



## **VARIANCES TO STANDARDS APPLICATION**

### **Renewal Application (three years)**

**Purpose:** ARM 10.55.604(4) "Following the second year of implementation of a variance to standards, the school district shall provide evidence to the Superintendent of Public Instruction that the methods selected by the district implement, meet, or exceed results that could have been achieved under established standards."

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**DUE DATE:**

**Second Monday in October**

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**COUNTY:** Lincoln

**DISTRICT:** Eureka Public Schools,

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

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

Eureka Elementary School:-

ARM 10.55.709 – Library Media Services-

ARM 10.55.710 – Guidance Standards

Eureka Middle School:-

ARM 10.55.710 – Guidance Standards

2. **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.)*



### **3. Describe the renewal variance requested.**

#### **Eureka Elementary School**

ARM 10.55.709 – Library Media Services:Eureka Elementary shares a licensed librarian with Eureka Middle School. The librarian provides direct instruction in the mornings at the elementary and in the afternoons at the middle school. A trained paraprofessional staffs the library during the librarians absence.

ARM 10.55.710 – Guidance Standards:The school employs a half-time licensed counselor and supplements services with a highly qualified paraprofessional.

#### **Eureka Middle School**

ARM 10.55.710 – Guidance Standards:The half-time licensed counselor splits time between elementary and middle school campuses.

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

#### **a. Workable.**

- a. Workable:Both schools are co-located, allowing efficient scheduling of licensed staff.
- b. Educationally Sound:Students receive instruction and services from certified professionals, supported by trained paraprofessionals.
- c. Meets or Exceeds Established Standards:Students have consistent access to certified professionals and support staff.
- d. Alignment with Program Standards:The proposed model aligns with ARM 10.55.1101– 10.55.2101.



**b. Educationally sound.**

- a. Specific Objectives:- Provide regular access to certified librarian instruction.- Ensure continuous library access via paraprofessional staffing.- Deliver counseling services through a licensed professional.
- b. Evidence of Effectiveness:- Students received uninterrupted library services.- Counseling access was maintained.- Families and staff report satisfaction.
- c. Adjustments Made:- Increased paraprofessional training.- Adjusted counselor schedule for middle school needs.


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

- Elementary: Certified librarian instruction, daily access to library, counseling services supported by a licensed counselor and paraprofessional.
- Middle School: Licensed counseling services, continuous support via coordinated scheduling.
- Overall: Successful in meeting academic and social-emotional needs.



**Required school district signatures:**

Board Chair Name: Raymond Flanagan

Board Chair Signature:  Date: 9/8/2025

Superintendent Name: Joel Graves

Superintendent Signature:  Date: 9/8/2025

**Email the signed form to:**

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



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

**5. Reflection upon initial variance:**

- a. Describe the specific measurable objectives that were listed in the initial variance application that demonstrated how the proposed variance was to meet or exceed the results under the current standard(s).**



**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.**

**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(s).**

too much detail.

- The goal is to provide sound economic information to the public to inform their decision-making.
- Any project would include new CTE facilities.
- There is a consideration to include siding repairs on the high school in the high school part of the bond.
- This is to prevent future issues with the building's condition.
- People's reasons for not voting yes don't have to do with kids.
- Hardly anyone brought up money or property taxes.
- The bus barn would be included in the CTE facility.

#### **Policy Review Committee – NONE**

**Review Agenda:** Chair Flanagan asked if there were any changes or additions to the agenda. One change to the agenda: Julie Bernardo switching from sub to paraprofessional.

Chair Flanagan then stated that the consent agenda can be approved by unanimous consent, passed unanimously.

#### **Consent Agenda (E)**

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**Motion:** Stephanie Vredenburg moved to approve the Occupational Therapy Contract – Sarah Murphy for 2025-2026, Chair Flanagan seconded, passed unanimously.

- Approve Ray Vorst as a substitute bus driver

Pending background check

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- Resignation – K. Hagadone

Superintendent Graves said she will be working with Head Start

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- e. Athletic Reports

High School AD Chad Dunn

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Baseball finished their season with a heart-breaking loss to AA Missoula Big Sky. The team finished 2 in our conference with a 11-2 record. Remember that baseball is all class, meaning B to AA schools all compete against each other. Eureka was the last class B school to be eliminated from competition.

Track: The boys long relay had its 4th consecutive season with All-State honors. The team consisted of Cole Sartori, Emmett Manges, Tim Schmidt, and Josh Lambertsen.

Cole Sartori also placed 6th place (All-State honors) in the 800 meter

Karli Campbell placed 3rd in the pole vault

Jesse Day on his very last throw launched his career best throw and beat his competition by ONE INCH to become a STATE CHAMPION. That throw of the javelin moved him up 4 spots up on the leader board.

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### **Fall Sports**

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5 Participants

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The Boy Cross Country Team competed at Libby this past Friday & they beat Libby. The Girls Cross Country Team also competed at Libby. They are a young team and did not do as well.

Our football team took care of business on Friday and beat a good Fairfield team.

Our volleyball team went undefeated and defended their opening season tip-off tournament in Mission. It is important to note that the team had a bus leave time of 4:45 am on Saturday and competed in the 1st game of the tournament. We have some tough young ladies.

The Rumble In the Jungle is this Saturday at North Point at 6:00 p.m.

#### Drug Testing Policy

- Within the first two weeks of the league, 25% of the activities are tested.
- By the end of the season, another 25% are tested.
- "Homecoming this week. Don't be dumb because you never know, it might be next week."
- Alcohol is very quick to leave the system, nicotine a couple weeks, harder drugs stay longer.
- Student will do research on the negative effects of nicotine and write a paper.
- They can still practice, but they can't compete for two weeks.
- After two weeks, they have to take another drug test at the parents' expense.

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Total - 35

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Girls - 2  
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Total Athletes - 72

#### **Motion:** Informational

- f. Approve Variance of Standards – OPI

- According to Montana administrative rules, schools with over 250 students must have a full-time librarian and counselor.
- The district shares a librarian between the middle school and elementary school and uses a paraprofessional when the librarian is unavailable.
- The elementary counselor went half-time, so a "highly qualified paraprofessional" was hired, which provides "one and a half people instead of just one person."
- The variance of standards application needs board minutes, Board Chair signature, and Superintendent signature before being sent in for approval.

Board Comment: Trustee Peterson asked about the paraprofessional transitioning into a licensed counselor position. Superintendent Graves this is unlikely to change in the next three years.

**Motion:** Jeff Peterson moved to approve the variance of standards for OPI, Chair Flanagan seconded, passed unanimously.

#### g. Discussion of School Shootings – Trustee Schmidt

- Trustee Schmidt is asking about the policy regarding teachers/administrators having concealed carry permits.
- Trustee Schmidt wants to know if the board should ignore the possibility of a school shooting or consider making concealed carry permits available.
- Superintendent Graves mentions that the district has reflex protect spray, which is a "very, very strong bad guy antidote."
- Superintendent Graves feels more comfortable with more people having the spray because there is less chance of accidental death.

#### Gun Ownership and Safety Concerns

- Chair Flanagan appreciates the discussion about gun ownership and acknowledges its difficulty.
- They express concern about trusting everyone with training and capacity, fearing being caught in a crossfire.
- There's worry that armed staff might create a false sense of security, overshadowing the importance of mental health support and creating a welcoming environment.

#### Insurance and Alternatives

- Trustee Vredenburg recalls that insurance coverage for armed staff exists but comes with an additional cost.
- Trustee Schmidt mentioned non-lethal options, referencing a "banana commercial" that discusses burnout and non-lethal solutions.
- Trustee Schmidt introduces Byrna, a non-lethal pistol legal in all 50 states, describing it as an air gun that can incapacitate someone for 25-30 minutes.

#### Byrna Pistol Details

- The Byrna pistol shoots a 60-caliber projectile at 400+ feet per second and can shoot through a coconut.
- It comes in different colors, including black (resembles a real gun) and orange (resembles a toy).
- Some models shoot tear gas in addition to kinetic projectiles.

#### School Safety Policies and Training

- Chair Flanagan reminded everyone of the school's policies to avoid school shootings, such as single points of entry and staff training.
- The school is focusing on "mandt training," emphasizing relational aspects and mental health, rather than "reflex protect training."
- The school is trying to schedule more "reflex protect training" (pepper spray) but is waiting for grant funding due to the \$5,500 cost.

#### Rave App and Emergency Alerts

- The school uses the Rave app for emergency communication, including a panic button that can be activated by anyone to alert different groups.
- The app has options for medical, 911, and other alerts.

#### Panic Button

- If a button is touched, it alerts everyone with the app, including local law enforcement.
- Real-world example: During a Veterans Day assembly, the elementary secretary needed assistance because a guy was attacking another guy in front of the elementary school.
- The secretary used the 911 "other" option, which notified the police.

#### Concealed Carry

- Trustee Schmidt said something should be done. And he's not opposed to at any level. Any level is massively better than no level.
- There is no policy of concealed carry; only law enforcement is allowed to have firearms on campus.

#### Reflex Protect Spray

- Reflex Protect spray is in multiple points in every building, especially at points of entry.
- It is not in every room because it is expensive and has an expiration date.
- Teachers receive training every year.
- The police and other law enforcement do active shooter drills in our schools frequently.

#### Safety Planning and Training

- The community should know that there is a safety plan in place.
- The safety plan was approved in May.
- Certain parts of the safety plan are not public knowledge.
- Reflex protection was brought in as part of a concern for school shootings.
- Over 80% of staff are already trained in Reflex Protect spray.

#### Concealed Carry

- Training people doesn't guarantee they won't freeze or panic in a real situation.
- There are concerns about who decides who gets to conceal carry.
- There are concerns about the non-lethal spray being lethal to elementary students.

#### Motion: Informational

#### h. Potential Bond Vote Discussion

- The goal is to have better numbers to work from the share numbers.
- Community meetings should be put together between November and February.
- There is an effort to get more audience at the October board meeting.
- Influential people and consistent attendees (including "no" votes with valid reasons) should be invited.
- If a spring vote is desired, the bond would have to be set by February.

#### **Motion: Informational**

#### i. Rerun Bond Election Discussion –

#### **Motion: Informational**

### **Superintendent Report**

#### **a. Superintendent Graves**

#### **Superintendent's Report September, 2025**

#### **Numbers:**

08/08/2023 **810**  
09/05/2023 **821** (284 EL, 226 MS, 311 HS)  
10/02/2023 **821** (282 EL, 229 MS, 310 HS)  
11/07/2023 **820** (283 EL, 229 MS, 309 HS)  
12/04/2023 **818** (285 EL, 226 MS, 307 HS)  
01/03/2024 **826** (287 EL, 229 MS, 310 HS)  
02/05/2024 **814** (288 EL, 232 MS, 294 HS)  
03/05/2024 **805** (283 EL, 234 MS, 288 HS)  
04/02/2024 **806** (284 EL, 234 MS, 288 HS)  
05/06/2024 **798** (282 EL, 231 MS, 285 HS)  
08/07/2024 **775** (259 EL, 234 MS, 282 HS)  
09/04/2024 **792** (266 EL, 251 MS, 275 HS)  
10/07/2024 **805** (266 EL, 262 MS, 277 HS)  
11/05/2024 **812** (269 EL, 262 MS, 281 HS)  
12/02/2024 **813** (269 EL, 259 MS, 285 HS)  
01/06/2025 **802** (263 EL, 259 MS, 280 HS)  
02/03/2025 **795** (260 EL, 265 MS, 270 HS)  
03/10/2025 **786** (259 EL, 259 MS, 268 HS)  
04/08/2025 **781** (259 EL, 259 MS, 263 HS)  
05/08/2025 **767** (256 EL, 255 MS, 256 HS)  
09/02/2025 **722** (234 EL, 233 MS, 255 HS)

#### **Building Bond/Facilities Update:**

Met with Dan McGee and Jackson Construction on 8/27 We're working on getting some more accurate and detailed comparison costs between a rebuild and remodel. Dan will be at our October meeting

Auditorium upgrades Speakers blown (insurance claim was filed) after the power came back on from the planned power outage. The replacements will include surge protectors.

Going to have to remove a couple fir trees behind the shop building. Grind stumps as well.

#### **Tiny House**

Sold, Going to Woods Bay near Bigfork.

Finished roof on Saturday.

The tiny house by the football field is being rented to school staff.

Wanted to thank Sandy Hall, Tiffin Hall, Ross Meester, and Mike Volsky for their help with the tiny houses.

#### **Title Grant**

Admin team worked on this last 9/3

### **Independent Contractor (Music)**

- There was an issue with hiring an independent contractor for the elementary music teacher position.
- The issue was resolved by the music teacher applying for emergency authorization.

### **Insurance**

MSPLIP Report attached

- The new insurance company provided an inspection report with recommendations to improve building safety and reduce insurance claims.
- The district will review the recommendations and implement changes where possible.

### **Enrollment down**

Down about 45 students district wide, 22 each in EI and MS

### **Elevator Update**

- The elevator installation is scheduled to begin on September 19th.
- A contingency plan is in place for a student to access all parts of the building until the elevator is installed.
- Fifth grade library classes are being held in a fifth-grade classroom.
- It's not easy accessing the gym and cafeteria.
- They need to make sure a student feels comfortable at the school before the weather turns bad because she has to go outside to get to the gym and lunchroom, using a ramp.

### **Community Concerns and MOUs**

- The speaker hasn't received any MOUs recently, just Facebook hate mail.
- There has never been a problem with the Trego community members or students.

### **Transportation and School District Lines**

- There's a section in the Montana code annotated that says you can't transport students across school district lines.
- The intent is to prevent schools from poaching kids from other districts.
- If a student has a sibling in high school, they can ride the bus.
- Superintendent Graves ran the situation by OPI and the county superintendents, and they are not doing anything wrong.
- Trego school doesn't want them to use Trego's bus stop or school for a bus stop, so they moved it to the Trego Merc.
- There probably could be at least one more transportation agreement.

### **Information Only - Next School Board meeting will be Monday October 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.**

Superintendent Graves will be gone next week.

### **Prep Next Agenda**

Approve Winter Coaches, Assistants & Volunteers for High School and Middle School 2025-2026

Open Bus Bids for possibly two new route buses

Potential Bond Vote

Discussion of School Safety

### **Closed Session – Superintendent Quarterly Evaluation**

Chair Flanagan said this meeting is an open meeting but the matter coming before the board tonight is a personal matter and it is my determination as follows:

1. That the matter involves individual privacy.
2. That such privacy demands protections of the individual and that little, if anything would be gained by publicly disclosing the information to be discussed; and
3. That the demands of the individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure in this matter.

Therefore, the meeting will be closed to the public while this matter is discussed. No action will be taken during the closed session.

Closed the meeting at 7:25 p.m. and reopened the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

**Adjournment**

**Motion:** Stephanie Vredenburg moved to adjourn, Bob Cuffe seconded, passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

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Board Chair

Date

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Clerk of Board

# **MINUTES - EUREKA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #13**

## **6:00 Regular meeting**

**September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025, LCHS Media Center**

**Board Members Present:** Raymond Flanagan, Bob Cuffe, Stephanie Vredenburg, Mike Sage (via phone), Jeff Peterson, Bri Van Orden (via phone) and Rodney Schmdit

**Board Members Absent:**

**Others Present:** Superintendent Graves, Clerk Escobar, Principal Dunn, Principal England, Principal Lucey, Traci Street for Tobacco Valley News, High School AD Chad Dunn

**Call to Order:** With a quorum present Chair Flanagan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Chair Flanagan asked Stephanie Vredenburg to lead the pledge.

**General Public Comment:** NONE

**General Board Comment:** NONE

**Communications:** NONE

### **Board Reports-**

#### **Facility Committee –**

- A facilities committee meeting was held with Mike Sage, Dan McGee (owners rep), and Jackson Construction Group.
- The purpose of the meeting was for Jackson Construction Group to gain a base understanding of the facilities to determine the feasibility of bonding for a new building and remodel versus two new buildings.
- Dan McGee provided a white paper outlining the process Jackson Construction would use to help decide what to move forward with.
- Jackson Construction will provide a "rough order of magnitude estimate" (ROM).
- The estimate will break down costs into categories such as structural, mechanical, bathrooms, and electrical.
- This will allow the board to see which items are affordable and important.
- The goal is to have the ROM by the October board meeting, with Dan McGee present to discuss it.
- The \$1.7 million lease estimate was specifically for the remodel and tear down of one elementary school and did not include the new building.
- There is a balance between providing enough information to the public and getting into

too much detail.

- The goal is to provide sound economic information to the public to inform their decision-making.
- Any project would include new CTE facilities.
- There is a consideration to include siding repairs on the high school in the high school part of the bond.
- This is to prevent future issues with the building's condition.
- People's reasons for not voting yes don't have to do with kids.
- Hardly anyone brought up money or property taxes.
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- Trustee Schmidt said something should be done. And he's not opposed to at any level. Any level is massively better than no level.
- There is no policy of concealed carry; only law enforcement is allowed to have firearms on campus.

#### Reflex Protect Spray

- Reflex Protect spray is in multiple points in every building, especially at points of entry.
- It is not in every room because it is expensive and has an expiration date.
- Teachers receive training every year.
- The police and other law enforcement do active shooter drills in our schools frequently.

#### Safety Planning and Training

- The community should know that there is a safety plan in place.
- The safety plan was approved in May.
- Certain parts of the safety plan are not public knowledge.
- Reflex protection was brought in as part of a concern for school shootings.
- Over 80% of staff are already trained in Reflex Protect spray.

#### Concealed Carry

- Training people doesn't guarantee they won't freeze or panic in a real situation.
- There are concerns about who decides who gets to conceal carry.
- There are concerns about the non-lethal spray being lethal to elementary students.

#### Motion: Informational

#### **h. Potential Bond Vote Discussion**

- The goal is to have better numbers to work from the share numbers.
- Community meetings should be put together between November and February.
- There is an effort to get more audience at the October board meeting.
- Influential people and consistent attendees (including "no" votes with valid reasons) should be invited.
- If a spring vote is desired, the bond would have to be set by February.

#### **Motion: Informational**

#### **i. Rerun Bond Election Discussion –**

#### **Motion: Informational**

#### **Superintendent Report**

#### **a. Superintendent Graves**

#### **Superintendent's Report September, 2025**

#### **Numbers:**

08/08/2023 **810**  
09/05/2023 **821** (284 EL, 226 MS, 311 HS)  
10/02/2023 **821** (282 EL, 229 MS, 310 HS)  
11/07/2023 **820** (283 EL, 229 MS, 309 HS)  
12/04/2023 **818** (285 EL, 226 MS, 307 HS)  
01/03/2024 **826** (287 EL, 229 MS, 310 HS)  
02/05/2024 **814** (288 EL, 232 MS, 294 HS)  
03/05/2024 **805** (283 EL, 234 MS, 288 HS)  
04/02/2024 **806** (284 EL, 234 MS, 288 HS)  
05/06/2024 **798** (282 EL, 231 MS, 285 HS)  
08/07/2024 **775** (259 EL, 234 MS, 282 HS)  
09/04/2024 **792** (266 EL, 251 MS, 275 HS)  
10/07/2024 **805** (266 EL, 262 MS, 277 HS)  
11/05/2024 **812** (269 EL, 262 MS, 281 HS)  
12/02/2024 **813** (269 EL, 259 MS, 285 HS)  
01/06/2025 **802** (263 EL, 259 MS, 280 HS)  
02/03/2025 **795** (260 EL, 265 MS, 270 HS)  
03/10/2025 **786** (259 EL, 259 MS, 268 HS)  
04/08/2025 **781** (259 EL, 259 MS, 263 HS)  
05/08/2025 **767** (256 EL, 255 MS, 256 HS)  
09/02/2025 **722** (234 EL, 233 MS, 255 HS)

#### **Building Bond/Facilities Update:**

Met with Dan McGee and Jackson Construction on 8/27 We're working on getting some more accurate and detailed comparison costs between a rebuild and remodel. Dan will be at our October meeting

Auditorium upgrades Speakers blown (insurance claim was filed) after the power came back on from the planned power outage. The replacements will include surge protectors.

Going to have to remove a couple fir trees behind the shop building. Grind stumps as well.

#### **Tiny House**

Sold, Going to Woods Bay near Bigfork.

Finished roof on Saturday.

The tiny house by the football field is being rented to school staff.

Wanted to thank Sandy Hall, Tiffin Hall, Ross Meester, and Mike Volsky for their help with the tiny houses.

#### **Title Grant**

Admin team worked on this last 9/3

**Independent Contractor (Music)**

- There was an issue with hiring an independent contractor for the elementary music teacher position.
- The issue was resolved by the music teacher applying for emergency authorization.

**Insurance**

MSPLIP Report attached

- The new insurance company provided an inspection report with recommendations to improve building safety and reduce insurance claims.
- The district will review the recommendations and implement changes where possible.

**Enrollment down**

Down about 45 students district wide, 22 each in EI and MS

**Elevator Update**

- The elevator installation is scheduled to begin on September 19th.
- A contingency plan is in place for a student to access all parts of the building until the elevator is installed.
- Fifth grade library classes are being held in a fifth-grade classroom.
- It's not easy accessing the gym and cafeteria.
- They need to make sure a student feels comfortable at the school before the weather turns bad because she has to go outside to get to the gym and lunchroom, using a ramp.

**Community Concerns and MOUs**

- The speaker hasn't received any MOUs recently, just Facebook hate mail.
- There has never been a problem with the Trego community members or students.

**Transportation and School District Lines**

- There's a section in the Montana code annotated that says you can't transport students across school district lines.
- The intent is to prevent schools from poaching kids from other districts.
- If a student has a sibling in high school, they can ride the bus.
- Superintendent Graves ran the situation by OPI and the county superintendents, and they are not doing anything wrong.
- Trego school doesn't want them to use Trego's bus stop or school for a bus stop, so they moved it to the Trego Merc.
- There probably could be at least one more transportation agreement.

**Information Only - Next School Board meeting will be Monday October 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.**

Superintendent Graves will be gone next week.

**Prep Next Agenda**

Approve Winter Coaches, Assistants & Volunteers for High School and Middle School 2025-2026

Open Bus Bids for possibly two new route buses

Potential Bond Vote

Discussion of School Safety

**Closed Session – Superintendent Quarterly Evaluation**

Chair Flanagan said this meeting is an open meeting but the matter coming before the board tonight is a personal matter and it is my determination as follows:

1. That the matter involves individual privacy.
2. That such privacy demands protections of the individual and that little, if anything would be gained by publicly disclosing the information to be discussed; and
3. That the demands of the individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure in this matter.

Therefore, the meeting will be closed to the public while this matter is discussed. No action will be taken during the closed session.

Closed the meeting at 7:25 p.m. and reopened the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

**Adjournment**

**Motion:** Stephanie Vredenburg moved to adjourn, Bob Cuffe seconded, passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

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Board Chair

Date

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Clerk of Board