

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: Yellowstone

DISTRICT: Laurel School District 7 and 7-70

LIST EACH SCHOOL THAT IS REQUESTING THE VARIANCE: West Elementary, Graff Elementary, Laurel Middle School, Laurel High School

- 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.**
10.55.601.3
10.55.601 Accreditation Standards: Procedures
(3) To ensure continuous education improvement, the school district and each of its schools shall develop, implement, and evaluate continuous school improvement plans and make the plans publically available. These plans shall be reviewed on a yearly basis to reflect a continuous improvement process.
- 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.**

In the Fall of 2016 the administrators for LPS met with a representative from AdvancED to begin the initial conversations about their process of accreditation. The team then attended a conference hosted by AdvancED personnel where they learned more about the components of the AdvancED accreditation process for a systems review and felt the review as an entire system would be more comprehensive and strengthen our alignment of K-12 practices, data analysis, and systems. The administrators were very interested in moving forward with using the process and invited a representative from AdvancED, Daniel Sybrant, to share with our school board the process and explore adopting the AdvancED framework to aide in our continuous improvement process. Our administration team met again with the AdvancED personnel during the early summer of 2017 and began planning for our next steps in using the AdvancED framework. We then met prior to the school year starting this fall, 2017, and established goals in the area of Academics, Behavior, and Climate/Culture as a district, we outlined a plan for continuing to educate others in our district about the framework and using the tools to evaluate our growth in our goal area.

The Laurel Public School administration team and central office staff have been working to train administrative and site level staff in the standards and indicators of the AdvancED accreditation framework for a systems review of our entire district, including all 4 schools. Each school in our district has been developing goals and collecting different pieces of evidence that will be necessary for the external review taking place in April of 2018 in all of our schools. We have conducted a variety of surveys and inventories to elicit feedback from our community stakeholder groups, teachers, parents, and students.

We sent out a comprehensive Fall Climate/ Culture survey to all of our Parents, teachers (approximately 122), support staff (approximately 127), and students in grades 3-12 (approximately 1120) using the resources available with AdvancED. Our K-2 students and parents will also be participating in a climate survey using their already established tools as part of the MBI process. We will conduct a student and teacher inventory K-12 in January that will address the actual experiences students and teachers participate in, in a classroom setting. Our Climate/culture survey will then be administered at the end of the year as a comparative piece of evidence in our shared values and beliefs as members of our system. Being able to look at this systemic feedback about our climate will be a new practice for our district and is intended to be a part of our goal setting for the next year. (20018-19)

There are 7 Principals, our Director of Curriculum, and Superintendent who are all involved in the leadership of our AdvancED process. Leadership from our district has attended the State Conference for AdvancED in Bozeman for the past two years, and three of our administrators have served on external review teams as evaluators for other districts in order to continue learning and gathering insight into the process and deliver feedback for our own staff. It is very important to the leadership of LPS that this be an authentic and ongoing practice embedded in our daily work in our schools. We have crafted professional development opportunities, and designed our weekly PLC times to aide in training staff and opportunities to follow up on feedback we have received from our different stakeholder groups. Each building has worked to align the district goals to their building goals and ultimately our grade level and departmental goals. We have provided opportunities to

evaluate data and are working to have an authentic process of setting goals – gathering evidence – evaluating evidence – adjusting practices – setting new goals.

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.

The Board of Trustees approved to use the AdvancED framework to assist in guiding our continuous school improvement process at the October 24, 2016 meeting. Their awareness of the process, tools being used, and progress along the way has been an integral part of our constant communication with them. Site level administrators and staff are currently working on the process of artifact collection at their individual sites in preparation for the standards and indicators that will be reviewed as part of the external review in the spring of 2018. The discussion of the request for a variance was held with the Board of Trustees as an item for information at the December 11, 2017 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.

5. Describe the variance requested.

10.55.601 Accreditation Standards: Procedures

(3) To ensure continuous education improvement, the school district and each of its schools shall develop, implement, and evaluate continuous school improvement plans and make the plans publically available. These plans shall be reviewed on a yearly basis to reflect a continuous improvement process.

The Laurel School districts, 7 and 7-70 request to use the AdvancED process as our continuous school improvement plan in place of the CSIP that is a current requirement for OPI accreditation. We would continue to use the tools and resources available in the AdvancED framework to create annual plans based on evidence of student achievement for improvement, make those plans publically available, and review those plans on a yearly basis to engage in an on-going continuous improvement process.

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

Our mission is to engage our staff in an authentic and ongoing practice of continuous growth, which is embedded in our daily work in our schools.

Goal 1: Establish goals that are aligned from a classroom level up to a district level to guide our movement forward as a cohesive system.

Goal 2: Use the ELEOT observation tool to improve teaching and learning at all schools. We are striving to use a common lens in which we look at and talk about student engagement in their learning and in the environment provided for learning in our schools.

Goal 3: Identify goals based on data provided by the external review of our system in each of the AdvancED standards.

Goal 4: To use the AdvancED external review as well as schedule time set aside to help us monitor progress toward student achievement and growth, and improve our instruction in meeting the Montana Content Standards.

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

A. In the area of academics, the number of students meeting established and appropriate academic expectations across the district will increase by 3% or greater as measured by academic data.

B. To address the behavioral connection between student behavior and student achievement the number of students meeting established and appropriate behavior expectations across the district will increase by 3% or more as measured by behavior data.

C. In order to establish a climate and culture baseline of evidence based on data, the district will administer surveys and inventories to students, teachers, staff, parents/guardians, and community members.

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

The following data, artifacts, and evidence will be gathered and evaluated to document progress towards meeting goals.

Data including but not limited to – ACT, Graduation and Dropout statistics, State-wide assessment results, NWEA/CPAA Math and Reading, Program specific assessments, Student Information System data, Attendance, surveys and inventories, Early Warning System data, Montana Prevention Needs Assessment, Youth Risk Behavior Survey. We will also be reviewing the evidence and scores on the standards in AdvancED, as well as our rating in each of the indicators from our internal and external review.

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

The evidence from the AdvancED tools, we believe, will provide students with the authentic and inclusive instruction by measuring the individual components of our grade leveled buildings and establishing specific connections to our whole system. Students will be on the receiving end of quality instruction and systematic improvements that are addressed through research-based factors of quality and diagnoses of areas in need of improvement. We believe we will be better prepared to evaluate our use of the quality factors as related to instruction, resources allocation, and leadership to implement programming that is diverse and varied, embedded at the fullest and most frequent levels for students, and reflective of a commitment to continuous improvement.

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

a. Workable.

The Laurel school district is already using the AdvancED framework to guide our continuous school improvement process. We believe having one consolidated plan addressing our district goals will be most efficient and guide our staff in a unified and clear direction.

b. Educationally sound.

Having the AdvancED framework as our Continuous School Improvement Plan allows for clear purpose and direction for our entire district. It also allows for our goals to be developed using data that is gathered and evaluated regularly. Student achievement is our highest priority and it is our commitment to engage active participation of our stakeholder groups in a shared responsibility and voice to advance our mission and support student growth.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

Required school district signatures:

Board Chair Name: Doug LeBrun

Board Chair Signature: Doug LeBrun Date: 2-2-18

Superintendent Name: Dr. Linda Filpule

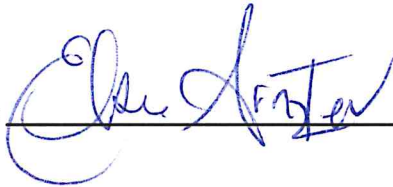
Superintendent Signature: Linda Filpule Date 2/2/18

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:



Date

5/15/2018

Approve Disapprove

Board of Public Education Chair



Date

5/10/2018

Approve Disapprove

MINUTES

I. Call to Order, Pledge to Flag, Welcome

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chairman Doug LeBrun.

Trustees present: Mike Longbottom, Kathy Herr, Roy Voss, Connie Love, Dale Ahrens and Leslie Hutchins.

Trustees absent: None

Administration present: Supt. Linda Filpula, Business Manager Donnie McVee;

Principals: Shawnda Zahara, Pat Cates, Allison Nys and Kelly Anderson; Asst.

Principals: Lucas Larson, Dan Gatley and Allyson Robertus; Other: Charla Wetsch, Roger Heimbigner, Zada Stamper, Wendy Strauch, Ken Hoiness, and Tara Sather (Sodexo).

II. Public Comment - None

III. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Meeting - December 11, 2017

B. Approval of Warrant Registers

1. December Payroll Warrants #93374 - #99482 & Direct Deposits
2. Claims Warrants #68649 - #68718 & -99754

C. Personnel Hiring

1. Hire Substitutes - Alexis Webster, Brenda Piatt, Cybrina Squier and Danielle Murray
2. MS Assist Track Coach - Taylor Pownall
3. Long Term Sub 5th Grade - Endreah Burnham
4. LMS Aide - Tamee Ward

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda.

Motion: Kathy Herr Second: Leslie Hutchins Passed: 7-0

IV. Discussion

1. MTSBA Calls for Resolutions

Trustee Longbottom shared his thoughts for potential resolutions to submit to MTSBA in the areas of increased Gifted & Talented funding and improved state support for facilities that would not rely so heavily on the local tax payer. It was suggested to contact MTSBA for assistance with developing a resolution for increased G&T funding. Resolutions are due to MTSBA by February 12.

V. Items for Information

A. Committee Reports

1. December 13 Administrative Meeting
2. December 18 Administrative Meeting

B. Department Reports

1. Nurses
 - a. Graff
 - b. South
 - c. West
 - d. Middle School
 - e. High School
2. Facilities
3. Technology
4. Transportation
5. Food Service
6. Activities

C. Financial Report

1. Cash Report
2. Revenue Report
3. Expenditure Report
4. High School
5. Middle School

D. Principal Reports

1. Graff
2. South
3. West
4. Middle School
5. High School

E. Curriculum Director Report

1. Strategic Curriculum Outline

F. Superintendent's Report

1. Resignations: Jose Guerrero - substitute, Sally Waters - teacher, Kenneth Dillon - substitute, Gregory Steven Ahmann - teacher (retirement), Lori Sayler - bus driver.

VI. Items for Action

A. Advance ED recommendation

A motion was made to approve the application with OPI for a variance of the standard 10.55.601 Accreditation Standards.

Motion: Connie Love Second: Doug LeBrun Passed: 7-0

Charla Wetsch addressed the board describing the differences between the Advance Ed school improvement plan versus OPI's school improvement plan

B. Land Purchase

A motion was made to run an election on May 8, 2018 to purchase 30.8 acres located north of East Main street and west of Yard Office Road at a cost of \$550,000.

Motion: Mike Longbottom Second: Dale Ahrens Passed: 7-0

C. MHSA Resolutions 2018 (no formal action taken)

Athletic Director Roger Heimbigner presented the proposals that will be considered at the MHSA annual meeting. It was recommended to oppose the proposal to

Amend Eighth Grade Participation/Academic/Transfer By-Laws and support the Proposal to Amend Fines.

Chairman LeBrun called for a break at 6:39 pm. The meeting resumed at 6:45 pm.

VII. Discussion (continued from above)

2. Art Club Presentation - Proposal for Trip

LHS Art teacher Stacia Garner gave a powerpoint presentation highlighting the activities of the Art Club and their proposed trip to San Francisco April 16-20, 2018.

VIII. Executive Session-Superintendent Evaluation & Contract

Chairman LeBrun closed the meeting at 7:07 pm for the purpose of Superintendent Evaluation and contract negotiation.

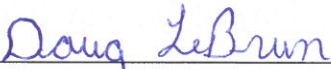
The regular meeting resumed at 8:43 pm.

A motion was made to offer Supt. Filpula a contract with 1) renewal for an additional 1 year added onto the contract for a duration of a 3-year contract, 2) personal leave to be paid out in accordance with the same regulations as vacation leave, and 3) increase the amount of deferred compensation from \$600 to \$700 per month.

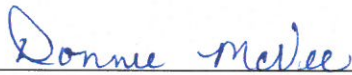
Motion: Mike Longbottom Second: Dale Ahrens Passed: 7-0

IX. Adjournment

Chairman LeBrun adjourned the meeting at 8:44 pm.



Chairman



District Clerk