Increase in Levies for FY2022. Mr. Straley made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Watson, to accept Superintendent Johnson's recommendation as presented. Chairman Marston asked each Trustee to state their name and vote aye or nay. All voted aye; the motion carried unanimously.

BUDGETING ISSUES

There were no budgeting issues to report.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

There were no transportation issues to report.

PAC / PTO / COMMUNITY MEMBERS

There were no requests to comment.

OTHER

Superintendent Johnson stated Mr. Straley submitted his letter of resignation to the Board of Trustees, with this being his last meeting. Mr. Straley thanked the Board and Superintendent Johnson and each of the Trustees thanked him in return.

With no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Marston adjourned the meeting at 7:01 pm.


Jodeen K. Marston, Board Chair

ATTEST:


Kym Kern, District Clerk