



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 variance to an assurance standard or a section of assurance 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 DATE

First semester implementation; second Monday in October

COUNTY: Yellowstone County

DISTRICT: Billings Public Schools, School District #2

LIST EACH SCHOOL THAT IS REQUESTING THE VARIANCE:

Billings Early College School - Yellowstone County - Billings Public Schools, School District 2

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

10.55.904 BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM OFFERINGS: HIGH SCHOOL

10.55.905 BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM OFFERINGS: HIGH SCHOOL



2. Describe the variance requested.

The Billings Early College School (BECS), a public charter within Billings Public Schools, offers students the opportunity to earn college credits up to an Associate Degree while completing their high school graduation requirements. As Montana's first early college program, BECS is entering its second year with 9th and 10th grade cohorts. The mission of BECS is to inspire, educate and empower students from diverse backgrounds through transformative educational opportunities to earn both a high school diploma and college credits toward an Associate Degree. Our vision is that together we will cultivate a culture of excellence every day to prepare our students for success in our evolving global community.

BECS employs a hybrid design wherein students attend BECS in a cohort model for three periods each day, either morning or afternoon. At BECS, students complete their English and Mathematics courses along with a dual-credit course each semester through Montana State University Billings, supporting the school's mission to provide both high school and college credit within targeted pathways.

Students spend the other half of their day at their comprehensive area high school, where they access library media services, basic program and course offerings as well as the full range of extracurriculars including athletics, clubs, world languages and music. This partnership ensures that students meet all Montana graduation requirements while benefiting from the focused, small-learning environment of BECS.

The hybrid model of BECS enables students to draw on the strengths of both environments: college and career-focused programming at BECS and full academic and extracurricular access at their comprehensive high school. This variance request reflects that all academic requirements are met or exceeded while allowing BECS to fulfill its mission of providing an innovative, flexible and community-centered pathway for students.

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

a. Workable.

The hybrid structure of BECS is already established and supported by district scheduling, staffing, and transportation systems. Students are enrolled in BECS as their primary high school, while also having a secondary enrollment at their area high school, giving them full access to basic education programs, course offerings, facilities, electives, extracurriculars, and library/media services. This structure allows BECS to focus resources on providing high-quality instruction in English and Mathematics with a focus on college-readiness along with dual-credit course offerings in partnership with Montana State University Billings. The schedule of the BECS coincides with our accredited, comprehensive high schools. This ensures that students have access to a six-period course schedule with complete access to all high school educational program and course offerings within the hybrid format as well as student support and library services. Students at BECS also have access to shuttle bus services provided by Billings Public Schools. All students can utilize this offering for transportation in order to travel between both the BECS and their area high school. Scheduling, transportation, facilities, staffing, and funding are all in place to support BECS students within this hybrid design.



b. Educationally sound.

Research demonstrates that early college and dual-credit programs increase student engagement, high school completion rates, and postsecondary attainment, especially for disadvantaged students. By focusing on dual-credit coursework that increases college-readiness and maintaining access to the resources at their area high schools, BECS students receive a broader and richer educational experience than could be provided solely at one school location. The early college and/or middle college framework is time-tested with over 50 years of success and several hundred early and/or middle college locations across the United States. According to national data, the average high school graduation rate of early college and/or middle college students is over 90 percent. This percentage is almost 15 percentage points higher than the national graduation rate average. With strong, supportive data that spans over half a century, BECS students are provided the opportunity for an educationally sound learning experience that aligns with the mission and vision of BECS as well as that of Billings Public Schools.

c. Designed to meet or exceed results under established standards.

BECS students meet all Montana high school graduation requirements through a combination of BECS courses and programs and course offerings at their area high school as well as access to dual credit courses through our partnership with Montana State University Billings. BECS ensures that students continue to receive equitable access to a full educational program and library media services while also exceeding state standards by completing transferable college credits before high school graduation. Through BECS, opportunities for students in Billings Public Schools are expanded without diminishing state academic and accreditation requirements in alignment with the mission and vision of BECS and our approved public charter school contract.



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

The BECS model is fully aligned with program standards under ARM 10.55.1101–10.55.2101. Students have access to qualified instructors, appropriate facilities, and comprehensive educational programming through both BECS and their accredited, comprehensive area high schools. The structure and design of BECS, as this variance request articulates, does not reduce program quality but rather ensures that students benefit from expanded opportunities across multiple accredited institutions. This aligns with the overall design, structure, mission and vision of the Billings Early College School in that through an innovative and flexible approach, BPS has demonstrated responsiveness to our student and community desire for expanded dual-credit opportunities during high school that are supported and delivered in a targeted way.

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 that provides evidence that local school community stakeholders were involved in the consideration and development of the proposed variance to an assurance standard or a section of assurance standards.**
(Stakeholder groups include trustees, administrators, teachers, classified school staff, families, community members, and students as applicable.)



Required school district signatures:

Board Chair Name: Jennifer Hoffman

Board Chair Signature: *Jennifer Hoffman* Date: 9/15/2025

Superintendent Name: Dr. Erwin Garcia

Superintendent Signature: *Dr. Erwin Garcia* Date: 9/15/2025

Email the signed form to:

OPIAccred@mt.gov

**PROCEEDINGS OF
BOARD OF TRUSTEES, SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 2
and
BILLINGS HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 2
REGULAR BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

Monday, September 15, 2025

5:30 p.m.

Lincoln Education Center

Board Room

415 North 30th Street

MEETING MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND ORIENTATION TO THE MEETING:

Trustee Jennifer Hoffman welcomed everyone to the meeting, and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Trustees in attendance: Jennifer Hoffman, Janna Hafer, Zack Terakedis, Tanya Ludwig, Teresa Larsen, Brooke Wagner, Luke Ashmore, and Jourdan Guidice. Trustee Andrea Nemitz was excused this evening.

Staff in attendance: Dr. Erwin Garcia, and Daniela Walsh.

Trustee Jennifer Hoffman asked for a moment of silence for the shooting victims of Colorado's Evergreen High School, the Minneapolis Catholic school, and for political activist and media personality, Charlie Kirk.

Welcome to the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Billings Elementary and High School Districts. The agendas and information about public participation in this meeting are available on the District's website.

2. GIFTS, DONATIONS & RECOGNITIONS:

- Donation by Billings Clinic - bed for Adult and Community Education to use in their medical teaching program.
- Donation by Diane Bertrand — \$300 worth of School Supplies to the Family Resource Center.
- Rimrock Subaru of Billings - \$500 to 6 teachers at Bench Elementary, totaling \$3000 to purchase supplies for student classrooms.
- The Education Foundation raised \$150,884.24 in August to benefit the Angel Fund Endowment, Ben Steele Wildcats Read Program, Classroom Grants, Daylis, Food Insecurity Programs, Saturday Live sponsorship, SUV Raffle and more. As of today, 9/8/2025, we're holding \$182,195.58 for Daylis Stadium.

Trustee Janna Hafer moved to recognize the people/groups as listed, and accept these gifts and donations with gratitude. Trustee Tanya Ludwig seconded the motion. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Trustee Jennifer Hoffman asked to remove Item C - Billings Senior HS Athletic and Performance Training from the Consent Agenda. Dr. Garcia stated that the district needed more time to sort out vendor complications, and that the item is inconclusive at this time.

Trustee Brooke Wagner moved first to approve removing Item C from the agenda, with Trustee Jennifer Hoffman seconding the motion. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

Trustee Janna Hafer moved first to approve the full agenda as amended, with Trustee Jourdan Guidice seconding the motion. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

4. BUDGET DISCUSSION:

- General Fund Forecast for the 2025-2026 school year (file attached) — Craig Van Nice and Laurie Kvamme gave a brief update about the monitoring of budget numbers of the General Fund for the 2025-2026 school year.

5. COMMUNICATION FROM THE PUBLIC:

The Board recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of listening to members of the public in its meetings. The Board also recognizes the statutory and constitutional right of the public to participate in governmental operations. The Board encourages members of the public to participate in and express opinions about issues important to the District. This part of the Board's meeting is dedicated to public comment on any public matter that is not on the agenda of this meeting and is within the jurisdiction of the Board of Trustees. Members of the public may also address particular items on this agenda either now or at the time the Board considers the particular item.

Please note that pursuant to Board policy the Chair may direct public commentary to ensure an orderly progression of the meeting. This direction may include setting a time limit for public commentary on any particular item. The Chair may also interrupt or terminate an individual's statements when necessary, including when statements are out of order, too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant. The Board as a whole shall have the final decision in determining the appropriateness of all such rulings by the Chair.

If you have not already done so, please fill out the public comment form available at the back of the room. This will allow the Chair to recognize you before you address the Board. In addition, the Board will receive any written communication at this time.

Public Comment:

1. Michael Gomez did not appear for his comments.

6. BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT:

1. Trustee Jennifer Hoffman reported on attending the COSSBA Conference in Washington, D.C., with MTSBA. She met with Senators Daines and Sheehy, who were supportive of Montana schools, and with Representative Downing regarding public education funding. Senator Daines expressed interest in attending the Build MT Graduation. This MTSBA meeting occurs annually in September.

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

1. Introduction of Paul Green from Big Sky Economic Development, as the new Executive Director, replacing Steve Arveschoug. This item was postponed as the invitee was required to attend another event.

a. MOU - Billings Urban Indian Health and Wellness Center

The Billings Urban Indian Health and Wellness Center, BUIHWC, is partnering with Bench Elementary for the 2025–2026 school year to provide on-site mental health support for students. This initiative was created in response to the growing need for accessible and culturally responsive care, ensuring students receive timely support that strengthens emotional well-being, builds resilience, and promotes success both in and out of the classroom.

Dr. Garcia introduced Leonard Smith, Kenny Smoker, and Tami Concepcion (Principal at Bench Elementary). He explained that the district had lost its partnership with CSCT in three schools, resulting in programming cuts. However, with AWARE's different funding source, services have now been restored across all schools.

Trustee Zack Terakedis moved to approve the MOU between BPS and the Billings Urban Indian Health and Wellness Center for the 2025–2026 school year. Trustee Tanya Ludwig seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

8. BOARD CLERK'S REPORT:

Board Clerk, Daniela Walsh reported.

- Number of Lawsuits — 0
- Number of Complaints — Two with OCR & Two with OPI.

9. BOARD OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

- Bus Trip and Stop Approval

MCA 20-3-324(11) states trustees will "...establish, maintain, budget, and finance the transportation program of the district in accordance with the provisions of the transportation parts of this title."

MCA 20-10-132(b) states it is the duty of the county transportation committee to "...approve, disapprove, or adjust the school bus routes submitted by the trustees of each district in conformity with the transportation service areas

established..."

MCA 61-8-351(5)(c) states "The board of trustees shall approve each school bus stop that requires a school child to cross a roadway." Most bus stops do or could require a school child to cross a roadway, either AM or PM or both. Per MCA 61-8-351(5)(a), "When a school bus route includes a bus stop that requires a school child to cross a roadway, the school bus must be equipped with an extended stop arm that partially obstructs the roadway." All buses that include a student crossing a roadway are properly equipped.

Bus Routes and Stops Summary — This report is available for public viewing at Lincoln Center in the Board Clerk's office, Room 210. It is also available to view at the District Warehouse, 1470 Industrial Ave.

Transportation Director Lindsay Gran presented this item. Board members had received the list prior to the meeting. Trustee Brooke Wagner moved to approve the Bus Routes and Stops Summary, and Trustee Jourdan Guidice seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

10. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:

1. TIF District Update — Applications are due by October 6, 2025. The appointments will be brought before the board on October 27th. Janna Hafer is assigned to the Downtown District; Zack Terakedis will be assigned to the East Billings Urban Renewal District, and Jourdan Guidice will work with the South Billings Urban Renewal District.
2. Potential HS Bond Update — The district is working with consulting firms and principals to assess facilities and estimate the costs outlined in the Facilities Manual. Final numbers for bringing all three high schools up to standard for repairs will be available on October 31. Consideration is also being given to the possibility of building a fourth high school. Population trends and projected student enrollment over the next 10 years are being evaluated to guide planning and ensure future needs are met.
3. Stadium Remodel Update — The design team met with A & E Design to prepare construction documents or permits and pricing. The next meeting is Sept. 24 to review the building's exterior, and Oct 15 to review the interior. The plan is to have the construction permits for demo, construction, and piers for the stadium in November. Final project numbers will come at the time the bids come in. The project budget is \$14.8 million right now.

a. Stadium Fundraising:

At the August 18th Regular Board meeting, the Billings School Board reviewed five potential naming partners for Daylis Stadium: Heenan & Cook (Stadium Naming Partner), Intermountain Health (West Ticket/Entry), Greg & Eileen McDonald (West Grandstands), Bravera Bank (Concessions), and Bill & Pat Ryan, in honor of Paul Klaboe (West High Locker Room). The Planning and Development Committee formally took action to accept these five naming opportunities and recommend them to the full Board for approval at tonight's Regular Board Meeting.

Chase Rose, from Bannack Group, spoke about the Naming Partners, as well as

how ticket sales for the Public Event at Alberta Bair Theater, on October 2 at 6:00 PM with Terrell Davis, are going strong.

During the campaign feasibility study, naming partners were found. Several partners and donors were identified. A local campaign committee was established.

After considerable discussion concerning the naming rights to John Heenan & Joseph Cook (Heenan & Cook Stadium) or Greg, Eileen, and Debby McDonald (Sam McDonald Memorial Stadium at Daylis) as the Stadium Naming Partner, the board decided that the item would be postponed until the next board meeting, based on legal requirements and considerations for the name. Trustee Brooke Wagner moved first to approve this postponement, with Trustee Jennifer Hoffman seconding the motion. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

Chase explained that Dr. Garcia, given the profile of this campaign, requested the highest level of public notice and input. This approach not only informs the board but also gives the community the opportunity to share feedback on the proposed naming opportunities. On Friday, September 12th, Greg, Eileen, and Debby McDonald came forward as naming partners for the stadium name. This was not solicited by Bannack Group. The McDonald's offered a \$2 million dollar pledge over 5 years. They requested the name of the stadium to be: Sam McDonald Memorial Stadium at Daylis. If approved, this offer would replace the McDonald family pledge to name the stadium's west grandstands. For the board's understanding, the previously discussed naming partner of Heenan and Cook was a \$1.5 million dollar donation, over a 10-year term.

Discussion: There are additional strong prospects to help fund the west grandstands. The overall goal is to create an outstanding stadium that serves student-athletes, visitors, the community, attendees, and donors. Dr. Garcia requested allowing both the public and the board one month (30 days) to consider and reflect on the McDonald family's new offer, consistent with the same timeframe provided to previous donors. The board chair also requested this postponement. The remaining naming opportunities will be voted on at this meeting.

Brooke Wagner moved to postpone the naming partner for the stadium for one month (30 days). Jennifer Hoffman seconded the motion. Discussion regarding the legal ramifications, and request for review. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

Public Comment: Karen Moses withdrew her comment.

Trustee Tanya Ludwig moved first to approve Intermountain Health as the West Ticket/Entry Naming Partner. Trustee Luke Ashmore seconded the motion. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

The Greg and Eileen McDonald naming of the west grandstands is being postponed until the next board meeting. Trustee Teresa Larsen moved to postpone this until the next board meeting. Trustee Luke Ashmore seconded the motion. No discussion. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

Trustee Jourdan Guidice moved first to approve Bravera Bank as the naming

partner for the stadium Concessions. Trustee Jennifer Hoffman seconded the motion. No discussion. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

Trustee Tanya Ludwig moved to approve Bill & Pat Ryan, in honor of Paul Klaboe as the West High Locker Rooms Naming Partner. Jourdan Guidice motioned second. No discussion. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

A new naming partner of Montana Peak Performance for the naming partner of the visitor locker rooms will be voted on next month.

b. Lewis and Clark Middle School — Photovoltaic System

Billings Public Schools has applied for a NorthWestern Energy USB Grant for a 50 KW photovoltaic system at Lewis & Clark. We were notified on 9/11/2025 that we have been selected to receive this Grant (see attachment). This system is proposed to go in the front staff parking lot as carport solar panels. With both the NWE USB Grant Award and the estimated Direct Pay Incentive credit, the projected payback would be around 12 years. Actual cost, after rebate and incentive, would be \$145,000, which would give SD2 a net gain payback after costs of \$267,605.78 over the 30-year life cycle. This project is proposed to be funded by Elementary Building Reserves. Upon approval by the Board, SD2 will notify NWE of our intent to accept the Grant Award before October 2, 2025. It is our intention to complete this project during the summer of 2026 at Lewis & Clark.

Trustee Tanya Ludwig moved first to approve moving forward with the 50 KW photovoltaic system at Lewis and Clark Middle School. Trustee Zack Terakedis motioned second. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

c. Request for Quotes — Daylis Stadium Financing

On August 27, the District issued an RFQ to banking institutions requesting bids for a CD-secured line of credit to support the Daylis Stadium construction project. On September 9, the scoring team reviewed the four bids received and concluded that Bravera Bank's proposal provided the most favorable terms for the District.

This evening, the Business Office seeks the Board's approval for the following actions to advance this initiative:

- **Approve** the selection of Bravera Bank as the District's partner for Daylis Stadium financing.
- **Approve** the transfer of **\$9.25 million** in cash from the Multi-District fund in the County Treasury to be invested in CDs or money market accounts with Bravera Bank immediately.
 - **\$6.25 million** will be invested in CDs and/or money market accounts and drawn down according to the project payment schedule through next spring.
 - **\$3.0 million** will be invested in CDs to generate additional interest and refunded to the Multi-District fund upon maturity.
- **Authorize** the District to begin loan applications with Bravera Bank and the Board of Investments. Based on the project schedule, the District does not anticipate needing to utilize the loan until spring or summer of

2026.

Trustee Teresa Larsen moved first to approve the selection of Bravera Bank as the District's partner for Daylis Stadium financing. And to approve the transfer of \$9.25 million in cash from the County Treasury Multi-District fund in the County Treasury to be invested in CDs and/or money market accounts with Bravera Bank immediately. And to authorize the District to begin loan applications with Bravera Bank and the Board of Investments. This motion was seconded by Jennifer Hoffman.

Roll Call Vote: Trustee Larsen — Yes; Trustee Ludwig — Yes; Trustee Hafer — Yes; Trustee Hoffman — Yes; Trustee Guidice — Yes; Trustee Wagner — Yes; Trustee Ashmore — Yes; Trustee Terakedis — Yes. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

11. STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT:

1. Strategic Priorities 2026-2030 — Trustee Teresa Larsen discussed the meeting and discussion about the district's strategic priorities, based on Kaleidoscope, and the graduate profile.

Trustee Teresa Larsen moved first to approve the Strategic Priorities for 2026-2030, while Trustee Jourdan Guidice seconded the motion. Discussion included a manual for guardrails. We are still investing in our teachers, and we want them to feel comfortable using AI. This is a tool for the present, and for the future. There was discussion about the "ethical" use of AI should be added to the document. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

12. PERFORMANCE MONITORING COMMITTEE REPORT:

Trustee Zack Terakedis spoke about the Performance Monitoring Committee review of AP, Dual Enrollment, PreACT, and ACT data from the 2024–2025 school year.

The attached presentation also includes updated AP Capstone diploma earners, as well as certifications and certificates offered and earned in Billings Public Schools.

Roger Dereszynski introduced Andy Bride of the College Board. Andy spoke briefly about Billings Public Schools and the offering of scholarships to the district AP teachers. Teachers from the district were able to attend the conference over the summer. Last year, Montana was specifically called out for being the highest growth for access to AP Seminar in the nation. The classes with an average score of 3 or better were 98% or better in the pre-calculus. Half of our 11th-12th graders maintained an average score of 3.25 on exams and an average GPA of 3.5. Billings has also exceeded our 5% improvement goal.

13. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION:

a. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

The committee reviewed the Professional Development Course Proposal Updates for recommendations to the board.

The committee reviewed the PIR Special Requests and any New MIDAS Requests for recommendations to the board.

Trustee Zack Terakedis moved first to approve the attached lists of Course Proposals and Special Requests, as recommended by the Professional Development Advisory Committee. Trustee Brooke Wagner seconded the motion. No discussion. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

b. 2024-2025 School Year Accreditation Reports from OPI

Dr. Chris Olszewski, Assistant Superintendent and Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction (6-12), provided the Board of Trustees an overview of the recent Annual Montana Accreditation Report for Billings Public Schools that was approved by the Montana Board of Public Education in May 2025. The presentation included the summary of the process used and the summary report for the district schools during the 2024-2025 school year.

The newly adopted accreditation rules took effect in July 2023, but include various year-to-year phases of implementation and accountability over the next few years. Additionally, an overview of the recently approved three-year cycle of accreditation review will be included.

c. Board of Public Education — Application for Variance for Effect Date of New Graduation Requirements — Financial Literacy

In March 2023, the Montana Board of Public Education (BPE) approved revisions to ARM 10.55.905 that added a one-half credit in economics or financial literacy as a graduation requirement. Recognizing the challenge of immediate implementation, the BPE granted a statewide delay until July 1, 2025, impacting the graduating class of 2026. Billings Public Schools (BPS) strongly supports financial literacy and has expanded qualifying courses from three at the time of adoption to six currently, with two more planned for the next school year. Financial literacy concepts are also embedded across other non-qualifying courses, and local partnerships with banks and other financial institutions have strengthened these opportunities and reinforced the district's commitment to preparing students with essential financial skills. Despite these efforts, the size of the classes impacted and prior scheduling constraints make full implementation by the class of 2026 unworkable without significant disruption and additional staff. To preserve educational soundness and student access to electives and core courses, BPS is requesting from the Montana Board of Public Education a one-year variance, delaying implementation until the class of 2027. Trustee Janna Hafer moved first for the approval of the application for a Variance to Standard extending the implementation of ARM 10.55.905(2)(h) until the Class of 2027, in order to ensure compliance with state standards while protecting student access to electives and core courses and maintaining educational opportunities. Trustee Luke Ashmore seconded the motion. Discussion involved changes in our district policy regarding this item. The Policy Series 2000 might need some review. All voted unanimously in

the affirmative. The motion passed.

d. Variance to Standard - Billings Opportunity School

Our Public Charter Schools were approved by the Board of Public Education (BPE) in January 2024 to provide innovative opportunities for students aligned to their specific charter mission and vision. As charter schools opened in the fall of 2024 across the state, the BPE and OPI recognized areas where the innovative ways charter schools were meeting accreditation standards did not translate seamlessly into OPI's reporting systems. Innovations specific to each school address accreditation standards in approved, creative and effective ways that utilize district resources efficiently without diluting educational opportunities and still meeting or exceeding accreditation standards.

The recommended course of action from OPI and BPE is to apply for a Variance to Standard for each of our public charter schools to articulate how we are meeting or exceeding specific standards. Board approved applications are due to the OPI by October 13, 2025, including signatures from the Board Chair and Superintendent. Once approved, the BPE will recommend that the variances be added to each charter school's approved contract so further applications are not necessary during the initial 5-year charter contract.

BOS: The Billings Opportunity School schedule was designed to meet the unique needs of the student population through a focus on high school graduation requirements aligned with the mission and vision of BOS. To utilize district staffing resources well, a range of electives and additional core course offerings are available online through the use of APEX and Courseware. Students may also choose a hybrid schedule to access any courses offered at their area high school or the Career Center. The one area for which we need to request a variance is:

Course Offerings — the BOS schedule in PowerSchool represents courses taken through direct teacher instruction; additional elective and core course offerings are available during the school day through APEX and Courseware. Students also have access to all courses offered at the Career Center or their area high school by requesting a hybrid schedule.

Local stakeholders have been involved throughout the design and implementation of BOS, including the areas addressed in the variance to standard application. This includes BOS staff, Advisory Board, community partners and district leadership as well as reports to the Board of Trustees and their final approval.

Trustee Hafer moved first for the approval of the application for a Variance to Standard to align with the approved Billings Opportunity School Public Charter School contract in order to demonstrate the innovative ways that BOS meets or exceeds the standards based on the mission and vision of the school. Trustee Terakedis seconded the motion. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

e. Variance to Standards — Billings Multilingual Academy

Our Public Charter Schools were approved by the Board of Public Education (BPE) in January 2024 to provide innovative opportunities for students aligned to their specific charter mission and vision. As charter schools opened in the fall of 2024 across the state, the BPE and OPI recognized areas where the innovative ways charter schools were meeting accreditation standards did not translate seamlessly into OPI's reporting systems. Innovations specific to each school address accreditation standards in approved, creative and effective ways that utilize district resources efficiently without diluting educational opportunities and still meeting or exceeding accreditation standards.

The recommended course of action from OPI and BPE is to apply for a Variance to Standard for each of our public charter schools to articulate how we are meeting or exceeding specific standards. Board approved applications are due to the OPI by October 13, 2025, including signatures from the Board Chair and Superintendent. Once approved, the BPE will recommend that the variances be added to each charter school's approved contract, so further applications are not necessary during the initial 5-year charter contract.

HS & MS BMA: The Billings Multilingual Academy has a hybrid schedule designed to expand opportunities for students without duplicating district resources and is aligned with research-based best practices for multilingual students to have access to targeted support as well as be immersed with their peers in their regular schools. The two areas for which we need to request a variance are:

- Librarian — all students have access to full library services at their area school, so no librarian is hired/assigned to the BMAs.
- Course Offerings — the BMA schedules in PowerSchool represent courses taken on campus at the BMAs to meet the unique needs of their student population; students have access to all courses required for graduation as well as for full accreditation and beyond at their area school.

Local stakeholders have been involved throughout the design and implementation of BMA, including the areas addressed in the variance to standard application. This includes BMA staff, Advisory Board, community partners and district leadership as well as reports to the Board of Trustees and their final approval.

Trustee Zack Terakedis moved first for the approval of the application for a Variance to Standard to align with the approved Public Charter School contract in order to demonstrate the innovative ways that the Billings Multilingual Academy meets or exceeds the standards based on the mission and vision of the school. Trustee Janna Hafer seconded the motion. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

f. Variance to Standard - Billings Early College School

Our Public Charter Schools were approved by the Board of Public Education (BPE) in January 2024 to provide innovative opportunities for students aligned to their specific charter mission and vision. As charter schools opened in the fall of 2024 across the state, the BPE and OPI recognized areas where the innovative ways charter schools were meeting accreditation standards did not translate seamlessly into OPI's reporting systems. Innovations specific to each school address accreditation standards in approved, creative and effective

ways that utilize district resources efficiently without diluting educational opportunities and still meeting or exceeding accreditation standards.

The recommended course of action from OPI and BPE is to apply for a Variance to Standard for each of our public charter schools to articulate how we are meeting or exceeding specific standards. Board approved applications are due to the OPI by October 13, 2025, including signatures from the Board Chair and Superintendent. Once approved, the BPE will recommend that the variances be added to each charter school's approved contract, so further applications are not necessary during the initial 5-year charter contract.

BECS: Billings Early College School has a hybrid schedule designed to expand opportunities for students without duplicating district resources and is aligned with the mission and vision of BECS. For example, maintaining access to music, world languages, etc.; alleviating the need to recreate high school science classrooms or gyms. The two areas for which we need to request a variance are:

- Librarian — all students have access to full library services at their area school, so no librarian is hired/assigned to BECS..
- Course Offerings — the BECS schedule in PowerSchool represents courses taken on campus at BECS that align with the mission and vision of the school; students have access to all courses required for graduation as well as for full accreditation and beyond at their area high school.

Local stakeholders have been involved throughout the design and implementation of BECS, including the areas addressed in the variance to standard application. This includes BECS staff, Advisory Board, and district leadership as well as reports to the Board of Trustees and their final approval.

Trustee Jourdan Guidice moved first for the approval of the application for a Variance to Standard to align with the approved Billings Early College School Public Charter School contract in order to demonstrate the innovative ways that BECS meets or exceeds the standards based on the mission and vision of the school. Trustee Tanya Ludwig seconded the motion. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

14. SPECIAL EDUCATION REPORT:

In August 2025, a Federal judge approved a settlement that mandates Montana provide public education for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) up to age 22, aligning the state with federal law. This settlement requires the Montana Office of Public Instruction to offer re-enrollment to students who graduated in spring 2025 without a regular diploma and allows eligible students to remain in school until they turn 22 or earn a standard diploma.

Kristi Flesch presented this report. She discussed the VIP Program (16 students) who learn vocational tasks. These students graduated with a modified curriculum. Our district was already functioning with this program before the approval of the mandate. This program is continuing to grow (with 20 students by the end of October). We are hiring another teacher. Funding is coming from the SB191 money. We are working with OPI on some of the final decisions, to include out-of-state students. Funding will be adequate, with the help of the Pre-employment Transition Services with the Dept of Health and Human Services. The concern right now is room to accommodate all of these

students on the third floor of Lincoln Center. We have two vans. Kristi foresees that we might run out of room, and need another van.

15. POLICY UPDATES:

a. Policy 3250 - Gun-Free Schools - Third Reading

The Board of Trustees has conferred to adjust the language in policy to align to [MCA § 45-8-361\(3\)\(b\)](#). Upon conclusion of these discussions, it has been determined that such authority shall reside exclusively with the Board of Trustees.

Trustee Teresa Larsen noticed that the last sentence was not added. Teresa Larsen moved to approve the amended Policy 3250 for Third Reading, with the addition of the following sentence: "The board of trustees of a district may grant persons and entities advanced permission to possess, carry or store a weapon in a school building related to education, as outlined in this policy." Trustee Janna Hafer seconded the motion. Jennifer Hoffman clearly stated that she would vote no on this motion, because she feels the superintendent and the board of trustees should both be working together, and not just the board of trustees. Additional discussion involved the alignment of the policy to state law. This third reading would have to fail, to go back and start over.

Roll Call: Trustees Teresa Larsen - Yes; Tanya Ludwig - No; Janna Hafer - Yes; Jennifer Hoffman - No; Jourdan Guidice - Yes; Brooke Wagner - No; Luke Ashmore - Yes; Zack Terakedis - Yes. There were five "yes" votes, and three "no" votes. The motion passed.

b. Policy 3416 – Administering Medicines to Students — First Reading

Policy 3416 governs the administration of medication to students during school hours and events. Updates align the policy with Montana law, clarify procedures for self-administration, authorize parent-designated glucagon administration, and permit schools to maintain stock emergency medications (epinephrine, naloxone, albuterol). Revisions also strengthen requirements for documentation, storage, and student safety.

Trustee Teresa Larsen moved to approve the amended Policy 3416, Administering Medicines to Students, for first reading. Trustee Janna Hafer seconded the motion. No discussion. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

c. Policy 7320 — Purchasing - Third Reading

At the July 17, 2025, Budget Committee meeting, proposed updates to Policy 7320 were discussed, including the addition of language addressing "split purchasing." The Committee agreed to forward the suggested revisions to Board Operations for consideration. Attached is a red-lined version of Policy 7320 reflecting the recommended edits.

Trustee Zack Terakedis moved to approve amended Policy 7320, Purchasing, on third reading. Trustee Jourdan Guidice seconded the motion. No discussion. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

d. Procedures 1130-P1; 1130-P2; 1130-P3

1130-P1: Committees General Procedures

1130-P2: Citizen Advisory Council

1130-P3: Budget Committee

The Board recently adopted revisions to Policy 1130. When reviewing its procedures, it was recognized that Procedures 1130-P1 and 1130-P3 are attended to in the new Policy 1130. However, 1130-P2 does not appear to be covered. Per legal counsel's review, we will retain Procedure 1130-P2, and rename it 1130-P1, and procedures 1130-P1 and 1130-P3 will be deleted. Please see the attached procedures for reference.

Daniela Walsh, Board Clerk, discussed this procedural adjustment. Policy 1130 has been updated, with procedures P-1 & P-3 being deleted, and the third one, Procedure P-2, updated to be named Policy 1130 P-1.

16. TRUSTEE SCHOOL VISITS:

Trustee Wagner visited Riverside MS today, and was very impressed. The building is inviting, warm, and beautiful. The decals on the windows show the pride of the school, but also provide security. Teachers, and staff are all invested in their kids.

Trustee Guidice visited Beartooth Elementary, with Principal Niemeyer and Teacher of the Year recipient Darla Stone. Loved the idea of "houses" and the great experience there.

Trustee Terakedis discussed visiting Bitterroot Elementary. It was very impressive how the principal handled some stressful situations at that moment. The school was spotless. He loved the signage to direct students and give reminders.

Trustee Ludwig went to Arrowhead Elementary where she visited the cafeteria — the staff appreciated the change in food service companies, but they needed an extra person. The kids are great!

Trustees Hafer and Larsen went to Alkali Creek Elementary and to Big Sky Elementary. They are piloting a program for Quest at Alkali Creek. Very impressive.

17. CONSENT AGENDA:

Trustee Zack Terakedis moved first to approve the Consent Agenda, with Trustee Tanya Ludwig seconding the motion. No discussion. All voted unanimously in the affirmative. The motion passed.

a. Renewal of Online Resources

The Board is asked to approve the one-year renewal of currently approved online STEM resources. These adoptions took place in 2019 with Board approval for a six-year online subscription to compliment our purchase of hard copy class sets of textbooks. This request is due to recent policy changes requiring consolidated purchases for one vendor over \$80,000.00 within a fiscal year.

The board approved the one-year renewal of the currently approved STEM resources.

b. Out of District September 2025

20-5-320 (Effective July 1, 2024) Out of District attendance by parent or guardian request with no extenuating circumstances. A child may be enrolled in and attend a school in a Montana school district that is outside the child's district of residence at the request of the child's parents or guardian as described in this section. If the trustees of the district of attendance approve of the child's attendance in a school of the district, the parent or guardian may be responsible for transportation.

The board approved the requested Out of District students identified on the attached list.

c. Billings Senior High School — Athletic and Performance Training

This summary is presented for the approval of the proposal from AMP for athletic training services and The Billings Clinic performance training services at Billings Senior High School.

The proposed collaboration aims to enhance the athletic training program, providing comprehensive support for student-athletes. AMP will deliver specialized athletic training services, ensuring the health and safety of our students through injury prevention, assessment, and rehabilitation. In parallel, The Billings Clinic will offer performance training services, focusing on improving the physical conditioning and overall performance of our athletes.

This partnership represents a significant commitment to the well-being and athletic development of our students. By implementing these services, we aim to create a safer and more effective athletic environment, fostering excellence in both performance and personal health.

Approval of this proposal was postponed due to administration desiring to further review the vendors in collaboration with the athletics and activities department. The item was removed from the consent agenda by the board.

d. Request to Establish New Student ECA - Girls Flag Football — Senior HS

Senior High School is requesting to establish a new student extracurricular account for their Girls Flag Football team. The account will keep money for meals, equipment, and/or technology, and any other team travel expenses for the season.

The board approved the Request to Establish a New Student ECA — Girls Flag Football — Senior HS.

e. Request to Establish New Student ECA - Girls Flag Football — Skyview HS

Skyview High School is asking to establish a new student extracurricular account for their Girls Flag Football team. The account will keep money from fundraising to pay for travel, equipment, and other gear.

The board approved the Request to Establish a New Student ECA — Girls Flag Football — Skyview HS.

f. Resolution to Sell/Dispose of District Personal Property

School District #2 personal property, in the form of library books, has fully depreciated and has become undesirable and unsuitable for School District purposes. Per Mont. Code Ann. Sec. 20-6-604(1), the Board of Trustees may sell or otherwise dispose of personal property upon a finding that the personal property has or is about to become abandoned, obsolete, undesirable, or unsuitable for school purposes. The Board of Trustees must adopt a resolution to sell or otherwise dispose of the personal property because it is or is about to become abandoned, obsolete, undesirable, or unsuitable for the school purposes of the district. Upon approval of the resolution, public notice must be provided pursuant to the requirements of Mont. Code Ann. Sec. 20-20-204, followed by a waiting period of 14 days to allow for taxpayer appeal. Per District Policy 7251, the trustees shall sell or dispose of the real or personal property in a reasonable manner determined to be in the best interest of the District.

To adopt the proposed Resolution regarding personal property that is abandoned, obsolete, undesirable, or unsuitable for the school purposes of Billings School District No. 2 and acknowledge that library books, as specified in the spreadsheets attached to the Resolution, may be otherwise disposed of by the Superintendent.

The board approved this line item.

g. Small Lot Sale - Online Auction 2025

Notification of intent to hold an online Small Lot Sale in October or November 2025 of items that are either abandoned, obsolete, undesirable, or unsuitable for use at SD2. If approved, advertising for the sale will take place following the Board meeting. Attached is the listing of items to be sold during the sale.

Per Mont. Code Ann. Sec. 20-6-604(1), the Board of Trustees may sell or otherwise dispose of personal property upon a finding that the personal property has or is about to become abandoned, obsolete, undesirable, or unsuitable for school purposes. Public notice must be provided pursuant to the requirements of Mont. Code Ann. Sec. 20-20-204, followed by a waiting period of 14 days to allow for taxpayer appeal. Per District Policy 7251, the trustees shall sell or dispose of the real or personal property in a reasonable manner

determined to be in the best interest of the District.

The board approved the process of public notification for the Billings Public Schools Warehouse online Small Lot Sale.

h. Personnel Report

Pursuant to Montana law, the Board of Trustees employs and dismisses District employees. MCA § 20-3-324. Each month, the Superintendent and our Human Resource Services staff present to the Board a personnel report that includes recommended hiring. The report also includes extracurricular activities, retirements, resignations, leaves of absence of one semester or longer, and, infrequently, recommended dismissals. The Board acts upon the Superintendent's employment recommendations by accepting the personnel report. The attached personnel report includes the Superintendent's current employment recommendations.

The board approved the Personnel Report.

i. Expenditures of Money - August 2025

The Expenditures of Money for the month of August were reviewed and authorized in accordance with District regulations and financial controls that have been established to ensure that all expenditures are in compliance with school, state, and federal laws, policies, and procedures. These procedures include authorization of expenditures by the appropriate supervisor and review by the finance department to ensure the expenditure has been authorized by budget and charged to the correct program. Attached are the detailed warrants for the month of August. In line with our unwavering dedication to transparency and responsibility, we place a strong emphasis on granting the community access to pertinent financial data.

We are pleased to outline the following avenues through which the public can obtain more detailed expenditure information:

1. District Clerk's Office at Lincoln Center: Starting every Friday afternoon before a Monday Board meeting, employee gross pay information will be made available for public review at the District Clerk's office located at Lincoln Center.
2. Board Meetings and Records Requests: Should you wish to access this data outside the regular schedule, you may do so by submitting a records request. For your convenience, a Chromebook will be provided to facilitate viewing information stored on a USB drive during Board meetings.
3. Minutes Approval and Documentation: To ensure clarity and accuracy, the approved meeting minutes will comprehensively document the options available for reviewing employee gross pay information.

Our primary objective is to foster a deeper understanding and trust within the community regarding our organizational operations, all while adhering strictly to relevant privacy laws and regulations.

See § 20-3-323 (2) MCA & § 20-9-213 (2) MCA.

Executive Summary:	
Claims (Paper Checks)	\$ 4,143,569.56
Procurement Card	\$ 311,077.23
Dragonfly Financial Payments (Referee Fees)	\$ -
EBMS ACH Payments (Third Party Admin for Health Plan)	\$ 2,721,454.42
8/7/2025	\$ 771,880.60
8/14/2025	\$ 974,868.79
8/21/2025	\$ 433,274.04
8/28/2025	\$ 541,430.99
MiCare Building Rental Monthly Payment	\$ 1,400.00
Total	\$ 7,177,501.21
Federal	\$ 194,154.54
Medicare	\$ 35,585.78
FICA	\$ 152,160.26
State	\$ 85,986.00
Payroll Tax Deposit	\$ 467,886.58
Payroll Warrants & Direct Deposits	\$ 1,745,906.44
Health Plan	\$ 48,905.45
125 Plan (Medical & Childcare FLEX)	\$ 20,892.30
AFLAC	\$ 273.28
Legal Services	\$ 177.54
Supplemental Life	\$ 6,294.18
PERS Payments	\$ 97,973.92
TRS Payments	\$ 99,469.08
Union Dues	
457 Plan	\$ 3,921.78
Tax Sheltered Annuity Plan	\$ 20,050.00
Education Foundation/United Way Donation	\$ 359.00
Child Support Processing Fee	\$ 40.00
Garnishments	\$ 1,153.63
Child Support Enforcement Division Garnishment	\$ 1,560.91
District Employee Cell Phone Stipends	\$ 21,513.54
Health Insurance Refund	\$ 818.65
Total Gross Employee Pay	\$ 2,537,196.28

The board approved Expenditures of Money for August 2025.

j. Financial and Investment Reports — August 2025 - Unaudited Investment Report

Billings Public Schools

The attached financial and investment reports are for the month of August 2025. They are unaudited.

The following procedures have not been completed for August 2025:

1. Reconciliation of cash/investments and warrants payable to the Yellowstone County Treasurer balances at month-end.
2. The recording of revenue collected by the Yellowstone County Treasurer during the month of August 2025.

- CS101/CS201 Account Expenditures by Fund – August 2025
- Investment Reports – August 2025 — Unaudited.

The board approved Financial Reports – August 2025, and Investment Report for August 2025 — Unaudited.

k. Minutes of Board Meetings

The board is asked to approve the board meeting minutes as follows:

- Special Board Meeting (Opening of 25-26 Budget), August 18, 2025
- Regular Board Meeting, August 18, 2025
- Special Board Meeting (Planning and Development), August 21, 2025
- Special Board Meeting (Budget Adoption), August 25, 2025
- Special Board Meeting (Planning and Development), September 2, 2025

Minutes are available at www.billingsschools.org under the School Board/Agendas & Minutes tab.

The board approved the board meeting minutes.

l. Minutes of Committee Meetings

The Board is asked to accept minutes of committee meetings as follows:

- Budget Committee Meeting, August 21, 2025
- Insurance Committee Meeting, August 26, 2025
- Stakeholder Relations Committee, September 2, 2025
- Board Operations Committee Meeting, September 2, 2025
- Professional Development Advisory Committee, September 2, 2025
- Performance Monitoring Committee Meeting, September 8, 2025
- Professional Development Advisory Committee, September 8, 2025
- Calendar Committee Meeting, September 11, 2025
- Budget Committee Meeting, September 11, 2025

The minutes are available on the website at www.billingsschools.org under the School Board/Agendas & Minutes tab.

The Board accepted minutes of committee meetings.

18. ADJOURNMENT:

There was no further discussion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM.

Jennifer Hoffman, Chair

Karen Yose, Recorder

Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Agenda

13.f.

Meeting Date: 09/15/2025

Item Title: Variance to Standards - Billings Early College School

Requested by: Jeril Hehn

Prepared by: Karen Yose

Recommended Action: Approve

Executive Summary:

Variance to Standard - Billings Early College School

Our Public Charter Schools were approved by the Board of Public Education (BPE) in January 2024 to provide innovative opportunities for students aligned to their specific charter mission and vision. As charter schools opened in the fall of 2024 across the state, the BPE and OPI recognized areas where the innovative ways charter schools were meeting accreditation standards did not translate seamlessly into OPI's reporting systems. Innovations specific to each school address accreditation standards in approved, creative and effective ways that utilize district resources efficiently without diluting educational opportunities and still meeting or exceeding accreditation standards.

The recommended course of action from OPI and BPE is to apply for a Variance to Standard for each of our public charter schools to articulate how we are meeting or exceeding specific standards. Board approved applications are due to the OPI by October 13, 2025, including signatures from the Board Chair and Superintendent. Once approved, the BPE will recommend that the variances be added to each charter school's approved contract, so further applications are not necessary during the initial 5-year charter contract.

BECS: Billings Early College School has a hybrid schedule designed to expand opportunities for students without duplicating district resources and is aligned with the mission and vision of BECS. For example, maintaining access to music, world languages, etc.; alleviating the need to recreate high school science classrooms or gyms. The two areas for which we need to request a variance are:

- Librarian — all students have access to full library services at their area school, so no librarian is hired/assigned to BECS..
- Course Offerings — the BECS schedule in PowerSchool represents courses taken on campus at BECS that align with the mission and vision of the school; students have access to all courses required for graduation as well as for full accreditation and beyond at their area high school.

Local stakeholders have been involved throughout the design and implementation of BECS, including the areas addressed in the variance to standard application. This includes BECS staff, Advisory Board, and district leadership as well as reports to the Board of Trustees and their final approval.

Suggested Action:

Approval of the application for a Variance to Standard to align with the approved Billings Early College School Public Charter School contract in order to demonstrate the innovative ways that BECS meets or exceeds the standards based on the mission and vision of the school.

Attachments

Variance to Standards - Billings Early College School - Application
