

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: Flathead

DISTRICT: Bigfork

LIST EACH SCHOOL THAT IS REQUESTING THE VARIANCE:

Bigfork Middle 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.

Library and Media Standards as defined in 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.**
Please see attached letter

- 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.**
Please see attached letter and meeting notes.

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.**

Bigfork Elementary & Middle School combined campus has a 1.0 FTE librarian. Combined enrollment numbers put us about 80 students over the 1.0 FTE for Library and Media standards requirements. We are requesting approval for a .5 FTE Library and Media variance from the standard defined in 10.55.709.

Approving the variance would allow for the combined continuation of instructional technology/media arts (1.5 FTE), Leveled Reading Material and Wonders Walk-to-Read supports for every K-5th student (1.0 FTE) (equivalent of 2.5 Instructional paraprofessionals) and Librarian Services (1.0 FTE) to remain in the K-8 rotation.

Additionally, Bigfork High School serves just over 300 students 9th-12th grade on the same campus as the Bigfork Elementary and Middle school. Although Bigfork High School is at the lower end of the student requirement, 1 FTE is employed for Library and Media Services. We believe the total 2 FTE Librarians as well as the combined supports mentioned above more than satisfy the spirit of the requirements.

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

It is our intent to ensure students are fulfilling the Montana Content Standards for Library Media and Information Literacy through a collaborative approach including grade level library access and instruction, technology/media instruction and a comprehensive literacy program facilitated by homeroom teachers.

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

-Kindergarten through 4th grade students will be scheduled for library services on a rotation to consist of no less than 25% of total electives opportunities.

-5th - 8th grade students will be scheduled for library services through grade level master scheduling to consist of no less than 15% of total elective opportunities.

-6th Grade students will receive (2) two periods of ELA services with (1) period having a specific literacy focus.

-7th and 8th Grade students will have weekly access time available to both the K-8th Library, as well as the high school library.

- Kindergarten – 5th grade students will participate in Wonders “walk-to-read” programs ensuring they have continual access to leveled resources and assessment.

- Kindergarten through 4th grade students will be scheduled for technology/media services on a rotation to consist of no less than 25% of total electives opportunities.

- 5th – 8th grade students will be scheduled for library services through grade level master scheduling to consist of no less than 20% of total elective opportunities.

-3rd -8th grade students will be provided Cromebooks at a 1:1 ratio, so that homeroom and core course teachers can incorporate media literacy standards across the curriculum.

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

Elementary and Middle School master schedules and rotations schedules will be reviewed annually to ensure measurable objectives for each grade level are fulfilled.

Cross curricular inquiry/research standards will be evaluated by content department and reflected in curriculum development documents as well as individual evaluations

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

a. Workable.

The vast majority of our proposed variance objectives are established practices or norms within each course or grade level. Adjustments have been discussed, reviewed and edited in fulfillment of the variance application process.

b. Educationally sound.

The additional supports defined in this request more than offset any limitation possibly incurred through the .5FTE shortage. Specifically, ARM 10.55.1801 (1) (a) (i-iii) speak to the importance of flexibility, collaboration of staff while modeling and supporting appropriate and ethical use of information. The fact our plan to compensate the .5FTE shortages requires these standards and sub-standards be a central focus only enhances the realities they will be fulfilled.

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

The vast majority of the Library Media Program Delivery Standards defined in
ARM 10.55.1801 and outlined in the basic program description will continue to be
fulfilled by our 2.0 FTE librarians.

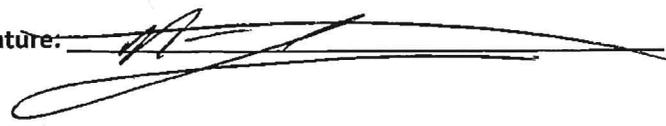
- d. Where applicable, aligned with content standards under
ARM Chapters 53 and 54.
N/A

Required school district signatures:

Board Chair Name: Paul Sandoy

Board Chair Signature:  Date: 2/22/2021

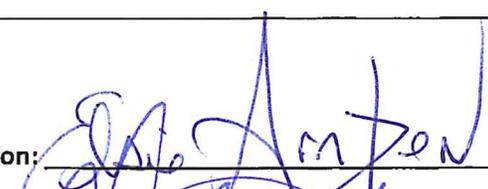
Superintendent Name: Matthew P. Jensen

Superintendent Signature:  Date 2/22/2021

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 5/3/2021

Approve Deny

Board of Public Education Chair:  Date 5/14/21

Approve Deny

Library Variance

Scarlett Sherman <scarletts@bigfork.k12.mt.us>

Fri 2/5/2021 10:53 AM

To: Matt Jensen <mattj@bigfork.k12.mt.us>; Charlie Appleby <charliea@bigfork.k12.mt.us>; Mark Hansen <mhansen@bigfork.k12.mt.us>; Julie Bonner <julieb@bigfork.k12.mt.us>; Tanya McAnally <tanyam@bigfork.k12.mt.us>; Jim Benn <jbenn@bf38.org>; Leslie Stodghill <lstodghill@bigfork.k12.mt.us>; Lori Davis <ldavis@bigfork.k12.mt.us>; Ann Dorr <annd@bigfork.k12.mt.us>

Matt and et al.,

Julie and I met Wednesday with Tanya and Jim to discuss the Variance. I'm sorry we didn't have time to talk with Leslie or Ann. Lori reached out to Julie and they discussed the topic. Here is a response from Julie and me. We support applying again for the Variance.

It is my understanding that the state sees our school in 3 ways; 1)K-6 2)7/8 and 3)9-12. That being said, the 7/8 school at last count had 140 students. The state says at 126 students we need a .5 FTE librarian for the 7/8 school. Therefore, we are currently over by only 14. We know that we have always vacillated right around 130 give or take students in the 7/8 school for decades. Thankfully, the state of Montana has put the option of the variance in place. I think it is important to note two things: 1) the state of Montana values librarians and sees that libraries are extremely important for our students, and 2) the State of Montana recognizes the ability to staff a .5 person is unrealistic. For these reasons, the variance exists and supports Montana schools.

Here is how our school is meeting the needs of our students. The person in the position of the elementary school librarian has historically worked especially hard to try to meet the needs of not only our Pre K-6 students, but also our 7/8 students. There is time set aside weekly for those students to be able to visit the library to check out books, and whatever items are physically not available in the elementary library, are obtained from the high school library. Both libraries share resources whenever possible and both librarians work collaboratively to meet the needs of the 7/8 students.

Furthermore, from the beginning of a students' career at Bigfork schools they have exposure to the library. They begin with an introduction to the areas within the library and use of the library catalog. Students learn about the many research databases we subscribe to in the library as well as in their elementary computer classes. These research skills are continued on through to the middle school not only in the library whenever the librarian is available to them, but also research skills are touched upon collaboratively with the middle school technology teacher. It is because of all this collaboration that we believe we are able to meet the needs of our 7/8 students ultimately preparing them for success as they transition to the high school.

As librarians and technology teachers in the Bigfork School District, we see value in the variance as it allows us to continue the collaborative work we do to ensure our students have appreciation for libraries as places to support their learning and to find books they enjoy. In

addition, the classes provided through our technology staff allow them to grow skills needed to prepare them to learn in the digital age.



Scarlett Sherman

Librarian | Bigfork High School

site: mtsc.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/BFHS

email: scarletts@bigfork.k12.mt.us

THE REGULAR MEETING of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES of Bigfork Elementary School and Bigfork High School, District No 38, Flathead and Lake Counties, was called to order by Vice Chairperson Anderson on February 10, 2021, at 5:00 pm in the high school library.

Trustees in attendance: Parish, Martinz, Anderson, Kreiman & Elwell

Trustees absent: Sandry & Relyea

Also in attendance were Superintendent Matt Jensen, Business Manager Lacey Porrovecchio, Principals Mark Hansen, Charlie Appleby and Brenda Clarke, staff members and community members.

Pledge of Allegiance

There were no comments on non-agenda items.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Trustee Elwell, seconded by Trustee Kreiman, and **approved** by unanimous vote of the elementary and high school trustees.

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Trustee Elwell, seconded by Trustee Parish, and **approved** by unanimous vote of the elementary and high school trustees.

- Consideration of Regular Board Meeting Minutes for January 13, 2021
- Consideration of All Bill Approval Lists
- Consideration of Student Activity Reports for December, 2020 & January, 2021
- Consideration of Individual Transportation Contract – Preschool Student to Evergreen
- Consideration of 1st Semester Individual Transportation Contract Reimbursement Claims
- Consideration of Surplus Property Resolution – Miscellaneous District Items
- Consideration of Personnel – *Any offer of employment is contingent upon receipt of satisfactory criminal history background check and for some positions receipt of satisfactory pre-employment screening.*
 1. Extra-Curricular Personnel Recommended for Consideration
 - a. Leslie Stodghill, Special Olympics Head Coach
 - b. Sue Loeffler, Head Track Coach
 - c. Clayton Woll, Assistant Track Coach
 - d. Jim Epperly, Assistant Track Coach
 - e. David Creamer, Assistant Track Coach
 - f. Brett Damaskos, Co-Head Golf Coach (split stipend)
 - g. Kyle Parker, Co-Head Golf Coach (split stipend)
 - h. Zoe Bedford, Head Tennis Coach
 - i. Hayden Congdon, Assistant Tennis Coach
 - j. Mary K Hoveland, Middle School Track Coach
 - k. Jill Morley, Middle School Track Coach
 - l. Josh Feller, Middle School Track Coach
 2. Extra-Curricular Volunteers Recommended for Consideration
 - a. Dani Potts, 5th Grade Girls Basketball Assistant
 - b. Wayne Loeffler, Track Assistant
 - c. Shawna Curtiss, Track Assistant
 - d. Beau Wielkoszewski, Track Assistant
 - e. Cole Jones, Track Assistant
 - f. Jim Benn, Track Assistant
 3. Substitute Personnel Recommended for Consideration
 - a. Jami Grende, K-12 Substitute Teacher
 4. Certified Personnel Resignation for Consideration
 - a. Mary Ahnert, June 2021
 5. Classified Personnel Resignation for Consideration
 - a. Jeremiah Brown, Paraprofessional

Mr. Jensen thanked Mary Ahnert for her years of excellent service and noted she will be missed. Mrs.

Clarke concurred.

REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS

Business Manager Porrovecchio gave a presentation going over the various Coronavirus Funding sources for schools. The presentation included how much the district has received so far, how much the district will receive in the future, and uses of the money.

Community member Connie Ciabatonni asked for clarification regarding spending on teacher salaries. Mr. Jensen explained Covid funds are used to pay teachers for extra hours beyond the normal day. Teachers spend time preparing virtual lessons.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Mr. Jensen told trustees the district received the Transformational Learning Grant funds for next year. It is approximately \$68,000 for the elementary and \$38,000 for the high school. He met with Kalispell Regional Hospital regarding a school based health center on campus 3 half days per week. There would not be a cost to the district. They are still in the discussion phase. Mr. Jensen asked trustees if they had strong opinions regarding the 2021-22 school calendar. Late start Wednesdays were discussed.

Community member Suzanne Childers said she is in support of what works for teachers but expressed late start Wednesdays are hard for her as a working parent.

Connie Ciabatonni asked for clarification on school start and end times and number of student days. Mr. Jensen responded and will have the school calendar on a future board agenda.

Mr. Jensen told board members the board self-assessment survey results will be discussed at the March board meeting. He talked about enrollment numbers being down and how it affects the budgets. He told trustees a decision will need to be made regarding virtual learners next year and if the school will continue to provide in person and virtual learning. He gave a Covid update and talked about vaccinations and the Governor's mask mandate going away. He recommended the trustees schedule a meeting to talk about all Covid protocols. Schedules were discussed and a meeting will be scheduled February 17.

Community member Kelly Saari asked for clarification regarding face masks at school. Mr. Jensen told her masks will be required until the school board makes a decision.

Suzanne Childers asked about the school calendar and if there is a process in place that looks at PIR days for the teachers and if it is working for the teachers or not and for parents and students. Mr. Jensen told her there is.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Variance to Standard Application 2021-23 – Mr. Jensen explained the application asks for a variance to the library media arts standard and allows the elementary district to maintain 1 FTE librarian and not 1.5 FTE librarians. He worked with the librarians, parents, teachers and administrators to complete the application.

Trustee Elwell asked how long the district has been asking for the variance. Mr. Jensen told him 6 years.

A motion to approve Variance to Standard Application 2021-23 was made by Trustee Kreiman, seconded by Trustee Parish, and approved by unanimous vote of the elementary trustees.

- B. Consideration of Policy Adoption, Policy 1910 COVID-19 Emergency Leave Measures – Mr. Jensen told trustees this is the first reading, second reading will be at the March meeting. Provisions in the policy expire June 30, 2021. The policy grants employees leave similar to the FFCRA leave that expired December 30, 2020. The policy specifies how many days may be taken per isolation or quarantine. He told trustees the leave has been granted administratively since January.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Facility Committee- Mr. Jensen told trustees a heater went out in the concession stand causing water damage and we are repairing the damage.

PRINCIPAL REPORTS

Mrs. Clarke talked to board members about the \$600 donation to the library from Flathead Lake Lodge and told them she will report next month on proficiency level data that she has been working on. She told them she is looking into a math program next year.

Mr. Appleby reported he is working on promoting Best Work, Best Self in the middle school. He talked about the upcoming middle school spirit week and about the excitement when students return from remote learning.

Mr. Hansen talked about results of the ACT and National Honor Society inductions. He gave a shoutout to Mrs. Taylor for her WIN class focusing on volunteerism. ACT Aspire results were sent to parents along with an explanation sheet made by Mrs. Sherman. Juniors and Seniors are able to attend home games and sit with their lunch table partners.

Mr. Porrovecchio gave a brief update on winter athletics. He said they all wrap up next month.

Community member DeeDee Wender commended administration and trustees for everything they have done to keep schools open and keep sports going.

Connie Ciabatonni asked if students say the pledge of allegiance every day (yes) and told everyone they are doing a good job.

Suzanne Childers thanked Mr. Appleby and Mr. Porrovecchio for live streaming 5th grade girls basketball games. She said her family is very appreciative.

Mr. Porrovecchio told trustees he is looking into middle school wrestling for this year only due to Covid. Little Guy wrestling tournaments have all been canceled. It is a discussion between local schools at this point.

The future meeting schedule was discussed. June board meeting dates will be added soon.

FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

All School Board meetings are held at 5 pm in the high school library, unless otherwise noted.

- o Wednesday, February 17, 2021
- o Wednesday, March 10, 2021
- o Wednesday, April 14, 2021
- o Wednesday, May 12, 2021

A motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Elwell, seconded by Trustee Parish, and **approved** by unanimous vote of the elementary and high school trustees.

Adjourned: 6:04 pm


District Clerk

X 
Chairperson

