Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent
opi.mt.gov

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 a variance to a standard or a section of 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 DATES (check one)

☒ First semester implementation; first Monday in March
☐ Second semester implementation; first Monday in July

COUNTY: Carbon

DISTRICT: Joliet Public School

LIST EACH SCHOOL THAT IS REQUESTING THE VARIANCE: Joliet Elementary K-8, Joliet High School 9-12

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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.**
   10-55-709

2. **Provide evidence that local community stakeholders were involved in the consideration and development of the proposed variance. Community stakeholder groups include parents, community members, and students as applicable.**
   The Special Meeting for accepting the proposal for the Joliet Public School to submit a Variance to Standard was posted in four different locations, and stakeholder comment was encouraged at the time of the proposal. Community members know that we have one librarian for our two schools, which are housed in one school building. Many stakeholders, not knowing the official breakdown of our school for OPI record keeping purposes, frequently think of Joliet as a K-12 school.

   Parents volunteer to help with Boxtops for Education, Labels for Education, and a community volunteer comes in to assist with shelving and organizing. Involvement has been 2-4 hours per month for parent / community volunteers. The Beartooth Human Alliance also brings dogs in to

read with students monthly. Additionally, Read to Me, Daddy is a program that the JPS librarian initiated this year, and is one that required a lot of collaboration with the Laurel and Red Lodge Head Start programs. Read to Me, Daddy requires fathers in the community to commit to reading with their own children multiple times a year for two hours at a time.

3. **Provide evidence that local school stakeholders were involved in the consideration and development of the proposed variance. School stakeholder groups include trustees, administrators, teachers and classified school staff.**
   In attendance at the Special Meeting were: Melvin Stene (board chairman), Doug Whitehead (trustee), Corie Mydland (trustee), Dawn Blain (trustee), Sharon Songstad (trustee), Superintendent Allison Evertz, and Principal Marilyn Vukonich.

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.**

5. **Describe the variance requested.**
   Based on current enrollment numbers, Joliet only needs a .001 FTE to cover our 7-8 grade. We need .5 FTE for the 183 elementary students, a .5 FTE for the 126 high school students, and a .001 for the 50 middle school students. Joliet Public School consists of two schools housed in one building sharing a large library. Based on conglomorate enrollment numbers, Joliet could easily maintain a K-12 status. However, we have two schools in one district due to a previously established joint district that we share with Laurel, and due to budgetary interlocal fund flexibility. Joliet's K-12 enrollment is fewer than 400 students, and the need for a .001 FTE librarian is nominal. For this reason, we continue to utilize one librarian to meet the needs of the Joliet School Community with great effectiveness.

6. **Provide a statement of the mission and goals of this proposed variance.**
   The Joliet Librarian more than adequately serves the school community. Through maintenance of literacy standards, conscientiousness in adhering to those standards, careful scheduling, diligent work, commitment to excellence, savy technical skills, and organization / collaboration of community volunteers, Joliet Public School Library meets all the needs of its students in the district. Since a dearth of qualified librarians continues, and since another part-time librarian would be disingenous to the taxpayers, the Joliet Public School would like to maintain excellent services without incurring OPI penalty.

7. **List specific measurable objectives that demonstrate the proposed variance will meet or exceed the results under the current standard(s).**
   Students at Joliet Public School will continue to show gains in Reading.

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

Students at Joliet Public School will continue to show gains in Reading by Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), Criterion Referenced Test (CRT), AIMSWeb (to identify RTI needs), Smarter Balanced, Cognitive Ability Test (CogAT), ACT Aspire, and the ACT.

9. **In what way does this variance meet the specific needs of the students in the school(s)?**
Student / Teacher ratios and lessons to meet Montana State Standards vary daily, but all standards are met by the end of the year. Much of the early part of the year is assessing where students are in perspective to the standards. Upon assessment, the JPS librarian swiftly plans for the year. The librarian's research instruction is efficient, and spontaneous research colloboration instensifies as students come in to the library to work on individualized research projects throughout the year. The librarian is able to assist in the students' searches, and is able to encourage the understanding of ownership of online materials. In this process, he utilizes EBSCO, OPAC, the Big6, Google Aps for Education, Montana Digital Academy, and the Joliet Public Library's collection of ebooks. Overall, our students are served well, and have been by the Library / Media program we have had in place thus far. The Joliet Public School librarian and the aforementioned tools, in conjunction with community volunteerism, meet the needs of all students through instructional delviery outlined by Montana State Standards.

10. **Describe how and why the proposed variance would be:**
    a. **Workable.**
    It is workable because the JPS library is always staffed with a highly qualified librarian. The librarian does employ occasional community assitance, and, so far, it has purposefully and intentionally served our students well.

    b. **Educationally sound.**
    Our students have thrived under one librarian. Spending taxpayer money on library materials (hardcopy and digital) seems more appropriate than hiring another nominal FTE to satisfy the requirement of employment percentages.

    c. **Where applicable, aligned with program standards under ARM 10.55.1101 through 10.55.2101.**
    The school library media program is essential in creating independent learners who are efficient consumers and producers of information. By using a variety of information formats, focusing on the learning process and collaborating with other disciplines, school libraries provide the entire school community with opportunities to acquire the information skills they need to interact responsibly in a global society. An ongoing desire to know, a love for reading and a respect for information will transform a student into a lifelong independent learner. The role of libraries in a democratic society is to embrace the social responsibility of learning.
    (1) In general, a basic program in library media shall:
    (a) meet the following conditions:

(i) establish flexible scheduling to ensure that libraries respond to information needs, foster intellectual curiosity, and support learning;

(ii) ensure collaboration with classroom teachers of all disciplines to implement content area standards and to assist students in engaging in the inquiry/research process;

(iii) model and support the ethical use of information, adherence to copyright laws, and respect for intellectual property; and

(iv) advise the board of trustees on policy and rule pertaining to:

(A) developing and maintaining a library collection that is current, balanced, and reflects authentic historical and cultural contributions of Montana's American Indians and other minority and ethnic groups;

(B) engaging in comprehensive long range planning to administer and manage, in a secure area, the human, financial, and physical resources of the library to locate, access, and use on-site resources that are organized and cataloged; and

(C) implementing a viable collection development policy which includes the following components:

(I) materials selection and de-selection;

(II) challenged materials procedure;

(III) intellectual/academic freedom statement;

(IV) confidentiality assurance;

(V) copyright guidelines; and

(VI) gifts and donations.

(b) include the following practices:

(i) collaborate with classroom teachers of all disciplines to highlight and reinforce the commonalities and links between and among the curricular areas;

(ii) cooperate and join with other libraries, information agencies, and community resources in the sharing of materials;

(iii) encourage partnerships with information centers that use electronic information systems; and

(iv) participate in school-wide technology and telecommunications planning and promote its integration into all instructional programs.

d. Where applicable, aligned with content standards under ARM Chapters 53 and 54.

Required school district signatures:

Board Chair Name: MELVIN L STEWE

Board Chair Signature: Melvin L Stewe **Date:** 2.29.16

Superintendent Name: Allison B. Evertz

Superintendent Signature: [signature] **Date** 3/1/16

Mail the signed form to:

Accreditation and Educator Preparation Division
Office of Public Instruction
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501

OPI USE ONLY

Superintendent of Public Instruction: _____ **Date**_____

_____**Approve** _____**Disapprove**

Board of Public Education Chair _____ **Date**_____

_____**Approve** _____**Disapprove**

SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 29TH, 2016

Football Interviews with the Activity Committee and Candidates at 5:00 pm, special board meeting to follow.

I. **Meeting Call to Order**
   Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
   Expression of Welcome
II. **Public Comment**
III. **Consent Agenda**
   a. Hiring of Football Coach for the 2016-17 Season (Action)
   b. Variance to Standards (Action)
IV. **Executive Session – As prescribed by School Laws of Montana**
V. **Adjournment**

Minutes of the Special Meeting held on Monday, February 29, 2016.

Members present: Doug Whitehead, Corie Mydland, Dawn Blain, Sharon Songstad, Melvin Stene, Superintendent Allison Evertz, and Principal Marilyn Vukonich.

Board Chairman Melvin Stene called the meeting to order at 6:43 PM.

Board Chairman Melvin Stene opened up the meeting for public comment. There was no public comment.

Motion was made by Corie Mydland to accept the consent agenda. Motion was seconded by Sharon Songstad. There was no public discussion or public comment. Motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Evertz made the recommendation to hire George Warburton as the head high school football coach for the 2016 season. Doug Whitehead made the motion to hire George Warburton as the head high school football coach for the 2016 season. Dawn Blain seconded that motion. There was no public discussion or public comment. The motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Evertz made the recommendation to submit the Variance to Standard application, for the Librarian position, to OPI. Corie Mydland made the motion to submit the application to OPI. Sharon Songstad seconded the motion. There was no public discussion or public comment. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Dawn Blain. Motion was seconded by Corie Mydland. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 6:46 PM.

Approved 3-14-16

Minutes taken by Supt. Evertz for the clerk Sheryl Roberts

Chairman Melvin L. Stene