



## 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*

**DISTRICT:** *Elysian School District #23*

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

Elysian Middle School

---

1. Standard(s) for which a variance is requested, e.g., 10.55.709. If there is a program delivery standard, be sure to list it as well, e.g., 10.55.1801.

The standards for which the variance are requested are 10.55.705 Administrative Personnel: Assignment of School Administrators/Principals ; and 10.55.704 Administrative Personnel: Assignment of District Superintendent



**2. Describe the variance requested.**

Elysian School District is a County K-8 School District in Yellowstone County. It houses all K-8 students under one roof. The current overall population for the District (K-8) is 450 students. Under Montana rule 10.55.705 a Principal (1.0 FTE) can serve 250-549 students. Elysian is well under that maximum number and all within the same building. However, because we are a K-5 elementary school and 6-8 Middle school by the wording of the law we have to have a fulltime principal for our Elementary (population 303) and would have to hire a 0.25 principal for the Middle School (population 127).

Our certified teaching staff is 30.5 FTE which according to 10.55.705 would allow the Superintendent to fill this 0.25 position in the Middle School as Principal and cover the Superintendent role for the District. However, when the Principal position is counted as certified staff and then the superintendent's 0.25 FTE for the Principal position in the Middle School this pushes our certified FTE to 31.75 which does not allow for a split Superintendent role.

Due to the fact that the entire school district falls within the parameters of student population that an elementary school across the highway could operate under with a 1.0 FTE Principal, Elysian School District is requesting that same opportunity if it so chooses.

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

**a. Workable.**

The variance to have a 1.0 FTE Principal be the administrator for 450 students under one roof is workable at any other elementary school in the state under the above standard listed. Elysian School District and taxpayers should not be denied the opportunity to operate budgetarily as other districts with similar populations because they are considered 2 separate schools when they operate under the same roof, share 1 gym, 1 lunchroom and share hallways.

Elysian School District also houses the Superintendent in the same building as the school(s) which allows for administrative help when needed.



**b. Educationally sound.**

Elysian School District has and will maintain its high standards in education and supporting the learning of its student body. This is documented and measured through Elysians state and district assessments over the years. Student safety and well being are a top priority for the Elysian School District. Allowing our Principal to be the administrator of 250-549 students in the same building is allowed under the Montana Administrative Rules for other schools, Elysian is well under this maximum and will operate in the same manner it has over the past years with similar population levels.

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

This variance in no way disrupts or changes Elysian's academic plans or goals for its student body. Elysians Integrated School Action Plan remains in place and is unaffected by the allowance of this variance.



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

Elysians English Language Arts / Literacy and Math delivery standards are not impacted by this variance. Elysian's academic goals in these areas as detailed in our ISAP are still attainable and unaffected with allowing this variance.

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: Monica Zieske

Board Chair Signature: Monica Zieske Date: 10/13/2025

Superintendent Name: Luke Shelton

Superintendent Signature: Luke Shelton Date 10/9/25

Email the signed form to:

[OPIAccred@mt.gov](mailto:OPIAccred@mt.gov)



# Board of Trustees Meeting

## Elysian Elementary School

### November 4, 2025, 6:00PM

Board Chair Monica Zieske called to order at 6:00PM the meeting of the Board of Trustees of School District #23, Yellowstone County, Montana. Trustees present were Trustee Jake Frank, Trustee Ben Reichenbach and Trustee Summer Barrett. Trustee Shanna Herrick was absent. Superintendent Luke Shelton and Clerk Cindy Herman were present. Also, present were teachers Bethany Joy and Teryn Allie.

All present recited the pledge of allegiance.

#### Public Comment

Bethany Joy informed the board Elysian School received a grant from Tyler Technologies in the amount of \$3083.60. The grant was used to purchase four Lego robotic kits. She showed one of the Robots the student has built. She stated the kits come with books. Each kit has a workbook with lessons for the students. There is a rulebook which states the specifications for robots. The students have challenges and missions which must be accomplished. She gave a video presentation on the Lego league the students will be participating in.

#### Correspondence

There is no correspondence

#### Consent Agenda

October 1<sup>st</sup> board meeting minutes, Warrants (23028201-23028218 (September 30<sup>th</sup>), Warrants 23028219-23028233 (October 13<sup>th</sup>), Warrants 23028234-23028245 October 16<sup>th</sup>) warrants 23028246-2302861 (October 27<sup>th</sup>), Expenditure Report as of September 30, 2025, Activity Balances as of October 31, 2025.

Trustee Frank moved to approve the consent agenda. Trustee Barrett seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Out of District Student -Elysian Resident Attending Another District

Trustee Barrett moved to approve the Elysian resident student to attend Billings Public Schools. Trustee Reichenbach seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Out of District Student – Billings Public School Resident Attending Elysian School

Trustee Barrett moved to approve the Billings Public Schools resident student to attend Elysian School. Trustee Reichenbach seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Appoint Elysian School Representative to SBBURD Advisory Committee

After discussion it was decided to table this item until the December meeting. Chair Zieske asked Superintendent Shelton to send a notice to the community stating the board is looking for a community member to represent Elysian.

Transportation agreement for individual student.

Trustee Frank moved to approve the transportation agreement for the individual student. Trustee Reichenbach seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Coaching Stipends for Volleyball and Unified Eagles

Larissa Cook Volleyball Assistant Coach  
Hannah Trumbull Volleyball Assistant 2  
Kate Campbell Volleyball Assistant 2  
Kaydee Desjarlais Unified Eagles Basketball Skills Coach  
Tena Ruffatto Unified Eagles Basketball Skills Coach  
Ashleigh Lasater Unified Eagles Bowling Coach  
Teryn Allie Unified Eagles Track Coach  
PJ Lybeck Unified Eagles Bocce Coach

Trustee Barrett moved to approve the coaching stipend for volleyball and United Eagles coaches. Trustee Reichenbach seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Variance to Standards Application for 10.55.705 & 10.55.704

Superintendent Shelton explained to the board there is a variance due to having to count the principal. He was not aware the principal needs to be counted. He was only counting teachers.

Trustee Frank moved to approve the variance to standards application for 10.55.705 and 10.55.704. Trustee Barratt seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy 5120 Hiring Process and Criteria Third Reading

Trustee Barrett moved to approve the third reading of Policy 5120 Hiring Process and Criteria. Trustee Frank seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Review/Revise/Adopt Policies 2nd Reading

Policy 1007FE Multidistrict Agreements

Board Chair Zieske called for recess at 6:40pm to research the QEC (Quality Educator Payment).

Board Chair Zieske called the meeting back to order at 6:53pm.

After discussion it was decided to table until more information could be obtained.

Policy 1009FE Recruitment and Retention

Trustee Frank moved to approve the second reading of Policy 1009FE with a space added in between substitute and classroom. Trustee Reichenbach seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy 3110 Entrance Placement and Transfer

Trustee Frank moved to approve the second reading of Policy 3110. Trustee Barrett seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy 3121 Enrollment and Attendance

Trustee Frank moved to approve the second reading of Policy 3121. Trustee Barrett seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy 3141 Nonresident Student Enrollment

Trustee Frank moved to approve the second reading of Policy 3141. Trustee Reichenbach seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy 3310 Student Discipline

Trustee Barrett moved to approve the second reading of Policy 3310. Trustee Reichenbach seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy 3416 Administering Medicines to Students

Trustee Frank moved to approve the second reading of Policy 3416. Trustee Barrett seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy 2150 Suicide Awareness and Prevention

Trustee Barrett moved to approve the second reading of Policy 2150 with the updates to review every three years. Trustee Reichenbach seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Review/Revise/Adopt Policies 1st Reading

Policy 2050 Student Instruction

Trustee Frank moved to approve the first reading of Policy 2050. Trustee Reichenbach seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy 2100 School Year Calendar and Day

Trustee Reichenbach moved to approve the first reading of Policy 2100. Trustee Barrett seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy 2158 Parent/Family Engagement and Involvement in Education

Trustee Barrett moved to approve the first reading of Policy 2158. Trustee Reichenbach seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy 2334 Release Time for Religious Instruction

After discussion on the number of hours per week Trustee Frank suggested 1 hour. The board settled on 1 hour and removing the optional section.

Trustee Frank moved to approve the first reading of Policy 2334 so that it says religious instruction for 1 hour per week. That the note must be at least one hour be struck and the optional section not be included. Trustee Barrett seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy 2335 Human Sexuality Instruction and Identity Instruction

Superintendent Shelton explained the current policy. He explained the school does not have any identity instruction which would require parents to opt in. The exception would be if a student were to go to a counselor. Before the counselor could talk with the student, they would have to get an opt-in form from a parent. Superintendent Shelton stated he would work on the forms. After discussion it was decided to table this policy until the December meeting.

Policy 2335NF(1) Human Sexuality Instruction and Identity Instruction

After discussion it was decided to table this policy until the December meeting.

Policy 2335NF(2) Human Sexuality Instruction and Identity Instruction

After discussion it was decided to table this policy until the December meeting.

Policy 2335NF(3) Human Sexuality Instruction and Identity Instruction

After discussion it was decided to table this policy until the December meeting.

Policy 2450 Recognition of Native American Cultural Heritage

Trustee Barrett moved to approve the first reading of Policy 2450 with a coma after study. Trustee Frank seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy 5331 Insurance Benefits for Employees

Trustee Barrett moved to approve the first reading of Policy 5331. Trustee Reichenbach seconded the motion; all trustees present voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Recurring Items

2165 Early Literacy Targeted Intervention

2165F Early Literacy Targeted Intervention Form

There is no update on these items currently.

Items For Discussion

Hiring Process for Stipend Positions

Clerk Herman told the board she had asked on the form for School Business Officials for schools to share their process for hiring stipend positions. The schools who responded stated they post the position and go through the interview process even if there is only one applicant.

School Expansion

Superintendent Shelton stated he spoke with Mr. McCall regarding the development being done in the Elysian School District. Mr. McCall informed him the current phase of development is ending however new land has been purchased. He stated the plan is to build 90 homes per year for the next 5 or 6 years. Superintendent Shelton predicts Elysian can see an increase of 235 students in the next five years. He stated now is the time to start looking at expansion as it is usually a three-year process. He stated the process to start would be to form a committee to start looking into expansion and public relations. He stated last time Elysian did this the committee consisted of two board members, two staff members and two community members. His recommendation is to have the same process this time.

District Reports

Clerk's Report

Clerk Herman reported to the board she would be attending an election webinar as there have been several legislature changes concerning school elections. She also stated she talked with business office personnel at Belgrade School District on their procedure for accepting credit cards. They use Square as their credit card processor. She will be looking into it further. She also stated she signed up for the New Clerk Academy. This is a new form of support for new school business officials Montana Association of School Board Officials has developed. It is a two-year process to give additional support to new business managers and district clerks. She also will be auditing the class on Montana school finance Roger Heimbigner teaches at Rocky Mountain College.

Principal's Report

None

Superintendent's Report

Parent teacher conferences are scheduled. The school will be providing meals for the teachers and coffee and cookies for the parents. The PTO carnival had a great turn out. The insurance claim for the repairs due to the lightning strike is \$71,375.50. The claim is being sent to the underwriter. The boiler is up and working and the HAVAC has been fixed. Lab kits the Science teachers have chosen to use have been ordered. This year the curriculum rotation is Math. This is being worked on. He is looking to find a used truck with a plow to purchase. Having a larger plow would make snow removal in the parking lot go much faster. Elysian's health insurance quote from Bridged Health Alliance should be coming this week.

Meeting was adorned at 8:19pm

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_