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

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:

First Monday in March

COUNTY: Yellowstone

DISTRICT: Independent School District #52

LIST EACH SCHOOL THAT IS REQUESTING THE VARIANCE: Independent School

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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.**
   10.55.704 and 10.55.705

2. **Provide evidence that local community stakeholders were involved in the consideration and development of the proposed renewal variance application. Community stakeholder groups include parents, community members, and students as applicable.**
   This is a renewal of a variance that was previously approved. The initial process started with a determination that the district budget could not support the additional administrative requirement. The situation was desribed in newsletters during the lead up to the original application. Teachers, parents, and Trustees all were invited to provide input, but the bottom line remains the same, state funding does not provide for the required administrative FTE, especially when other needs are factored in, like class size and special education needs.
   See attached Board minutes. No public comment was received.

3. **Provide evidence local school stakeholders were involved in the consideration and development of the proposed renewal variance application. School stakeholder groups include trustees, administrators, teachers and classified school staff.**
   See attached Board minutes and newsletter.. No public comment was received.

4. **Attach Board of Trustee meeting minutes that show the Board of Trustees approved the application for a renewal variance at an official, properly noticed meeting.**

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 initial objectives are listed below. The reality is the district chose not to implement the variance. 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, it is doubtful this situation can sustain itself as the individual wants to retire. Therefore, an extension of the variance is desired by the district.

   "The most critical objective of this variance request is to reduce the cost of school administration. The current Standard requires 1.5 FTE administrators is estimated to cost, at a minimum $160,400 assuming the district could find someone who would actually want to work the .5 FTE. Otherwise this district would have to create a full time position which would cost an additional $40,000 plus. In addition, there are numerous performance objectives that can be sited 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 18.5 FTE certified staff on an annual basis. 3. The Superintendent/Principal shall complete all reports required by the Office of Public Instruction. 4. The S/P shall monitor student behavior. 5. The S/P shall publish a periodic newsletter. 6. The S/P shall carryout all duties assigned by the Board of Trustees and the State of Montana. "

   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.**

   As stated above, the variance was not implemented, however, the principal data point of cost savings on unnecessary administration is still in play. This variance was requested in order to allow the district to provide a cost effective, bureaucratically efficient, and educationally sound administrative model. The goals of the variance were as follows (1) provide cost effective administration, (2) reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, and (3) provide an educationally sound administrative model.

   To that end, the district will save approximately $30,000 to $50,00 in unnesscessary administrative costs.

   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).**

   None.

(Use check boxes provided in items 6-11 if the information requested remains unchanged from the initial variance application.)

6. **Describe the renewal variance requested.**

☑ *Renewal variance is the same as the initial variance.*

Renewal variance is the same as the initial variance.

7. **Provide a statement of the mission and goals of this proposed renewal variance.**

☑ *Mission and goals are the same as the initial variance.*

Mission and goals are the same.

8. **List specific measurable objectives that demonstrate the proposed renewal variance will meet or exceed the results under the current standard(s).**

☑ *Measurable objects are the same as the initial variance.*

Measureable objectives are the same.

9. **What data or evidence will be gathered to document progress toward meeting the measurable objectives of the renewal variance?**

☑ *Data or evidence gathered in the same manner as the initial variance.*

Data gathered in the same manner as the initial variance.

10. **In what way does this variance meet the specific needs of the students in the school(s)?**

☑ *The renewal variance will meet the specific needs of the students in the same manner as the initial variance.*

The renewal variance will meet the specific needs of students in the same manner as the initial variance.

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

a. **Workable.**

☑ *Renewal variance is the same as the initial variance.*

Renewal variance is the same as the initial variance.

b. **Educationally sound.**

☑ *Renewal variance is the same as the initial variance.*

Renewal variance is the same as the initial variance.

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

☑ *Renewal variance is the same as the initial variance.*

Renewal variance is the same as the initial variance.

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

☑ *Renewal variance is the same as the initial variance.*

Renewal variance is the same as the initial variance.

Required school district signatures:

Board Chair Name: David E. Nedrow

Board Chair Signature: David E. Nedrow **Date:** 2/22/16

Superintendent Name: Willian M Laurent

Superintendent Signature: Willian M. Laurent **Date** 2/25/16

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**

Thursday, February 18, 2016

Montana Office of Public Instruction
Variance to Standards Review Board
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent
Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501

Honorable Superintendent Juneau,

On behalf of Billings Independent School District #52, I hereby submit this request for renewal of our Variance to Standards which was initially approved in 2014.

To support that request, the District has attached a completed Variances to Standards Application Renewal .

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Laurent, Superintendent

Bill Laurent, Supt

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 22, 2016

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 Chairman Dave Nedrow at 7:01 p.m.

Members present: Dave Nedrow, Craig Allred, Renae Scott and Cindy Sparr. Jeff Moore was absent. Also present were Superintendent Bill Laurent, Principal Sheila Chouinard and District Clerk Debi Orelup.

OLD BUSINESS

Programming & Long Term Planning Committee

Bill invited Tobin Novasio, Superintendent of Lockwood School and former Superintendent of Elder Grove School, to discuss various topics related to K-8 academics and transition to high school. Tobin provided a handout and reviewed the different state funding sources and the approximate anticipated increases to those revenues should Independent become a K-8 school. For grades 7-8 the required core subjects are English/Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, Science, and a semester of Health Enhancement. Students choose from the elective subjects for the remainder of their 7 period day. The electives Lockwood offers are Visual Arts, Music (band/chorus), Career and Tech Ed (Family Consumer Science, Computers, Business, Accounting, etc.) or World Languages (Montana Digital Academy). Tobin also provided a sample layout of both a student and teacher's daily schedules. Tobin stated while he was the Superintendent at Elder Grove School the students completing 8th grade continued on to high school at either West (SD#2), Central or Laurel and the students transitioned acceptably well into all of the high schools. He did note that the more involved students were in school activities the greater chance they had at successfully completing high school.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the January 11 & January 25, 2016 meetings as presented.
Motion – Cindy Sparr / Second – Renae Scott Unanimous vote

COMMUNICATIONS

Leave Request

Carol Hildebrand requests approval to use personal leave on March 24, 2016. ***A motion was made to approve the leave request.***
Motion – Renae Scott / Second – Craig Allred Unanimous vote

Lane Change Request

Jessica VanHemelryck requests approval for a lane change to a BA+105. ***A motion was made to approve the lane change.***
Motion – Craig Allred / Second – Cindy Sparr Unanimous vote

PRINCIPAL REPORT

Sheila stated an additional Instructional Aide is needed in the Preschool program Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Emails have been sent successfully to 300 parents through the Infinite Campus Messenger System. Professional development for the classroom teachers is focused on math through consultant Lisa Scott. This semester Mr. Linford and Ms. George each have mentored student teachers Casey Hereim and Taylor Hert respectively. Bill, Sheila, and the 6th grade teachers, are working together to determine if any changes are needed to the 6th grade program to ensure students are prepared for transition into 7th grade at Medicine Crow Middle School.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT
The current enrollment is 316 students.

OLD BUSINESS
Programming & Long Term Planning Committee
Today Dave and Cindy met with Kim Sindelar-Thompson and her husband Jeremiah Thompson to discuss the Dover Ranch property in Independent's district. Dave and Cindy expressed they are amenable with assisting to find a suitable location for building a school on their property.

NEW BUSINESS
School Election May 3, 2016 - Trustee & Building Reserve/Request for Mail Ballot
The trustees reviewed the proposed election resolution included in the Board packet which states the School Election will be held May 3, 2016, for the purpose of electing one trustee for a three-year term and the proposition for a building reserve levy. The trustees also request the Yellowstone County Election office conduct the election by mail ballot. ***A motion was made to approve the Trustee Resolution calling for an Election by Mail Ballot as presented.***
Motion – Renae Scott / Second – Cindy Sparr Unanimous vote

Review Policy 375.8, Fund Raising Activities
Bill recommends a change to the policy as follows:

The Board acknowledges that the solicitations of funds from students, staff and citizens must be limited since students are a captive audience and since solicitation can disrupt the program of the schools. Solicitation and collection of money by students for any purpose, including the collection of money by students in exchange for tickets, papers, magazine subscriptions, or for any other goods or services for the benefit of an approved school organization, may be permitted by the ~~Superintendent~~ **Board of Trustees** providing that the instructional program is not adversely affected.

A motion was made to approve the first reading of this policy amendment.
Motion – Craig Allred / Second – Cindy Sparr Unanimous vote

Renewal of Accreditation Variance
The current Accreditation Variance expires June 2016. Bill recommends the District reapply for the variance which would allow one individual to serve as the Superintendent/Principal. ***A motion was made to approve Bill submitting the application for an Accreditation Variance to OPI.***
Motion – Craig Allred / Second – Renae Scott Unanimous vote

Appointment of Trustee
Dave stated that Jeff Moore no longer resides within Independent's district which makes him ineligible to be a trustee. ***A motion was made to declare the trustee position vacant.***
Motion – Renae Scott / Second – Cindy Sparr Unanimous vote

The Board shall appoint a competent person as a successor within 60 days or the County Superintendent shall appoint someone. ***A motion was made to appoint Mary Nessan to serve out the remainder of Jeff's term until the May 2017 school election.****
Motion – Craig Allred / Second – Renae Scott Unanimous vote

Hire Preschool Special Education Instructional Aide

Sheila requests approval to hire Janna Keever as a Special Education Instructional Aide in the Preschool program on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. ***A motion was made to approve hiring Janna Keever as an Instructional Aide to assist in the Preschool program as requested. Motion – Cindy Sparr / Second – Craig Allred Unanimous vote***

The next regular School Board meeting is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 21, 2016. Payroll checks 80723-80747 and warrants 27122-27170 were approved for payment as presented.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Debi Orelup, District Clerk

Dave Nedrow, Chairman

* 20-3-309(3) MCA states "A person assuming a trustee position under the provisions of this section shall serve until the next regular school election and until a successor has qualified."

Mary Nessan shall be appointed as a trustee until the next regular school election (May 3, 2016).

Any interested party must file a Declaration of Intent and Oath of Candidacy for the office of School District Trustee for a one year unexpired term by March 24, 2016 for the annual regular school election to be held the 3rd day of May, 2016.

Variance to Standards Request to Renew
Addendum

To: Variance to Standards Review Committee

Fr: Bill Laurent, Superintendent

Re: Additional Information

Honorable Committee Members,

On or about February 22, 2016, I submitted on behalf of the district a renewal application for a Variance to Standards. Upon reflection, I realized some additional information may be helpful to the committee. I have included below that additional information.

Item #1: Questions that may need up-to-date information.

8. List at least one specific measurable objective(s) that demonstrates that the proposed variance will meet or exceed the results under the current standard(s).

The most critical objective of this variance request is to reduce the cost of school administration. The current Standard requires 1.5 FTE administrators and is estimated to cost, at a minimum $209,935. This assumes the district would employ a full time person who would serve as .5 FTE Superintendent/.5 FTE Principal and another person who would serve as .5 FTE principal. **The cost under the current standard would be estimated at $209,935. The cost with approval of the variance would be $157,105, or a savings of $52,830.**

In addition, there are numerous performance objectives that can be sited 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 adviser as prescribed in School Board policy.
2. The Superintendent/Principal shall conduct at least one formal observation of each of the **19.8 FTE certified staff** on an annual basis.
3. The Superintendent/Principal shall complete all reports required by the Office of Public Instruction.
4. The S/P shall monitor student behavior.
5. The S/P shall publish a periodic newsletter.
6. The S/P shall carryout all duties assigned by the Board of Trustees and the State of Montana. Note: A copy of the job description is attached (See initial application.)

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

The data collected to document the primary objective is readily available through a review of

the district expenditures. If the proposed variance is approved, district expenditures for school administration shall be reduced by a minimum of $40,000. This can be verified by comparing proposed budgets.

The additional performance items mentioned can be documented as follows:

1. The District Clerk shall document attendance at all Board meetings.
The Superintendent/Principal will report to the Board of Trustees the number and dates of the formal observations.
OPI monitors report submissions.
4. A student behavior log shall be kept.
5. Copies of the newsletter shall be retained for review.
6. The Board of Trustees shall evaluate the performance of the S/P on an annual basis.

10. In what way does this variance to standard meet the specific needs of the students in your school(s)?

This variance allows the Board of Trustees to meet the specific needs of students by allowing the allocation of resources to areas that directly impact students including instructional aides, up-to-date textbooks, additional certified staff to reduce class size, etc. All of these become options when resources (dollars) become available as a result of the reduction in administrative FTE.

11. Variance to Standard: Outline how and why the proposed variance would be:

Workable. (Sufficient district resources are available for the success of the variance.)

This variance allows the Board of Trustees to meet the specific needs of students by allowing the allocation of resources to areas that directly impact students including instructional aides, up-to-date textbooks, additional certified staff to reduce class size, etc. All of these become options when resources (dollars) become available as a result of the reduction in administrative FTE. This variance is very workable. The district has operated for the past 27 years with one person serving as Superintendent/Principal. Independent School is funded at the K-6 level. Current per pupil expenditures in the General Fund are $4925. This amount is one of the lowest in the state. (OPI Finance) Personnel costs exceed 86% of the GFB. This, coupled with the failure of the district to pass operating levies each of the last five years has created an annual budget crisis. The variance, which saves the district approximately **$52,830**, makes the general fund budget workable and allows for sufficient resources to assure the success of the variance.

Current Data on General Fund Budget

2014-2015 GFB Exp: $1,574,967 $5080/pupil
2013-2014 GFB Exp: $1,486,395 $5038/pupil

b. Educationally sound. (Applicant has relied on sound research as a rationale for the variance.)

Variance to Standards Request to Renew
Addendum

Educational research is generally positive when it comes to small schools. The concept of one district, one school, one administrator is an example that reflects the small school model. Specifically, the District has been unable to find any research on the assignment of administrators, superintendents or principals, to K-6 independent elementary districts. The district requests as much data as OPI can provide as to the development of the numbers which guided the creation of the current standard.

Item #2 Enrollment Information

2013-2014: 292
2014-2015: 313
2015-2016: 320

The district is growing at a rate of 3-4% over the last ten years.

Item # 3 Achievement Data

The district uses the AIMSWEB reading fluency and math computation data to monitor student achievement. Of course, the data is skewed by the loss of one class per year.

2013-2014 % of 1-6 students at benchmark: 79% reading, 73% math
2014-2015 % of 1-6 students at benchmark: 77% reading, 71% math

Note: 12% of students are identified as special education.

Item# 4 FTE Data

2013-2014 19.525 Certified FTE
2014-2015 20.7 Certified FTE
2015-2016 20.8 Certified FTE

This figure includes a 1.0 FTE Principal and a .5 FTE Superintendent. It would obviously be reduced by the approval of the variance.

Demographics Updated

Independent School District #52 is located in northeast Billings, Montana, approximately one half mile north of the Billings city limits on HW 87. It serves a suburban/rural population of approximately 2500 residents with a school population of **320 as of March, 2016**. Medium household income is $77,500 and the medium house value is $196,000. The percentage of students on free and reduced lunch is currently **16.25%**.

The district operates only one school within its boundaries. Independent School District #52 is considered a K-8 Independent Elementary School District by Montana Code. Independent Elementary is a K-6 elementary school with an enrollment of 320 students. Students in grades 7-8 (80+) attend middle school in Billings School District #2. Independent School District #52 pays

tuition for those students.

Independent Elementary employs **18** full-time classroom teachers, a full-time librarian, and part-time music, physical education, Title I and counseling positions. **(19.7)** As of 2015-2016, the district also employs a full-time principal and a half-time superintendent.

During Fiscal Year 2015, Independent School District #52 expended $5020 per student. This is one of the lowest per pupil expenditures in the state of Montana. It is this low level of funding that prompts the district to submit this request.

Student My Voice Survey Results

This survey seeks to identify the key elements of the student/school relationship. It is part of the Eight Conditions that make a difference in the lives of students.

Student Voice Grades 3-5 Survey 2010-2016	**2014**	**2015**
BELONGING		
I like my school.	85	93
The principal knows my name.	74	88
HEROES		
My teacher cares about me.	95	93
Teachers respect students.	86	94
SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT		
I give my best effort at school.	90	91
Getting good grades is important to me.	95	96
FUN & EXCITEMENT		
I have fun at school.	73	76
Teachers have fun at school.	64	81
CURIOSITY & CREATIVITY		
I enjoy working on projects with other students.	81	85
I like to learn new things in my classes.	87	89
SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE		
My teacher helps me learn from my mistakes.	87	93
The things I learn in school are important to me.	86	87
LEADERSHIP & RESPONSIBILITY		
It is important to follow rules.	94	99
CONFIDENCE TO TAKE ACTION		
I work hard in school.	90	93

I know how to set goals for myself.	76	88

Summary

As noted in the initial variance request, the district asks to be allowed to operate with one administrator. The school size, both certified FTE and student enrollment, falls on the cusp of both administrator requirements. The current certified FTE of 20.8 is well within the required (18-30) for a .5 FTE Superintendent and the student enrollment of 320 is well within the required (250-549) for a full time principal. The data reveal, the school is on solid academic and social ground. Going forward there is no reason to believe this will not continue with one person serving as administrator.

Submitted by

Bill Laurent, District Superintendent

Independent Elementary School Newsletter Wednesday, February 17, 2016

SKYHAWK TALK

It is with Skyhawk Pride, Respect, and Cooperation that We Achieve.

CALENDAR

Fri, Feb 19 • Read-A-Thon Ends
Mon, Feb 22 • School Board Meeting 7PM
Mon, Feb 22 • Ronald McDonald Dental Checkups
Fri, Feb 26 • Read-A-Thon Awards Ceremony

Board Again Requests Accreditation Variance

The Board of Trustees gave Superintendent Laurent permission to submit to the Office of Public Instruction a Variance to Standards Application. The re-approval of this variance allows the District to operate with one person serving as both Superintendent and Principal. Currently Mr. Laurent is serving as a part time Superintendent at a minimal cost to the District. Continued approval of the request would allow Ms. Chouinard to serve as both Superintendent and Principal if the Board so chose. Individuals interested in commenting on this process are directed to contact either Mr. Laurent or Ms. Chouinard, or submit, in writing, comment to the Board of Trustees.

Student Led Conferences

Thank you for your participation in Student Led conferences. The Student Led conferences are a special event at Independent when we empower students to share their pride in their accomplishments with parents. If you missed this opportunity, please contact your child's teacher.

YEARBOOK! YEARBOOK!

Orders for the Independent School Yearbook are due March 4. The standard yearbook is $16. Order forms will be sent home this week. Extras are located at the school office.
Order your YEARBOOK today!

Thank You Volunteers

Thank you to our parent volunteers, Bobbi Hanson and Lisa Wilson, for helping with the vision screening. You are appreciated!

Outdoor Classroom

I would like to personally thank those of you who have contributed to the Outdoor Classroom at Independent school! Because of your efforts, this dream is now a reality. This classroom will change how students learn for many years to come. At this time, we are still accepting donations in the form of "Adopting-A-Rock". Donations will be used to cover the costs associated with completing this phase as well as Phase 2. "Adopt-A-Rock" forms are available at the Independent School Office. The construction phase is temporally postponed until spring. This is a precaution taken to avoid shifting in the materials, as a result of freezing and melting. When the construction phase commences, we have landscapers, contractors, businesses, and volunteers for every aspect of the project! A huge thank you to Ty Ketchum and Justin Wagner of All Design Landscaping, Rance Remme of Old Castle Architecture, Adam & Allen of Billings Vineyard, and Jake Detling of EEC Inc. for all of your time and efforts in making this project a success!
Thank you again from all the current and future students of Independent School who will experience the outdoor classroom! ~Mr. Linford

Ronald McDonald Care Mobile

The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile will be coming to Independent School on **Monday, February 22** for FREE dental exams. This program is part of a statewide effort to improve oral health in children by providing disease-preventing services to children in school. These FREE services are available to ALL children regardless of a family's insurance status or finances. NO bills will ever be sent to families.

Oral health screenings identify children with dental problems such as cavities and connect them to dental services if needed. Even if children have seen the dentist recently or have a dentist, we encourage families to participate because the dentist is gathering general health information about our school population and because it's fun, entire classes will be visiting the dentist together at school.

If you need a consent form, please contact Betty @ 259-8109.

Independent Elementary School Newsletter Thursday, March 6, 2014

SKYHAWK TALK

It is with Skyhawk Pride, Respect, and Cooperation that We Achieve.

Board Reports: March 2014

The Independent School Board of Trustees met in regular session on Monday, March 10th at 7 PM in the school library. The following is a synopsis of the meeting.

Superintendent Bill Laurent submitted for first reading a preliminary budget for Fiscal Year 2015 in the amount of $1,555,400, an increase of $68,000 over FY 2014. The Board is awaiting news on insurance increases and the planned labor negotiations with the Independent School Education Association.

Mr. Laurent reported on the Administrative Variance submitted to the Office of Public Instruction which would allow the district to operate with one administrator. The OPI committee meets April 2nd to review the application.

The Board voted to table action on the 2nd reading of Building Use Policy 375.631, Fees. This was a result of the comments they received from district resident Josh Gregor. Mr. Gregor, a boy scout sponsor, requested that the policy be published in the Skyhawk Talk and a period of public comment allowed. He stated that the Boy Scouts, which number about 30 students from Independent, could not afford to pay the fee.

The Board approved for final reading Policy 375.638, Posting of Bills. This policy provides administrative guidelines for the posting of notices in the building.

The Board approved the recommendation of Ms. Chouinard, Principal, to hire Ms. Brianna Oblander as instructional aide.

The Trustees approved with modifications, a school calendar for 2014-2015. A copy can be viewed on the district website.

The Board tabled additional review of Building Use Policy 375.6, Building Use until next month.

Mr. Laurent submitted and the Board accepted a modified evaluation form to be used for his upcoming evaluation. Mr. Laurent is serving as part time Superintendent this year after 25 years as Superintendent/Principal.

The Board approved a request from girls basketball coaches Amy Pfeifle and Greta Buehler to conduct a school sponsored basketball camp this summer.

CALENDAR

Thurs, March 13 • PTA Meeting 3:30PM Library

Fri, March 14 • Crazy Socks Day

Thurs, March 20 • Band & Honor Choir 9AM & 2PM

Fri, March 21 • Crazy Hair Day

Mon, March 24 • No School

Fri, March 28 • End of Quarter & Crazy Blue Pride

Tues, April 8 • Board Meeting 7PM Library

Trustees Call for Election

The Independent School Board of Trustees has called for a Trustee election to be held Tuesday, May 6, 2014. The election will be for two Trustee positions, that are currently held by Trustees Cindy Sparr and Reed Sutton.

If interested, please contact Bill Laurent, Superintendent or Debi Orelup, District Clerk. The forms to file as a candidate for the trustee election may be obtained from Debi Orelup. The deadline to file for election is Thursday, March 27th.

Independent Elementary School Newsletter Thursday, January 9, 2014

SKYHAWK TALK

It is with Skyhawk Pride, Respect, and Cooperation that We Achieve.

CALENDAR

Fri, Jan 17 • End of Quarter

Mon, Jan 20 • No School

Wed, Jan 22 • Report Cards Sent Home

Thurs, Jan 23 • Hearing Screening Gr. K & 1

Wed, Jan 29 • Girls' Volleyball Begins

Mon, Feb 10 • Board Meeting 7PM

Board Requests Accreditation Variance

The Board of Trustees gave Superintendent Laurent permission to submit to the Office of Public Instruction a Variance to Standards Application. Approval of this variance would allow the District to operate with one person serving as both Superintendent and Principal. For 23 of the last 25 years, the District has functioned with one person serving as the Superintendent/Principal. Recently, the Board of Public Education changed the standard for the assignment of school administrators requiring the District to employ an additional half time superintendent. Currently Mr. Laurent is serving in that position. Approval of the request would allow Ms. Chouinard to serve as both Superintendent and Principal. This configuration is considered a more efficient use of district resources. Individuals interested in commenting on this process are directed to contact either Mr. Laurent or Ms. Chouinard, or submit, in writing, comment to the Board of Trustees.

Daycare Bus Only Parking

To help ensure safety of our students, we have created a Daycare Bus Only parking area. Please be respectful of the marked spaces. Thank you.

The Board Reports...

The Independent School Board of Trustees met in regular session on Monday, January 6th at 7 PM in the school library.

Items addressed included:

• Approval of building use requests from Mike Carle (basketball), Carrie Barnhart (Boy Scouts), and Doug Nichol/Jenni Vickery (Good News Club).

• Approval of leave request from Ms. Frickle.

• Acknowledged receipt of letter from ISEA regarding their desire to begin collective bargaining.

• Approved a recommendation from Superintendent Laurent to apply for an Accreditation Variance.

Received from Superintendent Laurent a copy of a Preliminary Budget for 2014-2015.

Received a report from Board Chair Dave Nedrow on his recent attendance of a meeting regarding the building of a new middle school by Billings School District #2.

DANGEROUS HIGHWAY PARKING

We realize the parking lot is not inviting, but parking on the highway is dangerous for students and drivers. When cars are stopped along the highway, the drivers leaving the parking lot cannot see when it is safe to exit. This creates an unsafe environment! **Please DO NOT stop or park along the highway.**

LOST AND FOUND!

Lost and found items have been gathered and are on display on table by the front office. Please take a moment to check to see if any items belong in to your children.