



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."

DUE DATE:

Second Monday in October

COUNTY: Yellowstone

DISTRICT: Independent School District 52

LIST EACH SCHOOL THAT IS REQUESTING THE VARIANCE: Independent 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.

10.55.704 and 10.55.705

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.

Independent School District requests renewal of a previously approved variance allowing one administrator to serve as both superintendent (0.5 FTE) and principal (1.0 FTE), in place of the standard requirement for separate positions. This variance has been in place since 2017 and currently supports a student population of 290.

The original variance was sought after the district determined its budget could not sustain the additional administrative positions. The application process included input from teachers, parents, community members, and trustees, and updates were shared with the community through newsletters and board meetings.

The need for renewal of the variance is critical this year, as the district was unable to fill open teaching positions. In June, 2025, the District hired a full time principal and a .5 FTE superintendent. In August, the principal hired returned to the classroom to meet instructional needs of students, requiring the superintendent to continue serving in the combined superintendent/principal role. This structure ensures leadership continuity while prioritizing classroom staffing for the benefit of students.

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

a. Workable.

Since the 2021-2022 school year, the combined superintendent/principal position has provided a workable and effective leadership structure for our district. While one administrator carries both roles, additional support is built in by providing a stipend to a teacher who assists with key administrative tasks. This collaborative approach ensures that the daily needs of students and staff are met, while also allowing the district to make responsible use of limited resources.



b. Educationally sound.

Since the 2021-2022 school year, the combined superintendent/principal position has provided steady leadership that has supported both student learning and school operations. Under this structure, students have continued to achieve academically and show positive growth in behavior. Teachers and staff receive consistent guidance, and families benefit from clear communication and strong connections with school leadership. The district has successfully maintained all accreditation requirements, and this approach continues to serve the best interests of our students, families, staff, community, and Board of Trustees.

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

The superintendent/principal arrangement ensures the district continues to meet or exceed state standards by maintaining strong instructional leadership, ensuring compliance with accreditation requirements, and prioritizing resources for student learning. Academic and behavioral data demonstrate that students are achieving at or above expected levels. The district remains fully accredited under this structure.



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

The combined superintendent/principal model aligns with program standards by ensuring leadership is in place to support curriculum, instruction, student assessment, professional development, and school improvement planning. The structure allows for consistent oversight of all educational programs and compliance with state standards.

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).**

The reality is the district chose not to implement the variance until 2021-2022. Prior to 2021-2022, the district was able to contract with the previous administration at a significantly reduced amount to perform the duties of Superintendent at .5 FTE. However, the previous individual retired in June 2021. Therefore, an extension of the variance is desired by the district.

Since 2021-2022, the most critical objective of this variance request was to reduce the cost of school administration.

In addition, there are numerous performance objectives that can be met which can be carried out by one administrator.

A few of those are listed below:

1. The Superintendent/Principal shall attend 100% of School Board meetings serving the role of advisor as prescribed in School Board policy.
2. The Superintendent/Principal shall conduct at least one formal observation of each of the 23 FTE certified staff on an annual basis.
3. The Superintendent/Principal shall complete all reports required by the Office of Public Instruction.
4. The Superintendent/Principal shall monitor student behavior.



- 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.**

Evidence from student performance data, accreditation reports, and school climate surveys show the district has maintained high academic outcomes and positive student behavior under the combined role. The school has remained in good standing with accreditation and continues to meet or exceed benchmarks set under state accreditation standards.

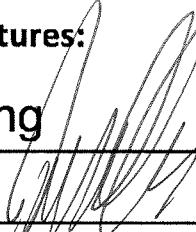
- c. After reflection on the initial variance, describe any adjustments that need to be made to meet the specific needs of the students in the school(s).**

The district continues to review staffing and administrative needs annually. While the combined role has proven effective, the district has added a stipend-supported teacher-leader to assist with daily administrative tasks, ensuring timely support for staff and students. This adjustment allows the superintendent/principal to balance district-wide leadership with building-level needs.

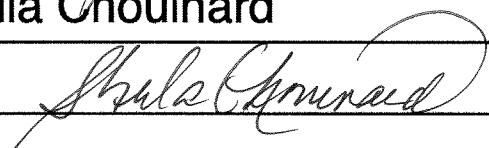


Required school district signatures:

Board Chair Name: Jake Detling

Board Chair Signature:  Date: 9/22/25

Superintendent Name: Sheila Chouinard

Superintendent Signature:  Date 9/22/25

Email the signed form to:

OPIAccred@mt.gov

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER 22, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, Independent School District #52, Yellowstone County, Montana was held in the library. The meeting was called to order by Chair Jake Detling at 7:40 p.m.

Members present: Jake Detling, Amy Lierow, Jamee Wilson and Adam Zelka. Brett Weisz participated via telephone. Also present were Superintendent/Principal Sheila Chouinard and District Clerk Debi Orelup.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2025 meeting.

Motion – Jamee Wilson / Second – Brett Weisz Unanimous vote

COMMUNICATIONS

Building Use Requests

Levi Newman (coach) requests approval to use the gym for basketball practice October 21, 2025 - March 2026 on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings 7:30-9:00 PM. Amy and Joe Lierow are the responsible parties.

Chad Davis (coach) requests approval to use the gym for basketball practice October 2025 - February 2026 on Monday evenings 6:00-8:00 PM. Emily Hedin is the responsible party.

A motion was made to approve the requests, pending receipt of the necessary insurance certificate for Chad Davis's team.

Motion – Jamee Wilson / Second – Brett Weisz Unanimous vote

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

- Current enrollment 291 students
- AIMSweb Fall testing completed
- Title I Fall parent meeting to be hosted by Rebecca Reinker at 8:00 AM on Sept. 25. Independent School hosts a Title I Targeted program.
- K12MT conducted Google Workspace security audit
- Sheila has confirmation that Sydney Rude will complete her Junior Field Experience with Mr. Christofferson with the intent for her to complete her student teaching with Ms. Larsen as her mentor under the Emergency Authorization in the Spring of 2026. This would allow for Buck to move into the Principal position.

OLD BUSINESS

Consider Internet Options

Sheila reported that Jared Kerr the Network/Computer Systems Administrator with MSU-Billings visited the school to assess the district's current internet set up and recommend a cost-effective internet provider to increase our internet speed. *A motion was made to give Sheila the authority to select an internet provider best suited to improve the district's internet service.*

Motion – Adam Zelka / Second – Brett Weisz Unanimous vote

Consider Additional Costs for Acquisition of Donated Property

Sheila stated Stacey Hellekson is unable to complete a formal assessment of the property but is willing to provide an informal assessment. Sheila received two quotes for completing the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment of the property. Brandon Kingsbury with Tetra Tech quoted \$4,500 with a timeline of 30-60 days and Jason Vollmer with ECS quoted \$3,850 with a timeline of 30 days.

A motion was made to request Stacey Hellekson proceed with an informal assessment of the property as well as the document search at a cost of \$400.

Motion – Adam Zelka / Second – Amy Lierow Unanimous vote

NEW BUSINESS

Hire School Counselor

Sheila recommends hiring Amy Weisz for the school counselor position. Amy is working with MSU-Billings to apply for a Class 5 School Counselor license. She has a degree in psychology and is currently enrolled in the Master of Education: School Counseling (K-12). Trustee Brett Weisz is Amy's husband which requires specific measures be taken prior to the consideration of employing her. MTSBA outlined the steps as follows:

1. Written notice of the time and place for the intended action must be published at least 15 days prior to the intended action in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the school district is located.
2. The vote to hire must be approved by all the trustees, with the exception of any trustee who is related to the person being appointed and who must abstain from voting for the appointment. This has to be a favorable vote by every remaining trustee, and everyone must be present.

Sheila stated the Notice of Intended Appointment was published in the Yellowstone County News for the past three weeks. It was also posted on ParentSquare on September 1, 2025.

A motion was made to approve hiring Amy Weisz as the School Counselor.

Jake, Jamee, Adam and Amy voted in favor of the motion and Brett abstained from voting. The motion passed by majority vote.

Hire Special Education Paraprofessional

Sheila would like to delay hiring a paraprofessional at this time.

Review Evacuation and Safety Plan

Sheila reported the School Fire Evacuation and Safety Plan has been updated to reflect the change in the evacuation routes due to the unplanned removal of a bridge in the Yellowstone County Park behind the school. Sheila and Buck met with a representative from the School Pipeline Safety Partnership (SPSP) program sponsored by Phillips 66. Independent School is identified as a High-Consequence Area (HCA), the SPSP provides safety and emergency planning resources to support the district's preparedness efforts. There is a crude oil line on the west side of highway 89 across from Independent School. SPSP recommends an evacuation distance of at least 1,000 feet away from the pipeline. It would benefit Independent School to promote the reinstallation of a bridge across the creek behind the school in the Yellowstone County Park. This would provide the safest way to transport the students and staff to the Saratoga Trail neighborhood. Sheila asked Phillips 66 if they would be willing to pay to replace the bridge on the back side of the school property. They requested an estimated cost to replace the bridge in addition to reviewing the bridge plans. The Board requested Sheila contact the necessary County authorities regarding the necessity of replacing the bridge since it was removed without proper approval and how it has impacted the school's evacuation route. Sheila will report any new information to the Board at the upcoming meetings.

Reapplication for Administrative Variance

Sheila recommends renewal of a previously approved variance allowing one administrator to serve as both the Superintendent (0.5 FTE) and Principal (1.0 FTE) in place of the standard requirement for separate positions. This variance has been in place since 2017 and currently supports a student population of 290. The District would remain fully accredited under this structure. ***A motion was made to approve the reapplication of the administrative variance.***

Motion - Adam Zelka / Second - Jamee Wilson Unanimous vote

MTSBA Board Policy Updates

Approve 1st Reading: 3310, 5252, 8560

A motion was made to approve the first reading of the three stated policies.

Motion – Jamee Wilson / Second – Adam Zelka Unanimous vote

Approve 1st Reading: 2158, 2165NF, 3100

A motion was made to approve the first reading of the three stated policies.

Motion – Adam Zelka / Second – Brett Weiss Unanimous vote

Table the following policies: 1007FE, 2050, 2165NF, 3121, 3141

Delete the following policies: None

The next regular School Board meeting is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on Monday, October 13, 2025.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

Debi Orelup, District Clerk

Jake Detling, Board Chair

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MTSBA Board Policy Updates

Approve 1st Reading: 3310, 5252, 8560

A motion was made to approve the first reading of the three stated policies.

Motion - Jamee Wilson / Second - Adam Zelka Unanimous vote

Approve 1st Reading: 2100, 2158, 2165

A motion was made to approve the first reading of the three stated policies.

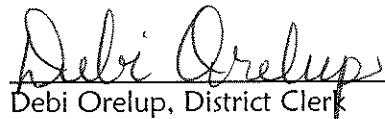
Motion - Adam Zelka / Second - Brett Weisz Unanimous vote

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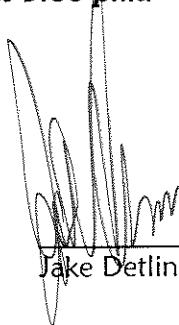
Delete the following policies: None

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A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:55 p.m.


Debi Orelup

Debi Orelup, District Clerk


Jake Detling

Jake Detling, Board Chair

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #52
Regular School Board Meeting
Monday, September 22, 2025
7:30 p.m.

AGENDA

- 1. *Roll Call***
- 2. *Approval of Minutes***
- 3. *Old Business***
 - A. Consider Internet Options*
 - B. Consider Additional Costs for Acquisition of Donated Property*
- 4. *Communications***
 - A. Nonresident Student Enrollment Requests*
 - B. Building Use Requests*
 - C. Public Comment (non-agenda items)*
- 5. *Committee Reports***
- 6. *Administration Report***
- 7. *New Business***
 - A. Hire School Counselor*
 - B. Hire Special Education Paraprofessional*
 - C. Update Board Policies*
 - D. Review Evacuation and Safety Plan*
 - E. Reapplication for Administrative Variance*
- 8. *Executive Session***

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #52
Regular School Board Meeting
Monday, September 22, 2025
7:30 p.m.

Superintendent Board Report

Sheila Chouinard, Superintendent/Principal

Current Class Sizes – September 18, 2025

K -- 38/40 max	Accreditation K-2 -- 20/per class
1st – 26/40 max	
2nd – 41/40 max	
3rd – 40/56 max	Accreditation 3-4 -- 28/per class
4th – 47/56 max	
5th – 48/60 max	Accreditation 5-6 -- 30/per class
6th – 52/60 max	
Total 291	

Administration Report

Aimsweb Plus Fall Benchmark Testing

The fall benchmark testing has been completed. Using the procedures outlined through our Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS) program and Title IA manual, students not scoring at the 50%ile or higher will be considered for placement in our Title I program and/or receive interventions to increase their academic skills.

The Ms. Reinker will host the fall Title I Program Parent Meeting on Thursday, September 25 at 8 AM. Independent School hosts a Title I Targeted program.

Requested review of Google Workspace by K12MT

K12MT was hired to 1) perform a Google Workspace security audit and document the results including recommendations on remediation strategies. 2) discuss MFA rollout strategy and ensure MFA compliance and K12 Montana best practices. 3) Configure basic SPF, DKIM, DMARC and train staff in audit mode.

Student Teacher/Emergency Authorization Spring 2025

I have received confirmation that Sydney Rude will complete her Junior Field Experience at Independent School with Mr. Christofferson. I am working with MSU-Billings for Sydney Rude to complete her student teaching under the Emergency Authorization in the Spring of 2026 which would allow Mr. Christofferson to move into the Principal position.

Old Business

A. Consider Internet Options

Jared Kerr, Network/Computer Systems Administrator with MSU-Billings, provided notes from his observation of our equipment.

He recommended moving to Spectrum Business Fiber, Symmetric 1 gig. He also recommended adding additional Access Points (APs) and mounting the APs on the ceiling for better distribution of internet service.

In review,

Spectrum - If they are keeping a modem, the only option would be to move to 1 Gig on Ei. If moving to fiber, Spectrum will fund the installation and the District would sign a contract

Viking Broadband - Fixed terrestrial wireless to towers. Provides a commercial account with static IP \$120/month \$199 install - 500Mbps - No Contract.

Blue Creek and Elysian schools both have fiber options. Both use E-Rate to help with the costs.

I have reached out to an E-Rate consultant to determine if E-Rate would benefit Independent.

B. Consider Additional Costs for Acquisition of Donated Property

We have two quotes to complete the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment.

Brandon Kingsbury with Tetra Tech quoted \$4500 with a timeline of 30-60 days.

Jason Vollmer with ECS will perform this Phase I ESA work for a fee of \$3,850 with a timeline of approximately 30 days.

Stacey Hellekson is not able to complete a formal assessment. However, she is willing to review the property and provide an informal assessment.

Communications

A. Nonresident Student Enrollment Requests

B. Building Use Requests

We have a building use request from Levi Newman, Joe Lierow, and Amy Lierow for use of the gym from November 20, 2025 through March 31, 2026 for twice a week basketball practice. Proof of liability insurance provided.

C. Public Comment (non-agenda items)

New Business

A. Hire School Counselor

I recommend the hiring of Amy Weisz as a school counselor. Ms. Weisz is working with MSU-Billings to apply for Class 5 School Counselor license. Amy has a degree in psychology and is currently enrolled in the Master of Education: School Counseling (K-12).

As the spouse of a board member, MTBSA has outlined the steps prior to consideration of Amy's employment.

The steps required to hire on an ongoing basis are as follows:

1. Written notice of the time and place for the intended action must be published at least 15 days prior to the intended action in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the school district is located.

2. The vote to hire must be approved by all the trustees, with the exception of any trustee who is related to the person being appointed and who must abstain from voting for the appointment. This has to be a favorable vote by every remaining trustee, and everyone must be present.

The Notice of Intended Appointment was published in the Yellowstone County News for the past three weeks. It was also posted on ParentSquare on September 1, 2025.

C. Hire Special Education Paraprofessional

I recommend the hiring of Heather Wick to cover the maternity leave of Rochelle Phelps. We are expecting the leave to last 8 to 10 weeks depending on the health of the baby. Ms. Wick would receive \$16.60/per hour for 4.5 hours per day.

D. Update Board Policies

MTSBA has provided multiple policy changes to reflect the changes in the last Legislative session. This will be the first reading for the policies. A summary of the MTSBA's most time critical updates is included. A link to the folder of MTSBA recommended policies is [here](#).

E. Review Evacuation and Safety Plan

The Independent School Fire Evacuation and Safety Plan has been updated to reflect the change in evacuation routes due to the removal of the bridge in the Yellowstone County Park behind the school.

Mr. Christofferson and I met with Jacob Mount, a representative from the School Pipeline Safety Partnership program, sponsored by Phillips 66. Because Independent School is identified as a High-Consequence Area (HCA), the School Pipeline Safety Partnership provides safety and emergency planning resources to support our preparedness efforts. I have included a summary of their information in the safety manual. The School Pipeline Safety Partnership recommends an evacuation distance of at least 1000 feet away from the pipeline which runs along the west side of the highway. To meet this criteria, it would benefit Independent School to promote the reinstallation of a bridge across the creek behind the school in the Yellowstone County Park. This would provide the safest way to transport the school population to the Saratoga neighborhood as outlined in the evacuation and safety plan. I have reached out to Phillips 66 to determine if they would support the funding of a new bridge.

The Fire Evacuation and Safety Plan is shared with all staff and practiced by staff and students according to the law.

20-1-402. Number of disaster drills required -- time of drills to vary. There must be at least eight disaster drills a year in a school. Drills must be held at different hours of the day or evening to avoid distinction between drills and actual disasters.

F. Reapplication for Administrative Variance

I recommend the adoption of the Variances to Standards Application which is the reapplication for the administrative variance for 10.55.704 District Superintendent FTE and 10.55.705 School Principal FTE. In this application, Independent School District requests renewal of a previously approved variance allowing one administrator to serve as both the superintendent (0.5 FTE) and principal (1.0 FTE), in place of the standard requirement for separate positions. This variance has been in place since 2017 and currently supports a student population of 290. The District would remain fully accredited under this structure.

8. *Executive Session*

MTSBA Policy Notes

The MTSBA Policy Services team has prepared updates to the MTSBA Model Policy manual. The suggested updates were developed primarily in response to completion of the most recent legislative session. We've uploaded a PDF into the [Policy Notes Library](#) of each policy update.

The specific policies recommended to be updated are outlined below. Districts that have previously adopted an existing model policy may adopt proposed changes as amendments to the current policy. If a district has not previously adopted an existing model policy, it may do so now with the applicable changes. All the policies will require the number of readings specified in each district's Policy 1310.

Time Critical Updates: The following discussed policies are based on bills passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor with immediate effect or an effective date of July 1. As a result, these proposed updates are time sensitive:

1. HB745: This bill requires adoption by school districts of a student safety policy requiring a fingerprint criminal history check prior to any individual (employees, volunteers, chaperones, etc.) having unsupervised contact with students. In order to comply with the bill, we are recommending adoption of a new Policy 3655, as well as amendments to Policies 5120P, 5122, and 5430NF.
2. HB471: This bill amends the requirements for mandatory notices to parents regarding human sexuality instruction and adds requirements related to identity instruction. In order to comply with the bill, we are recommending amendment of Policy 2335.
3. HB819: This bill prohibits the display of flags or banners on District property other than specific types of flags identified in the bill. In order to comply with the bill, we are recommending adoption of a new Policy 8560.
4. HB400: This bill prohibits adverse employment action or student disciplinary action against an individual that declines to provide their own pronouns or declines to address another person by a name other than their legal name or by using a pronoun inconsistent with the person's sex. In order to comply with this bill, we are recommending amendments to Policies 3310 and 5255.
5. HB600, SB211, and SB502: These bills collectively address emergency administration of asthma medications and opioid antagonists. In order to comply with this bill, we are recommending amendments to Policy 3416.
6. SB278: This bill provides funding in the form of advanced opportunity aid and the quality educator payment for an advanced opportunity facilitator position of employment. In order to comply with this bill, we are recommending amendments to Policy 1015FE.
7. HB338 & SB35: These bills collectively add math to early targeted intervention, exceptional circumstances, and revise out of district student requirements for children enrolled in a jumpstart early intervention program. In order to comply with these bills, we are recommending amendments to Policies 2158, 2165, 2165NF, 3110, and 3121.
8. HB631 & SB297: These bills collective amend definitions for the pupil online protection act. In order to comply with these bills, we recommend amendment of Policy 3650.
9. HB226: This bill requires confirmation of citizenship or work authorization status. In order to comply with this bill, we are recommending adoption of a new Policy 5123.
10. HB250: This bill revises provisions related to out-of-district attendance. In order to comply with this bill, we are recommending amendments to Policies 2050 and 3141.
11. HB567: This bill generally amends provisions related to multi-district agreements and provides an incentive for county-wide multi-district agreements. In order to comply with the bill, we are recommending amendment of Policy 1007FE.

12. HB602: This bill specifies that nonrenewal of a nontenured teacher for financial reasons is nonrenewal without cause and requires the matter to be placed on a Board meeting agenda before June 1. In order to comply with this bill, we are recommending adoption of a new Policy 5252.
13. HB359: This bill amends the requirement for hiring a recently retired teacher to allow for hiring a retired teacher who is employed to mentor a newly hired teacher. In order to comply with this bill, we are recommending amendment of Policy 1009FE.
14. HB651: This bill permits installation of temporary door locking devices for use during shelter-in-place or emergency lockdown situations with violation of fire codes. In order to comply with this bill, we are recommending amendment of Policy 8301.
15. HB343: This bill requires districts to allow for release of students from school for religious instruction at the written request of the parent and allows districts to award academic credit for completion of religious instruction under certain circumstances. In order to comply with this bill, we are recommending amendment of Policy 2334.
16. HB381: This bill allows for students to earn credits towards graduation for working in congregate-care facilities, child-care facilities, or school-age programs under certain circumstances. In order to comply with this Policy, we recommend amendment of Policy 2600.
17. HB591: This bill adds "Freedom Week" to the list of commemorative days set forth in § 20-1-306, MCA, in order "to educate students about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of the United States and the values on which the United States was founded." In order to comply with this bill, we recommend amendment of Policy 2100.
18. SB181: This bill revises provisions related to Indian Education for All. In order to comply with this bill, we are recommending amendment of Policy 2450.
19. SB369: This bill revises provisions related to suicide training and prevention. In order to comply with this bill, we recommend amendment of Policy 2150.

The above list is not a complete list of updates based on the legislative session, but includes the most time-sensitive bills. We will provide an additional update in the future, which will address additional bills passed by the Legislature as well as other recommended updates.



Sheila Chouinard <chouinard@independent.k12.mt.us>

Network Recommendations

2 messages

Brett Weisz <trusteeweisz@independent.k12.mt.us>
To: Sheila Chouinard <chouinard@independent.k12.mt.us>

Tue, Sep 2, 2025 at 12:00 PM

Hi Sheila,

Here's Jared's write up from our visit.

Quick notes from my observation the other day

Primary upgrades to consider

Move to Spectrum Business Fiber, Symmetric 1gig

- Cable services will always lack in upload speeds causing bandwidth contention with the security cameras, current upload speed is about 12mbps
- Cameras appeared to be at least 720p if not 1080p, each camera could potentially need 4-8mbps per camera for upload.
- No local servers, all services are cloud based, only reliable fast network connectivity to the internet is needed.

More Access points

- Current - Aruba Instant AP 305, 10 total
- Plan for 1 AP per classroom, with possible additional APs in hallways, to support a mostly wireless device deployment
- Mount from Ceiling or away from obstructions such as computers/printers/walls if left on tables
 - This appears to be the ceiling mount bracket listed in the manual for the AP, lot of 10 for \$30, used on t-grid ceiling, may be possible to use on a flat surface, not familiar with Aruba's APs and mounting methods, verify
 - <https://www.ebay.com/itm/166299994486>
- APIN0305 is an older model, can find some on Ebay (model I saw at front desk) for around \$25, not sure if these would just be plug and play or if anything additional would be needed
 - <https://www.ebay.com/itm/256963507622>
- Refresh/New in box around \$65-100
 - https://www.serversupply.com/NETWORKING/WIRELESS/WIRELESS%201.7GBPS/HPE/JX946A_289995.htm
 - <https://www.amazon.com/Instant-Access-IAP-305-US-Entry-Level-802-11ac/dp/B07Q4G1M1K>
- This may be a newer version of the 0305, APIN0335, for about \$40-\$100
 - <https://www.ebay.com/itm/296482178747>
 - <https://www.ebay.com/itm/266991529805> (5x for \$100)
- Would be best to consult with Hi-Point networks (or vendor/MSP of choice) on APs for their

recommendations and/or pricing, the above Aruba 300 IAPs do appear to be End of Life/Sale, and newer Aruba 500 series Instant APs appear to retail at \$1200 from a quick search

Check distance between the two closets, if possible, identify the conduit run through building for accuracy

- 100m/300ft is about the longest distance the ethernet standard supports, any further may work but could be an issue at 1gbps speeds between the two.
- Fiber between closets would be ideal regardless of distance but has a steep labor cost for installation of fiber, in addition to optic SFP components for each switch and the fiber itself.

Jared Kerr

Network/Computer Systems Administrator

Montana State University Billings

[1500 University Drive, McMullen Hall 300, Billings, MT, 59101](#)

406-247-5700

*IT staff at MSU-Billings will *NEVER* ask you for your password or other personal information via email. Please ignore and delete all email messages requesting such information.*

Sheila Chouinard <chouinard@independent.k12.mt.us>
To: Brett Weisz <trusteeweisz@independent.k12.mt.us>

Tue, Sep 2, 2025 at 1:58 PM

Hi Brett,

Thank you for sharing the information. I appreciate that you and Jared could make it out. I realize your time is valuable.

The distance between the closets is 200 feet or 61 meters.

~Sheila

Sheila Chouinard
Superintendent
Independent School District
Billings, Montana

[Quoted text hidden]

Notice of Intended Appointment - School Counselor - Monday, September 22, 2025 at 7:00 PM

Sheila Chouinard • 19 days ago • Monday, Sep 1 at 3:07 PM • **Independent School**

Notice of Intended Appointment

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Trustees of Independent School District 52 intends to consider the appointment of Amy Weisz to the position of school counselor. Amy Weisz is related to Board Trustee Brett Weisz, who will abstain from voting on this appointment.

The intended action will be discussed and voted upon during the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees scheduled for Monday, September 22, 2025 at 7:00 PM. The meeting will be held at Independent School.

This notice is provided in compliance with Montana Code Ann., § 2-302(3).

All interested parties are invited to attend.

Independent School District 52

Monday, September 1, 2025



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."

DUE DATE:

Second Monday in October

COUNTY: Yellowstone

DISTRICT: Independent School District 52

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

10.55.704 and 10.55.705

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.

Independent School District requests renewal of a previously approved variance allowing one administrator to serve as both superintendent (0.5 FTE) and principal (1.0 FTE), in place of the standard requirement for separate positions. This variance has been in place since 2017 and currently supports a student population of 290.

The original variance was sought after the district determined its budget could not sustain the additional administrative positions. The application process included input from teachers, parents, community members, and trustees, and updates were shared with the community through newsletters and board meetings.

The need for renewal of the variance is critical this year, as the district was unable to fill open teaching positions. In June, 2025, the District hired a full time principal and a .5 FTE superintendent. In August, the principal hired returned to the classroom to meet instructional needs of students, requiring the superintendent to continue serving in the combined superintendent/principal role. This structure ensures leadership continuity while prioritizing classroom staffing for the benefit of students.

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

a. Workable.

Since the 2021-2022 school year, the combined superintendent/principal position has provided a workable and effective leadership structure for our district. While one administrator carries both roles, additional support is built in by providing a stipend to a teacher who assists with key administrative tasks. This collaborative approach ensures that the daily needs of students and staff are met, while also allowing the district to make responsible use of limited resources.



b. Educationally sound.

Since the 2021-2022 school year, the combined superintendent/principal position has provided steady leadership that has supported both student learning and school operations. Under this structure, students have continued to achieve academically and show positive growth in behavior. Teachers and staff receive consistent guidance, and families benefit from clear communication and strong connections with school leadership. The district has successfully maintained all accreditation requirements, and this approach continues to serve the best interests of our students, families, staff, community, and Board of Trustees.

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

The superintendent/principal arrangement ensures the district continues to meet or exceed state standards by maintaining strong instructional leadership, ensuring compliance with accreditation requirements, and prioritizing resources for student learning. Academic and behavioral data demonstrate that students are achieving at or above expected levels. The district remains fully accredited under this structure.



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

The combined superintendent/principal model aligns with program standards by ensuring leadership is in place to support curriculum, instruction, student assessment, professional development, and school improvement planning. The structure allows for consistent oversight of all educational programs and compliance with state standards.

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).

The reality is the district chose not to implement the variance until 2021-2022. Prior to 2021-2022, the district was able to contract with the previous administration at a significantly reduced amount to perform the duties of Superintendent at .5 FTE. However, the previous individual retired in June 2021. Therefore, an extension of the variance is desired by the district.

Since 2021-2022, the most critical objective of this variance request was to reduce the cost of school administration.

In addition, there are numerous performance objectives that can be listed which can be carried out by one administrator.

A few of those are listed below:

1. The Superintendent/Principal shall attend 100% of School Board meetings serving the role of advisor as prescribed in School Board policy.
2. The Superintendent/Principal shall conduct at least one formal observation of each of the 23 FTE certified staff on an annual basis.
3. The Superintendent/Principal shall complete all reports required by the Office of Public Instruction.
4. The Superintendent/Principal shall monitor student behavior.



- 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.**

Evidence from student performance data, accreditation reports, and school climate surveys show the district has maintained high academic outcomes and positive student behavior under the combined role. The school has remained in good standing with accreditation and continues to meet or exceed benchmarks set under state accreditation standards.

- 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).**

The district continues to review staffing and administrative needs annually. While the combined role has proven effective, the district has added a stipend-supported teacher-leader to assist with daily administrative tasks, ensuring timely support for staff and students. This adjustment allows the superintendent/principal to balance district-wide leadership with building-level needs.



Required school district signatures:

Board Chair Name: Jake Detling

Board Chair Signature: _____ Date: _____

Superintendent Name: Sheila Chouinard

Superintendent Signature: _____ Date _____

Email the signed form to:

OPIAccred@mt.gov