



**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

**DISTRICT:** Hardin Elementary

**LIST EACH SCHOOL THAT IS REQUESTING THE VARIANCE:** Ft Smith Elementary

1. **Standard(s) for which a variance is requested, e.g., 10.55.709. If there is a program delivery standard, be sure to list it as well, e.g., 10.55.1801.**  
10.55.709
2. **Provide evidence that local community stakeholders were involved in the consideration and development of the proposed variance. Community stakeholder groups include parents, community members, and students as applicable.**  
The PTO of Ft. Smith Elementary has always been involved in the improvement of the school. It was this committee that worked toward the grant writing and implementation of the River of Knowledge grant for the Library. This grant allowed the Library to update it's reading materials and to put four computers into the Library for use by students and community. The Library was open one day per week during summer months and one evening per week during the school year for community use. The PTO continues to support the Library at Ft Smith with donations to the book fund.  
A special meeting was held by the PTO on Wednesday Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> for presentation of the request for variance from the state for the Library Media Services.
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.**





Ft. Smith Stakeholders include:

Library Aide: Lorrie Miller

Principal: Sandra Francis

Ft Smith Teachers: Stacey Redding, Jennifer Purk, Reba Strom, Jennifer Herman

Ft. Smith PTO

Hardin School District Superintendent: Dennis Gerke

Hardin School District Board of Trustees

(Attached letter from PTO President and PTO Special Meeting Minutes)

- 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.**

- 5. Describe the variance requested.**

Ft Smith Elementary currently serves 36 students in a K-5 school. We need approximately .1 FTE Librarian for which we are requesting a variance. Ft. Smith is in a remote area which is accessed by a road from Hardin, 42 miles away. This area does not have access to a person with a Library Media Specialist Degree.

There are four classes, two of them multi-age. All students participate in Library classes twice a week with the Library aide that has worked closely with the district Librarians. She is experienced with check-out, data entry, and organizational processes. Mrs. Miller has spent time training at our other buildings, and the district elementary Librarians have taken turns coming out to Ft. Smith over the years to help with set up, training, etc. Mrs. Miller is using the district Library Media Standards as she develops lessons and she works with classroom teachers to align these lessons to the other curriculum standards that are covered at each grade level. Our students at Ft. Smith receive 2x the amount of Library instructional time than our schools in Hardin due to the size of our school and the capabilities of Mrs. Miller.

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

The mission of Ft. Smith Elementary Library is to provide an excellent class and resource site to our students and community.

The goals are to continue providing reading materials for enjoyment and instructional purposes, maintain access to computers and internet services for instructional purposes, information and as research tools, and to continue providing Library instruction that aligns with the Montana Standards for our students.

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

-Ft. Smith will continue to assign a .5 Library aide that will provide weekly services for our students. The schedule will consist of two 45 minutes classes per week for each classroom.





One class will be dedicated to exploration of literature through read alouds and selection of books for checkout. The second class will be for skill building activities in research and all other lessons needed to cover the Library Media Standards.

-Ft. Smith's Library aide will continue to meet with district Librarians for any training as needed, sharing of information in materials and teaching techniques, and to be updated in Library Media standards.

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

-Library use will be documented by the schedule that is maintained for instruction.

-A record of student checkout will be maintained to monitor increases or decreases in circulation.

-Student checkout will also be monitored for areas of interest so inventory can be increased or replaced as needed.

-Lesson plans will be maintained to document implementation of Library Media standards by grade level.

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

This variance will allow Ft. Smith to maintain it's Library facility and to continue to provide all services for students that are required by the state. With only 36 students and it's remote location Ft. Smith is not able to hire a certified Librarian due to availability and cost. By maintaining an open Library with a .5 Library aide we are providing our students with a classroom and resouces that are beneficial for their education.

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

**a. Workable.**

This variance is workable because the district is committed to supporting this small school with the necessary staff to support all areas of instruction. The position for the Library aide is given a .5 time slot to support the students' learning.

Full time positions are desirable in this location so by dedicating .5 of a full time aide position to the Library we are able to keep it staffed with an employee that has experience in the school and in the Library.

**b. Educationally sound.**

Ft. Smith Elementary has provided excellect library services to their students under this plan and they receive instruction at or above the standards that are set.

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

The Library aide works closely with the four classroom teachers on all resources that are needed in the Library. The classroom teachers have the background and instructional knowledge of all



Montana  
**Office of Public Instruction**  
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

[opi.mt.gov](http://opi.mt.gov)

educational standards set for their grade level. Information is shared with the Library aide on what resources, (fiction, non-fiction, curriculum specific, Montana American Indian primary sources, ect.) are needed and if additional resources should be added or supplemented in the current collection.

Research lessons that are implemented in the Library also coincide with grade level curriculum in multiple areas such as Social Studies and Science and reports are written to grade level standards in Communication Arts.

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

Our current library and media classes are focused on supporting our classes in the implementation and enrichment of all instructional areas





**Required school district signatures:**

Board Chair Name: Jodeen K. Marston

Board Chair Signature: Jodeen K. Marston Date: 1-24-17

Superintendent Name: Dennis Gerke

Superintendent Signature: Dennis Gerke Date: 1/24/17

**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: Elise Montoya Date: 5/15/2017  
 Approve  Disapprove

Board of Public Education Chair: Thammy Carroll Date: 5/11/17  
 Approve  Disapprove



## **REGULAR MEETING – January 24, 2017**

The Board of Trustees of the County of Big Horn Big Horn Co School District 17H & 1 met in regular session at the District Administration Office, 401 Park Road, Hardin, Montana, on Tuesday, January 24, 2017.

There not being a quorum, Chairman opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Upon conclusion of general information and the presentation, Mrs. Moreland will teleconference into the meeting to provide a quorum and allow for business to be conducted.

The following trustees and officers were present: Jodeen Marston, Cori Watson, Jon Wells, Superintendent Dennis Gerke and District Clerk Kym Kern. Trustees absent: Abby Moreland, Bryce Rogers and Crystal Uffelman.

Also present: Jim Eshleman, Logan Jenó, Dawn Stewart, Judy Arnold, Sandra Francis, Debra Laci, Larry Johnson, Kenny Kepp and Karla Clark.

### **PAX GOOD BEHAVIOR GAME – DEBRA LACI**

Ms. Laci, counselor at Hardin Intermediate School, introduced the PAX Good Behavior Game. (PAX = Peace, Productivity, Health, Happiness). She explained this is a skill, not a curriculum, and when implemented in first grade it has the maximum lifetime outcome. She talked about how teachers have implemented PAX into their classrooms, with some using it more than others. Students also provide input using the PAX Vision, a poster with PAX and SPLEEMS, an undesirable or inappropriate behavior. The poster lists things the students would like to have more or less of in their classroom. This poster is updated by the teacher throughout the year.

Chairman Marston asked if the PAX GBG was being used in the primary grades, specifically since the benefits to the students are greater when implemented in first grade. Discussion followed. Mr. Johnson stated that some of his teachers attended a workshop for PAX at MEA year before last and decided to implement the program a couple years ago. He reported that Hardin Primary School and Crow Agency Elementary School have been using the Conscious Discipline program for two (2) years.

The Board thanked Ms. Laci.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Mr. Gerke reviewed the CIP meeting agenda from last week which included discussion of a facility audit of the schools and pool. In regards to funding, he stated the auditor suggested running a building reserve levy and the board will have to decide at the next meeting because there will not be any real numbers until the legislature is done in mid-March. The principals will be responsible for prioritizing the list of needs for their building.

Mrs. Moreland was teleconferenced in and with a quorum present, Chairman Marston called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Chairman Marston asked if there was any objection to the minutes of the January 10, 2017, regular meeting being approved without being read. With there being no objection, the minutes were approved.

Mr. Wells reviewed claims in the amount \$287,944.82 and recommended approval. Chairman Marston asked if there was any objection to approving the claims; there being no objection, the claims were approved.

### **STAFFING ISSUES**

Overtime report for the pay period ending January 14, 2107 was distributed to the Board for review.

A Montana Office of Public Instruction Variances to Standards Application for the Library Media Services at Fort Smith Elementary School was submitted to the Board for adoption. The application was reviewed and discussion followed. Mr. Wells made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Moreland, to adopt the Variances to Standards Application. Motion carried.

**BUILDING ISSUES**

The Board received the Impact Aid Program Indian Policies and Procedures (IPP) for 2017 from Beth How-Yarlott, Federal Programs Director. The IPP is updated annually and requires approval from the Board of Trustees. Mrs. Kern stated there were no changes to the IPP since being approved in 2016. Mr. Wells made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Watson, to approve the Impact Aid Program Indian Policies and Procedures for 2017. Motion carried.

**BUDGETING ISSUES**

The Budget Amendment Resolution for an amendment to the high school general fund budget in the amount of \$60,181.85, due to the unanticipated increase in student enrollment in High School District #1, was presented to the Board. Mr. Wells made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Watson, to adopt the Budget Amendment Resolution. Motion carried.

**TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**

There were no transportation issues to report.

**PAC / PTSA / COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

Chairman Marston asked if there were any comments from those individuals attending the meeting and no one requested to speak.


**OTHER**

The next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 24, 2017, beginning at 5:30 p.m., at the District Administration Office, 401 Park Road, Hardin, Montana.

With no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Marston thanked Mrs. Moreland for joining via teleconference and adjourned the meeting at 6:21 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jodeen K. Marston, Board Chairman

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kym Kern, District Clerk