

## VARIANCE TO STANDARDS APPLICATION

### Renewal Application

1. **Standard for which variance is requested: 10.55.709 (1)(c)**
2. **Provide evidence that local community stakeholders were involved in the consideration and development of the proposed renewal variance application. Community stakeholder groups include parents, community members and students as applicable.**

Community stakeholder groups include parents, community members and students as applicable. Columbia Falls High School works closely with the abovementioned stakeholder groups to continually make improvements to our school. During the 2020-21 school year, we sought input regarding our school library program from parents, community members and students in two ways: (1) during parent/community/student advisory meetings, and (2) using surveys developed using the Montana State Information Literacy/Library Media Standards. We encouraged all stakeholders to provide input on achieving our library improvement goals. In addition, we collected different perspectives on how to make the library more a comfortable and inviting place to enjoy reading, studying and learning. *(Meeting agenda/attendance report attached.)*

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

School stakeholder groups include trustees, administrators, teachers and classified staff. All staff were made aware of the staffing issues related to the library variance and were given the opportunity to comment on a survey developed using the Montana State Information Literacy/Library Media Standards. Additionally, there was a specific meeting to present the goals and objectives of the library to staff and other abovementioned stakeholders. This gave stakeholders the opportunity to to learn more about the accreditation shortfall and comment on goals, shortfalls, and ask questions regarding school improvement. *(Meeting agenda/attendance report attached.)*

4. **Attach Board of Trustees meeting minutes that show the Board of Trustees approved the application for a renewal variance at an official, properly noticed meeting.**

**5. Reflection on initial variance:**

- a. Describe the measurable objectives that were listed in the initial variance application that demonstrated how the proposed variance meets or exceeds the results that could have been achieved under the established standards.**

The operational goals noted in the 2018 renewal variance application were:

- Create a makerspace
- Increase circulation
- Acquire chromebook cart for circulation of chromebooks to students
- Hire additional library staff
- Teach Information Technology/ Library Media content standards

The instructional goals with measurable student learning objectives/ focus standards noted in the 2018 renewal application were as follows:

**FOCUS MONTANA STATE LIBRARY MEDIA-INFORMATION LITERACY  
STANDARDS**

Montana State Library Media Standards (2008)

- Standard 3
  - 3.1 assess the quality and effectiveness of the product
- Standard 4
  - 4.1 legally obtain, store and disseminate text data, images, or sounds
  - 4.2 follow copyright laws and fair use guidelines when using the intellectual property of others
  - 4.3 participate and collaborate in intellectual and social networks following safe and accepted practices
- Standard 5
  - 5.3 evaluated multiple resources and other creative expressions from diverse cultures using, including Montana American Indians
  - 5.4 access and use resource and information from all types of information environments to pursue personal and creative interests

Unfortunately, during the 2018 transition between the current librarian and the former librarian, the focus standards noted in the 2018 application were not conveyed. The current librarian chose to work from the AASL standards, many of which align with the state content standards. The AASL standards selected as focus standards are as follows, and implementation notes about both these and the selected MT state standards are detailed in the annual library strategic plans, which are addendums to this application:

**FOCUS AASL STANDARDS FOR 2018-20**

American Association of School Librarians Standards Framework for Learners

1. Making critical choices about information sources to use (*AASL Standards, 4.A.3*).
2. Seeking a variety of resources (*AASL Standards, 4.B.2*).
3. Systematically questioning and assessing the validity and the accuracy of information (*AASL Standards, 4.B.3*).
4. Reading widely and deeply in multiple formats and write and create for a variety of purposes (*AASL Standards, 5.A.1*).
5. Problem solving through cycles of design, implementation and reflection (*AASL Standards, 5.B.1*).
6. Persisting through self-directed pursuits by tinkering and making (*AASL Standards, 5.B.2*).
7. Ethically using and reproducing others work (*AASL Standards, 6.B.1*).

**b. Provide a summary of the evidence or data gathered to demonstrate that the initial variance meets or exceeds results that could have been achieved under the established standard.**

Stated goal	Accomplished	Implementation notes	Attached Report
Create a makerspace	Yes	After remodeling, there is now a dedicated makerspace room that is used by a variety of classes including Science, Computer Science and Spanish. Additionally, the makerspace houses daily after school programming provided by our	No

		partner, The Boys and Girls Club of Columbia Falls.	
Increase circulation	Yes	There has been a circulation increase of ____ . I attribute this to a strong outreach program, English teachers promoting reading for personal enjoyment, and collection development.	Yes  Alexandria Report
Acquire chromebook cart for circulation of chromebooks to students	Yes	As per the chromebooks, they were well circulated during the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years. In 2020-21, the school received funding to provide 1:1 technology, and all students were assigned a chromebook. Due to this, the library no longer circulates chromebooks.	No
Hire additional library staff	Yes	In 2018-19, we added a 1.0 FTE library paraprofessional to allow the fully licensed School Library Media Specialist to focus on library curriculum, teaching and library programming.	No
Teach MT Library Media Standards <i>(selected by librarian who retired in 2018)</i>	Yes	I didn't find the former librarian's goals and checklists until this year, so don't have any completed checklists. However, I have included the annual Strategic Library plans that I drafted with help of our district Curriculum Director. The first two years have AASL focus standards. This year, I am in the process of converting to state content standards. Many of the standards already align. This year's plan uses the revised MT State Library Media Standards.	Yes  Three plans attached:  2018-19 2019-20 2020-21
Teach AASL focus standards <i>(selected by current librarian)</i>	Yes	Focus standards and implementation notes for 2018-19 and 2019-20 are detailed in the correlating Library Strategic Plans.	Yes

**c. After reflection on the initial variance, describe any adjustments that need to be made to meet the specific needs of the students in the school.**

After reflecting on the 2018 variance renewal application, which was written and submitted by my predecessor, I feel it is necessary to find a way to track operational and instructional data over time. By tracking this data, I will be able to make more informed decisions about the school library program and student proficiency in the state Library Media standards. Furthermore, this information will help drive decisions that are then outlined for implementation in the annual CFHS Strategic Library Plan.

The following tools will be developed and utilized to track data:

- Student, staff and librarian surveys
- Circulation reports
- Collection analyses
- Minutes documenting meetings to disseminate and discuss survey results and library teaching objectives
- Annual CFHS Strategic Development plans
- Student assessments that correlate to the focus content standards

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

The mission of this renewal variance is to fully comply with the Montana Standards and Procedures in a variance to the standard that is still an appropriate interpretation of the library curriculum needs of the students. The goal of the proposed variance is to continue to have a 1.0 FTE fully licensed School Library Media Specialist with 1.0 FTE highly qualified paraprofessional. This will ensure adequate staffing for the Library Media Center and allow the Library Media Specialist to focus on library curriculum, teaching and program development.

**7. List specific measurable objectives that demonstrate the proposed renewal variance will meet or exceed the results under the current standards.**

Objectives:

- Develop student, staff and librarian surveys that are cross-walked with the Montana state Library Media Program Delivery Standards and Library Media Content Standards.
- Administer the surveys once per year to track data over time
- Library Advisory Team and staff meetings to disseminate and discuss survey results and annual focus standards for the library media program

- Use data to drive instructional and operational decisions
- Detail the plan for implementing data-based decisions in annual Strategic Library Plan

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

I plan to use a collaborative action research cycle (Ferrance, 2000) to evaluate and refine the school’s library media program. The evidence gathered will be annual student, teacher and librarian survey results. Additionally, I plan to develop pre- and post- assessments that are correlated with the focus standards. These assessments will provide data as to the student’s proficiency with information literacy. Once the data is collected, it will be discussed with the library advisory team, where potential focus standards will be noted. Once focus standards have been identified, the information will be disseminated to CFHS faculty at a staff meeting. The evidence from these meetings will be agendas and minutes. Lastly, I will include annual CFHS Strategic Library Plans that will show specific timeline for the implementation of instructional and operational library goals.

	<b>Step in action research cycle</b>	<b>Evidence gathered to document progress</b>	<b>Who is going to do this</b>
1.	Identify problem	Student and staff surveys to identify student proficiency with Library Media content standards  Student assessments of library media skills	Surveys completed by students and classroom teachers  Focus groups of students
2.	Collection and organization of data	Develop spreadsheets, graphs and charts with collected data using Google forms	Librarian
3.	Interpret data	Discussion of data w/ agenda and minutes to document	Library Advisory team
4.	Action based on data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop strategic library plan with focus standards</li> <li>● Disseminate focus standards for</li> </ul>	Librarian  Librarian

		<p>the upcoming year to staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative teaching between librarian and classroom teachers to meet standards</li> </ul>	Librarian and classroom teachers
5.	Reflection	<p>Librarian survey</p> <p>Implementation/reflection notes in strategic library plan</p>	<p>Librarian</p> <p>Librarian</p>

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

By allowing the CFHS library to operate with 1.0 (FTE) licensed school library media specialist with a k-12 library media endorsement and a 1.0 (FTE) paraprofessional, our library will better meet the needs of the students: instruction in library media standards, positive relationships, and staff to help students locate books that fit their academic needs, and books that develop a passion for reading and learning. This flexibility in staffing will allow CFHS to create an inviting space with sufficient staff to manage the physical library, as well as engage in action research and collaboration with subject area classes to teach state library media standards.

**10. Describe how the variance would be:**

**a. Workable**

This is a workable scenario precisely because we have two adults working full time in the library. With a paraprofessional taking care of many of the operational tasks of a library, the certified teacher-librarian will have the time to collect and analyze data, plan and teach collaboratively, and offer professional development to teachers, all with the focus of increasing student library media and information literacy.

**b. Educationally sound**

This is an educationally sound proposal because the certified librarian is directing a whole library media program. By acting as the director of this library media program, she oversees both the operations of the library, as well as information literacy instruction. The instructional arm of this program includes direct student

instruction, librarian-teacher collaboration, partnerships between the librarian and other stakeholders, as well as teacher professional development.

Furthermore, this proposal is based on the idea of continual improvement of the library media program. In order to accomplish this, it utilizes action research as laid out by the Educational Department at Brown University, one of the ten educational laboratories funded by the US Department of Education's Office of Research and Improvement. The Laboratory at Brown says, "Action research projects influence thinking skills, sense of efficacy, willingness to share and communicate... Through action research, teachers learn about themselves, their students, their colleagues, and can determine ways to continually improve (Ferrance, 2000)." I can think of nothing more educationally sound than finding ways to "continually improve" the instruction of library media/information literacy standards. By honing a "willingness to share and collaborate" with content area teachers, this plan ensures that students leave our school with the necessary library media/information literacy skills to be successful in their lives after high school. Action research, with the steps and evidence detailed above, will provide us with the structure and tools to do this.

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## REFERENCES

American Association of School Librarians. 2018. *AASL Standards Framework for Learners*. Chicago: ALA.

California Department of Education. 2020. *CDE Online School Library Survey*. California: CDE.

Ferrance, E. (2000). *Themes in education: Action research*. Brown University.

[https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/sites/brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/files/publications/act\\_research.pdf](https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/sites/brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/files/publications/act_research.pdf)

Montana Office of Public Instruction. 2020. *Information Literacy-Library Media Content Standards*. Montana: OPI.



**Required school district signatures:**

Board Chair Name: Jill Rocksund

Board Chair Signature: *Jill Rocksund*

Date: 4/23/21

Superintendent Name: David N. Weck

Superintendent Signature: *David N. Weck*

Date: 4/23/21

**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: *Elsie Arntzen*

Date: 5/03/21

Approve  Deny

Board of Public Education Chair: *Mike Roth*

Date: 5/14/21

Approve  Deny

REGULAR MEETING  
 BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
 SCHOOL DISTRICT #6  
 FEBRUARY 8, 2021

PRESENT:

Jill Rocksund.....	Board Chair	
Dean Chisholm.....	Vice Chair	Zoom
Michael Nicosia .....	Trustee	
Gail Pauley .....	Trustee	telephone
Heather Mumby .....	Trustee	Zoom
Larry Wilson .....	Trustee	
Keri Hill .....	Trustee	
Dave Wick....	Superintendent of Schools	
Dustin Zuffelato	Business Manager/Clerk	

ABSENT

Barbara Riley ..... Trustee

Board Chair Rocksund called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Motion by Hill, second by Nicosia, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed 7-0.

APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Hill, second by Nicosia, to approve the consent agenda as presented:

APPROVE CONSENT  
 AGENDA

-Approve the January 11, 2021 Regular Board Meeting and the January 25, 2021 Work Session Meeting minutes.

-Approve January bills.

Passed 7-0

Public Participation:

PUBLIC  
 PARTICIPATION:

Approximately five members of the public participated in the meeting electronically via Zoom.

Chair Rocksund requested public participation on any agenda or non-agenda items.

There was no additional public participation.

Reports:

REPORTS

The Elementary District Principals submitted written reports to the Board.

Scott Gaiser, High School Principal, submitted a written report to the Board.

Dustin Zuffelato, Business Manager/Clerk, submitted a written report to the Board. Mr. Zuffelato highlighted the K-8 Facility Bond Project budget document.

Curriculum Director, Mark McCord, submitted a written report to the Board.

Superintendent Dave Wick provided the Board with a written report. Mr. Wick provided an update regarding the State of Montana 2021 legislative session. Mr. Wick informed the Board that the District recently obtained an appraisal report for Canyon Elementary and would like to schedule a Long Range Planning Committee meeting to discuss the information contained in this report.

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ACTION /  
DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Action/Discussed Items:

The Board considered a variance to accreditation standards related to the High School Library. The application to the State Office of Public Instruction was presented to the Board. Board consensus was that one full-time librarian plus one full-time para-educator is as good as 1.50 full-time equivalent certified librarian as required by accreditation standards.

MOTION TO APPROVE  
APPLICATION FOR  
THE HS LIBRARY  
VARIANCE

Motion by Wilson, second by Mumby, to approve the application for the High School Library accreditation variance. Passed 7-0.

The Health Insurance Committee conducted a meeting on January 28, 2021. The Committee recommended amending the Flex Plan Document as allowed under new federal legislation. The year-end appropriations act permits an extension of the grace period which medical expenses incurred by a participant will be deemed to have been incurred during the plan year. With respect to plan year ending in 2020, the grace period could be extended through September 30, 2021. With respect to the plan year ending in 2021, the grace period could be extended through September 30, 2022.

MOTION TO APPROVE  
AMENDMENT #17 TO  
THE FLEXIBLE BEN-  
EFITS PLAN

Motion by Wilson, second by Nicosia, to approve the Amendment #17 to the Flexible Benefits Plan. Passed 7-0.

Business Manager Dustin Zuffelato presented the FY 2022 General Fund budget projections. The enrollment reported October 5, 2020 and February 1, 2021 are averaged and used to determine the FY 2022 General Fund budget limits. The enrollment was impacted by Covid-19. The Fall enrollment count for the K-6 students was low as compared to the prior year as well as the Spring count. More families were comfortable with the safety of the schools in the Spring as opposed to at the beginning of the school year. Specifically, the Spring count for K-6 was 41 more students than the Fall count. Elementary District ANB for budget is projected to decrease by 26 as compared to the current year. The High School District ANB is projected to be down by 2. Mr. Zuffelato presented the general fund budget projections for fiscal year 2022 based on the enrollment data and the anticipated statutory state funding increase of 1.50% based on the governor's budget for the first year of the upcoming biennium. The Elementary District General Fund budget limit would remain unchanged next year and the High School District would receive a \$51,255 increase. Based on projected expenses for next year, the Elementary District is projected to have a \$266,986 deficit and the High School District would have a slight \$3,766 deficit. The overbase levy authority is \$203,866 for the Elementary District and \$23,276 for the High School.

The Board considered the annual school election to be conducted on May 4, 2021. Two Elementary District School Board members have expiring terms (Rocksund and Nicosia). The deadline to file a Declaration of Intent is March 25, 2021. Mr. Zuffelato informed the Board that they are required to call for an election prior to February 23, 2021 and have until April 2, 2021 to set the mill levy amount or cancel the election.

The Board considered the method for which to conduct the election. Mr. Zuffelato recommended conducting a mail ballot election. The last time (2019) the District conducted a trustee election via a traditional polling place election, a mere 138 voters cast ballots in person while the majority (1,314) were cast by permanent absentee (mail). There are approximately 10,700 registered voters of which 6,400 register as permanent absentee. Mr. Zuffelato also pointed out that conducting a polling place election at the Glacier Gateway Elementary would allow members of the public to enter the facility, which is contrary to 2020/21 school year Pandemic Operation Guide protocols approved by the Board in August 2020.

MOTION TO APPROVE  
MAIL BALLOT ELEC-  
TION PLAN FOR MAY  
4, 2021

Motion by Wilson, second by Nicosia, to approve the mail ballot election plan for the May 4,

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2021 annual school election. Passed 7-0

Motion by Wilson, second by Nicosia, to approve Resolution 382-calling for an Elementary District annual election on May 4, 2021. Passed 6-0

Motion by Wilson, second by Nicosia, to approve Resolution 383-calling for a High School District annual election on May 4, 2021. Passed 7-0

The Board considered an employment contract for District Superintendent Dave Wick.

Motion by Wilson, second by Hill, to approve a three-year contract (school years 2021/22, 2022/23, and 2023/24) for Superintendent Dave Wick. Passed 7-0

Personnel:

The Board acknowledged the following resignations accepted by the Superintendent: Janet Reindl – Paraeducator and Brianna Brooks - Paraeducator.

Motion by Nicosia, second by Wilson, to approve the following Elementary District hiring recommendations: Paige Hall –Long-term Substitute and Ty Morgan-Junior High Girls Basketball Coach. Passed 6-0

Motion by Wilson, second by Hill, to approve the High School/District-wide hiring recommendation of Alyssa Drew – COTA for school year 2021/22. Passed 7-0

Motion by Wilson, second by Nicosia, to approve the substitute hiring recommendations. Passed 7-0

The Board considered a proposed change to the travel itinerary for high school student trip to France to defer from previously approved date of June 2021 to Spring Break of 2022.

Motion by Chisholm, second by Hill, to approve the High School out of state travel request. Passed 7-0

Miscellaneous and Future Planning:

Superintendent Dave Wick recommended a Work Session Meeting focused on the K-8 Facility bond project. Board consensus was to schedule a Long Range Planning Committee meeting focused on the Canyon Elementary School on the same night prior to this Work Session meeting.

Long Range Planning Committee Meeting	February 22, 2021	5:00 P.M.
Work Session Meeting	February 22, 2021	6:00 P.M.
Regular Board Meeting	March 8, 2021	6:00 P.M.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, Chair Rocksund adjourned the meeting at 7:25 P.M.

MOTION TO APPROVE  
RES #382-CALLING  
FOR ELEMENTARY  
ELECTION AND  
RES #383-CALLING  
FOR A HS ELECTION

MOTION TO APPROVE  
SUPERINTENDENT'S  
3-YEAR EMPLOY-  
MENT CONTRACT

PERSONNEL

MOTION TO APPROVE  
ELEMENTARY HIRING  
RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION TO APPROVE  
HIGH SCHOOL HIRING  
RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION TO  
APPROVE THE  
SUBSTITUTE HIRING  
RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION TO APPROVE  
THE HS OUT OF STATE  
TRAVEL REQUEST

MISC / FUTURE  
PLANNING

MEETING  
ADJOURNED

  
Board Chair

  
Business Manager/Clerk