

**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."

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**DUE DATES (check one)**

- First semester implementation; first Monday in March  
 Second semester implementation; first Monday in July
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**COUNTY:** Jefferson

**DISTRICT:** Whitehall School District 4, 47, & 2

**LIST EACH SCHOOL THAT IS REQUESTING THE VARIANCE:**

Whitehall Elementary School, Whitehall Middle School, Whitehall High School

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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 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.**

The proposed variance was noted in the elementary newsletter sent home to parents on 1/25/19 and 2/1/19. (See attached newsletter).

We also have had contact with the Whitehall Public Library. We gathered input from the town librarian and she volunteered to help provide the .1 FTE we needed but she is not certified to do so per OPI Standards.

- 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 proposed variance was reviewed and discussed numerous times; it was discussed at the Whitehall School Board meetings on 11/5/18 and 2/6/19. (See attached superintendent reports). It was discussed at various administrator meeting on 9/17/2018, 1/22/2019, and 1/28/2019. (See attached admin. meeting docs) It was discussed at the Whitehall School District Strategic Planning Committee meetings in 2018. (See attached strategic plan email). It was discussed at K-12 staff meetings that follow school board meetings and in Friday Updates sent by superintendent. (See attached Friday Update). It was discussed with the current librarian in 2109 as we review his schedule. (See attached schedule)

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.**

Whitehall School District (WSD) requests a variance to Montana School Accreditation Standard 10.55.709. The WSD operates its library as a K-12 library with all schools on one campus. The variance is in regard to 10.55.709, 1(A) - .5 FTE for school with 126-250 students. Our enrollment in the high school has fluctuated between 120-140 students from 2014-2019. Our projected enrollments are near the 126 cutoff. We currently employ a full-time librarian for our elementary (K-5), middle school (6-8), and high school (9-12). Our middle school enrollment has been 85-110 from 2014-2019. Thus, we are required to have services in that school with partial FTE. We have found it difficult to find that partial FTE certified employee. Our current librarian was our only applicant for our library opening in 2018. We adhere to the .5 FTE for elementary library position and .5 FTE for the high school library position although there has been years when our high school enrollment has dropped below 126 and .001 FTE was needed. It is impossible to hire a Library Media Specialist for only .001 FTE without the option or ability to offer additional teaching assignments to the individual if they are even endorsed in other areas. With the additional

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

Our goal is to continue to provide a learning environment which creates independent learners who are efficient consumers and producers of information. Our K-5 students will continue to have scheduled library time each week and our 6-12 students will have opportunities to visit the library through curriculum offerings and scheduling. Our library will continue to have flexible hours and our librarian will have a flexible schedule to meet the needs of our school district.

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

1. Continue to allow flexible scheduling to ensure that the library responds to information needs, fostering intellectual curiosity, and supporting learning. Measured by schedule and student contact time.
2. Continue to collaborate with teachers to gain understanding of content standards and will use Lexile levels, corresponding AR levels, and grade level content to enhance students reading and comprehension.
3. MAP reading data will be utilized to develop and purchase materials suitable for student body. These scores will also be utilized for long range planning to manage the human, financial, and physical resources needed for a successful library.
4. MTSS data will be utilized in the same manner as the MAP data.
5. Teacher Evaluation documents with measurable objectives will be utilized to ensure that the teacher is delivering the desired curriculum based on the Library Media program standards.

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

Evidence gathered will be similar to what is stated in questions 7, data will be gathered from MAP scores, Lexile scores, AR scores, and teacher evaluation rubric scores. Classroom data will also be shared in regard to student comprehension and learning in our Walk-To-Read program and student grade level placement according to success in that program. A sampling of library lesson plans, along with student assessment of the lesson, will be gathered in order to document that students are receiving the curriculum based on the Library Media Standards.

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

**a. Workable.**

1. We are a single campus with the elementary and middle school physically connected by buildings. The high school is within 10 yards of the middle school building. All students can easily access all areas of all three buildings. Currently the K-12 Library is in the middle school.
2. We are projecting a similar pattern to our enrollment over the last 5 years. (See attached enrollment figures)
3. We currently operate as a K-12 Library setting and our students and staff are comfortable with this format.
4. Schools and school districts face many financial burdens, to operate with one library and one full-time librarian is fiscally responsible to the taxpayers of our district.

**b. Educationally sound.**

We have a certified librarian who serves our K-5 and 9-12 at this time. We employ a paraprofessional who has assisted our librarian in the past to help students who enter the library and need guidance. Literacy remains our top educational priority for this district. All students receive between 60-90 minutes per day of literacy instruction. Opportunities for students to access the library have been scheduled. Achievement data shows that current literacy goals are being met with the structure in place.

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

As mentioned above, our curriculum and program is aligned with 10.55.1801 - Library/Media

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

Our current library program does meet each benchmark for grades 4, 8, and 12. All students in grades K-5 have scheduled library time in which our librarian adheres to those benchmarks and standards. Our 6-8 grades have opportunities throughout the curriculums to meet these benchmarks and some our scheduled in the library for study sessions which allows the librarian to teach these skills. All these students are versed on the inquiry process and how to retrieve information, they have ample time to seek out individual needs and questions with our librarian, we have a library with both print and electronic sources that they can utilize, and through their various curriculums they learn to navigate through relevant sources. By graduation our students are comfortable using the library and can create authentic, new products and are able to critique student made or published publications.

**Required school district signatures:**

Board Chair Name: Guino Castello  
Board Chair Signature: [Signature] Date: 2/15/19  
Superintendent Name: John T. Sullivan  
Superintendent Signature: [Signature] Date: 2/15/19

**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: [Signature] Date: 4/15/2019  
 Approve  Deny  
Board of Public Education Chair: [Signature] Date: 5/08/19  
 Approve  Deny

## **Regular Board Meeting of February 6, 2019**

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Whitehall School District 4, 47 and 2 of Madison and Jefferson Counties was held on February 6, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Whitehall Middle School Library.

### Board Members:

Gina Ossello  
Jeff Briggs  
Scott Prevost  
Bill Whitehurst  
James Reiff  
Paul Shaw

### Administrators:

John T. Sullivan, Superintendent  
Patti Drake, District Clerk  
Hannah Nieskens, 6-12 Principal  
Kurtis Koenig, K-5 Principal

Visitors: Marci Whitehurst

## **AGENDA**

### **ITEM:**

#### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Gina Ossello

#### **Flag Salute**

#### **Approval of Agenda**

Jeff Briggs made a joint motion to approve the agenda.

Scott Prevost seconded the motion.

In Favor: Gina Ossello, Jeff Briggs, Scott Prevost, James Reiff, Paul Shaw, Bill Whitehurst

Opposed: None

Motion carried

#### **Visitors**

The visitors were welcomed to the meeting and were told that a public comment period for matters of a general nature would be held later in the meeting.

#### **Minutes**

Scott Prevost made a joint motion to approve the minutes of the Special Board Meeting of January 9, 2019

Bill Whitehurst seconded the motion.

In Favor: Gina Ossello, Jeff Briggs, Scott Prevost, James Reiff, Paul Shaw, Bill Whitehurst

Opposed: None

Motion carried

Jeff Briggs made a joint motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of January 9, 2019.

Scott Prevost seconded the motion.

In Favor: Gina Ossello, Jeff Briggs, Scott Prevost, James Reiff, Paul Shaw, Bill Whitehurst

Opposed: None

Motion carried

#### **Public Comment**

None

#### **Correspondence**

None

**Senior Parents**

Marci Whitehurst was present at the meeting to inform the board about the Senior trip and ask the boards permission to take the students out of state. The seniors will meet at the bus barn at 11:00 pm on Sunday May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019, from there they will go into Butte to the Escapology. At 2:00 am they will board the bus and drive to Lagoon in Salt Lake City, UT where they will spend the day at the amusement and water park and then return to Whitehall that evening.

James Reiff made a high school motion to approve the senior trip. Paul Shaw seconded the motion.

In Favor: Gina Ossello, Jeff Briggs, Scott Prevost, James Reiff, Paul Shaw, Bill Whitehurst

Opposed: None

Motion carried

**REPORTS:**

**Elementary Principal**

(See attached)

**High School Principal**

(See attached)

**Superintendent**

(See attached) Mr. Sullivan wished all the teams good luck this weekend. He also thanked Jen and Scott Prevost for running the concession stand this year, Whitehall Rotary for taking tickets, Joy Smith for everything she does around the school and for the students, Jim Reinschmidt for all the work he is doing around the school and Dan Lacey for getting everything ready for the games, he is always there. He also thanked the paraprofessionals for everything they do.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Strategic Plan Update**

There have been two meetings held to develop a new three-year strategic plan. Mr. Sullivan was asked to put together a report of what has been accomplished from the previous strategic plan. He presented the report that was put together by him and the committee chairs. The report listed the strategies accomplished and additional items that were accomplished but were not on the plan, in each of the following areas: Communication Objective, Facilities and Maintenance Objective, Finance Objective, School Health and Safety Objective, School Leadership Objective, Teacher/Staff Growth and Development, High School Curriculum, K-5 Curriculum, Communication and Technology. The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 20, 2019, they will meet in March and bring the final plan to the board in April. (See attached report.)

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Variance to Standards Application –  
Library Change**

The library is the only place that the District receives a deviation on our accreditation. Based on enrollment, to meet the standards requirement in the library, we need a 1.1 librarian. We would like to apply to OPI for a variance for our middle school and operate as a K-12 Library. We need the board to approve the application for a variance.

James Reiff made a joint motion to approve the application for the variance.

Scott Prevost seconded the motion.

In Favor: Gina Ossello, Jeff Briggs, Scott Prevost, James Reiff, Paul Shaw, Bill Whitehurst

Opposed: None

Motion carried

### **Budget Review**

Mr. Sullivan briefly went over the general budget in both districts. The budget looks good. He explained that each classroom receives \$500 for classroom supplies and we will be ordering those supplies for next year in the next couple of months.

### **Staff Hire**

Mr. Sullivan asked the board to approve the hiring of Janine Burrows as a paraprofessional. She will be replacing a paraprofessional that had to resign unexpectedly.

Scott Prevost made a joint motion to hire Janine Burrows.

James Reiff seconded the motion.

In Favor: Gina Ossello, Jeff Briggs, Scott Prevost, James Reiff, Paul Shaw, Bill Whitehurst

Opposed: None

Motion carried

### **Substitute Staff**

Mr. Sullivan asked the board to approve the hiring of Sadie Gooch and Todd Breitenfeldt as substitutes.

James Reiff made a joint motion to hire Sadie Gooch and Todd Breitenfeldt.

Jeff Briggs seconded the motion.

In Favor: Gina Ossello, Jeff Briggs, Scott Prevost, James Reiff, Paul Shaw, Bill Whitehurst

Opposed: None

Motion carried

### **Claims and Accounts**

Claims approval list was presented to the board.

Paul Shaw made a high school motion to approve payment of the high school claims for February as submitted.

James Reiff seconded the motion.

In Favor: Gina Ossello, Jeff Briggs, Scott Prevost, James Reiff, Paul Shaw, Bill Whitehurst

Opposed: None

Motion carried

Jeff Briggs made an elementary motion to approve payment of the elementary claims for February as submitted.

James Reiff seconded the motion.

In Favor: Gina Ossello, Jeff Briggs, Scott Prevost, James Reiff

Opposed: None

Motion carried

### **Meeting**

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Jeff Briggs made a joint motion to adjourn the meeting.

Scott Prevost seconded the motion.

In Favor: Gina Ossello, Jeff Briggs, Scott Prevost, James Reiff, Paul Shaw, Bill Whitehurst

Opposed: None

Motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Signed:

*Gina Ossello*

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Chairman

ATTEST:

*Patti Drake*

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Clerk