

**POWELL COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING – April 17, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Board Vice-Chair Bart Smith called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

2. ROLL:

Board Vice-Chair: Bart Smith.

Board Members: Amanda Bohrer, Baylee Brown, Will Graveley, Maureen Mannix, and Robert Rabel.

Administration: Rick Duncan, Katie Crofutt, and Annette Galahan.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

4. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS:

Susie Bleken, Dawn Hagan, Jace Haynes, Maggie Hunter, Sean McConnaha, Alesha Ross, Dave Ross, Bob Schalk, Clint Stevenson, and Luke Ulatowski.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Action: Baylee Brown moved to approve the March 13, 2023 regular meeting minutes as corrected, seconded by Robert Rabel.

The motion passed unanimously.

6. CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

7. STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT:

Council President Jaina Meador was present to discuss recent student activities. Ms. Meador reported that ProStart and FCCLA recently attended the FCCLA State Convention, and that 4 students qualified to go to nationals; E-Sports is doing well; all spring sports are competing this week; and Choir/Band are performing tonight at the Rialto, and tomorrow in the Wrestling Room.

8. DEPARTMENT PRESENTATION: Industrial Arts & Agriculture

Postponed.

9. E-SPORTS PRESENTATION:

Sean McConnaha was present to discuss fall and spring E-Sports, which 17 students participated in. Mr. McConnaha discussed various competition platforms, which include Montana League, PlayVS, and Vanta, and provided advantages/disadvantages for each; he said that PlayVS is the best one. Mr. McConnaha was happy to report that our students received several compliments this year! He added that there will be an exhibition on April 26th with the East Helena team visiting PCHS, and discussed the computers/equipment used, competitions and games, etc. Mr. McConnaha expressed

thanks for the computer lounge, and for the following volunteers that helped during the year: Ken VanSickel, Kim Biere, Kathryn Jackson, Mrs. Thomas/Booster Club, and Clint Stevenson. While fielding questions, Mr. McConnaha stated that we do not play against colleges where E-Sports is also very popular, and that he believes that e-Sports will grow.

9. ATHLETIC DIRECTOR REPORT:

Bob Schalk was present to discuss spring sports. He stated that Les Schwab Tire has offered to pay for shot clocks at the Central Park Center (CPC)! Mr. Schalk said this is great news, as PCHS can now use the CPC for overflow basketball games and wrestling tournaments. Mr. Schalk added that next February PCHS will host the District 7B Basketball Tournament in Deer Lodge, and that an additional Pixelot camera will be added to the CPC for game viewing. Also discussed was advance make-up work for students participating in activities; Katie Crofutt said the change was very positive. Baylee Brown asked if there were any roadblocks regarding the district tournament, and Mr. Schalk responded there are not, and that 4 games/day will be played. Amanda Bohrer suggested we reach out to the city to the Economic Growth and Development Board. Teams attending the district tournament will be from Darby, Arlee, Florence, Loyola, and PCHS.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Employment Contracts

Cheer Coach

Action: Baylee Brown moved to hire Courtney Prosenick as Head Cheerleading Coach for 2023-24 as recommended by Rick Duncan, seconded by Amanda Bohrer. The motion passed unanimously.

Assistant Football Coach

Postponed in order to keep all coach contracts together.

Principal

Action: Robert Rabel moved to rehire Katie Crofutt as Principal for 2023-24, seconded by Will Graveley.

Discussion: There was a consensus that Mrs. Crofutt has done a great job! Baylee Brown thanked her for an awesome job, questions answered, and great surveys. The motion passed unanimously.

Certified Contracts

Action: Amanda Bohrer moved to rehire the Certified Non-Tenured Staff, seconded by Will Graveley (attached).

Discussion: Baylee Brown verified that all non-tenured teachers are all certified. The motion passed unanimously.

Action: Baylee Brown moved to rehire the Certified Tenured Staff, seconded by Amanda Bohrer.

Discussion: Baylee Brown said, “I think we have a fantastic teaching staff and that we’re very lucky to have everyone listed on this sheet.”
The motion passed unanimously.

Policy Review 2nd Reading

Rick Duncan provided a brief recap of the committee formed to discuss the proposed CRT policy amendment, and thanked Amanda Bohrer for bringing the Attorney General’s opinion to the committee, as it was helpful. Mr. Duncan read aloud the following committee statement:

Critical Race Theory Committee

March 29, 2023

Trustees: Bart Smith, Will Graveley, Amanda Bohrer

Administration: Rick Duncan, Katie Crofutt

Staff: Clint Stevenson, Sean McConnaha, Tom Cotton

Board Policy 2120: Curriculum Development and Assessment

Board Policy 2330: Controversial Issues and Academic Freedom

Staff Handbook

Insert:

- *“Critical Race Theory (CRT) is not part of the curriculum within the Powell County High School District.”*
- *Montana Attorney General Opinion legal reference.*

Bart Smith read aloud the following CRT statement:

POWELL COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL’S STATEMENT ON CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is not part of the curriculum at Powell County High School.

In May 2021, the Montana Attorney General issued a binding opinion addressing the potential of CRT in Montana k-12 curriculum. The opinion cites Miller, 515 U.S. at 911 “At the heart of the Constitution’s guarantee of equal protection lies the simple command that the Government must treat citizens as individuals, not as simply components of a racial, religious, sexual or national class” PCHS strives through practice and policy to adhere to this statement. Current curriculum is available on the district’s website at <https://www.pchs.dl.k12.mt.us/page/curriculum>.

The Attorney General stated in his opinion that “when evaluating whether anti-discrimination protections threaten to chill the teaching of curricula that may offer great value to students, First Amendment case law takes into account a school’s legitimate pedagogical interest in explaining and effectively and lawfully addressing racism.”

BP 2120 Curriculum and Assessment defines the process by which the PCHS Board of Trustees adopts curriculum.

The district has a Curriculum Committee that is composed of content teachers, administrators, and board members who are responsible for a thorough vetting of curriculum prior to presenting new curriculum to the board for approval. All board members will have ample opportunity to review the curriculum prior to adoption & purchasing.

To ensure that all parents, guardians, and students are informed about course expectations, high school classroom teachers develop a course syllabus that covers expectations and a general overview of the course. The course syllabus is to be distributed to students during the first week of the course and to new students as soon as they are enrolled in the course. PCHS's curriculum is always available on our website, and we encourage questions about what we are teaching.

Montana Attorney General's Opinion. 27 May 2021. Vol. 58, Op. 1.

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MTAG/bulletins/2e198cd>

Miller et al v. Johnson et al. 515, 911, U.S. District Court. 1995. Supreme Court Collection. Legal Information Inst., Cornell U Law School, n.d. Web. 30 Apr. 2023

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/94-631.ZS.html>

This document was adapted, with permission, from Helena Public School District's statement on Critical Race Theory

<https://helenaschools.org/departments;curriculum-and-instruction/> Permission granted March 30, 2023

Action: Amanda Bohrer moved to add *Powell County High School's Statement on Critical Race Theory* to BP 2120, BP2330, and to the Staff Handbook, including the legal references, seconded by Will Graveley.

Discussion: Baylee Brown asked if this is technically a 1st reading, and even though it is, Mr. Smith said that the committee vote was unanimous. Clarification was given on the insert point in the policies, and that this issue is settled and there is no need for anymore committee meetings. The motion passed unanimously.

Action: Robert Rabel moved to make an amendment to the above motion that any teaching of LGBTQ+ topics must be preceded by board and administration notification and approval, seconded by Bart Smith.

Discussion: Baylee Brown said that this is opening up a whole can of worms, and that she trusts the teachers, and that the CRT statement needs to stay where it is. Will Graveley asked if this would require the CRT Committee again and said the teachers should have input so that the real issues are known, and then we could have debate. Amanda Bohrer asked if we already have something that covers this? Rick Duncan responded that there is a bill that may pass the legislature next week regarding this topic – SB99, and Bart Smith

asked about redundancy. Mrs. Bohrer thought it in our best interest to wait to see what the state does and decide on further committee meetings later. Katie Crofutt suggested that something could be added to BP 2330 regarding the human sexuality policy. Mr. Duncan and Mr. Graveley both said, “Wait.” Maureen Mannix said that procedurally, this is a different topic. Mr. Rabel and Mr. Smith both agreed to withdraw the motion.

Policy Review 3125

Rick Duncan discussed homelessness and provided examples; when asked he stated that there are 5 or 6 students that qualify as homeless.

Action: Baylee Brown moved to approve BP 3125 Education of Homeless Children as presented by Rick Duncan, seconded by Amanda Bohrer.

Discussion: Robert Rabel asked BP 3125F (a dispute form) if it was included in the main policy. Mr. Duncan said it is being added with this policy update.

The motion passed unanimously.

Policy Review 2312: Copyright Compliance

Action: Will Graveley moved to eliminate BP 2312P from BP2312 due to obsolescence, seconded by Baylee Brown.

Discussion: Robert Rabel said the policy link on the PCHS website is not working. Rick Duncan responded that it will be updated, and that now a username and password is required to review policies; this change is the result of the MTSBA contracting with a new company.

The motion passed unanimously.

Bus Contract Renewal: Sackman Busing

Rick Duncan announced that we’ve had a contract with Sackman Busing for over 50 years. At the end of this school year, Bob Sackman will retire after 55 years of service, and his son Martin will be taking over Sackman Busing. PCHS’s contract with Sackman Busing expires this June and is due for renewal. Mr. Duncan recommends a 12% increase (which is the maximum allowed) for the next 3-year contract.

Action: Maureen Mannix moved to approve a 3-year contract with Sackman Busing with a 12% increase, seconded by Will Graveley.

Discussion: Maureen Mannix said that we have been shown the durability of Sackman Busing for the north county residents and stated that this payment comes through the Transportation Fund. Baylee Brown asked if potential unification of districts affect this contract, and Rick Duncan said no. Mrs. Mannix asked about the 12% increase and Mr. Duncan said that is equals \$4,813.00, and that Drummond High School also renewed its contract with a 12% increase.

FOR: Amanda Bohrer, Will Graveley, Maureen Mannix, Robert Rabel, and Bart Smith.

AGAINST: Baylee Brown.

Staff Request for Credit

Rick Duncan recommended approval of a staff request for credit for a graduate-level class graded as a pass/no pass, rather than a letter grade per our policy. Mr. Duncan added that this has become more common at that level and that we have approved pass/no pass classes numerous times in the past.

Action: Amanda Bohrer moved to approve the Staff Request for Credit for a pass/no pass graduate-level class, seconded by Robert Rabel.

Discussion: Robert Rabel said he wouldn't be against someone furthering their education. The motion passed unanimously.

Golden Triangle Curriculum Cooperative: Contract Renewal

Action: Will Graveley moved to renew the Golden Triangle Curriculum Cooperative contract for 2023-24, seconded by Robert Rabel.

The motion passed unanimously.

Joint Board MOU Status and Trustee Appointment

Action: Robert Rabel moved to renew the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)

Between Powell County High School District and Deer Lodge Elementary District No. 1, seconded by Will Graveley.

Discussion: Maureen Mannix asked if #2 on the agreement regarding transaction business should be stricken, or if it was correct. The legal wording states, "The joint board of trustees shall not have the power to transact business that is not specifically related to the joint administration of the districts" After discussion regarding joint administration, Mrs. Mannix found that it is part of MCA 20-3-362 and needs to remain in the MOU.

The motion passed unanimously.

12. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Katie Crofutt reported an April 17, 2023 enrollment of 176 students (a decrease of 3 from last month), and consists of the following: 49 freshman, 58 sophomores, 37 juniors, and 32 seniors. Included in the count are 0 Job Corp students, and 0 Youth Challenge students. Mrs. Crofutt said that 2 moved to home school, and 1 dropped out. Mrs. Crofutt stated the CNA Cohort will have 11 students next year and is 100% free; 1 student is graduating from Montana Tech on May 17th with her CNA Certificate and license; and 1 student is currently completing the CDL program (also free) and will have her CDL license by the end of this school year. Montana Tech is working to continue this program next year, but it's not guaranteed. Mrs. Crofutt listed the dual-credit classes available **online** at PCHS next year, which include the following:

- Intro to Sociology
- Intro to Psych
- Exploring digital photography
- Web design
- Cybersecurity Essentials
- Business Law
- Medical Terminology
- Principles of Financial Accounting
- College Writing 1
- Intro to Health Careers
- Computational Thinking
- Technical Math

Dual-credit classes available **on campus** at PCHS next year include the following:

- Spanish I, II, III
- French I, II, III
- Child Development
- EDU 201
- Education Internship
- Healthcare Internship
- Metal Fabrication
- Advanced Welding
- College Algebra (all Algebra II will be eligible for dual credit through Western)

Advanced Placement classes available **on campus** at PCHS next year include the following:

- AP Language
- AP Government
- AP Calc
- AP Pre-Calc

The potential college credit earnings are 90 college credits, which equals 3.75 years, or approximately \$83,467.00. Mrs. Crofutt also discussed alternative programs for students either working fully online at home (requires a 504 plan for alternative placement), and credit recovery. Students have completed 22.5 credits, and 3 of the students are graduating this year.

Mrs. Crofutt also discussed ELA and Math Curriculum Alignment and the Innovation Team. She said that ELA is finishing reading standards and is moving on to speaking and listening, and that math has identified priority standards and working on a final document; both will provide presentations at the May meeting. The Innovation Team used a cognitive rigor matrix and learning-target rubric to create high-quality learning targets. The team is focused on a learner-centered school that will better engage students and make them the driver of their own learning.

11. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:

Rick Duncan gave a Covid update and stated that there have been no changes. Mr. Duncan then gave a legislative update and said it is day 76 of the session. Mr. Duncan discussed various bills, including an “open enrollment” bill, the health insurance for educator’s bill, a school elections bill, a “defining obscenity” bill, and last an updated CSCT bill (it was just updated last year). Mr. Duncan then discussed the Joint Board, the MTSBA survey, and the pros and cons of unification; he said the big con is the meshing of the 2 Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA’s). Mr. Duncan said there are many challenges/issues, and that it takes more than just a flip-of-the-switch. He said the biggest positive should be whatever is in the best interest of the students of Powell County. Will Graveley was concerned that Avon and the other feeder elementary districts to PCHS won’t have the same curriculum alignment. Maureen Mannix asked about the MTSBA survey going out to the voters, and asked if we are still waiting for it. Mrs. Mannix also asked about every-door direct mailings. Mr. Duncan said that the survey is not available yet, and he will get an update from the MTSBA. Baylee Brown had questions on the

timeline for the survey and its results. Bart Smith stated that we may need a special meeting to review the results once available; he added that negotiating between the 2 CBA's is purely between the 2 unions, and the Board has very little to do with it.

12. BUSINESS MANAGER

Annette Galahan provided an updated revenues/expenditures spreadsheet through February 2023. Robert Rabel asked when we are going to buy a bus, and Mr. Duncan said he's trying to get 3 buses ordered – 1 for PCHS and 2 for the elementary district.

Action: Robert Rabel moved to approve the April bills, seconded by Baylee Brown.

Discussion: Robert Rabel said that he and Annette Galahan agree that the credit card limit should be increased, as online purchases are more commonplace, and the limit hasn't changed for years. This can be changed next month.

The motion passed unanimously.

13. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- 2nd Reading CRT policy.
- Credit card limit increase.
- Board member background checks.

14. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m. by unanimous consent.

The next regular meeting will be **Monday, May 8, 2023** at 6:30 p.m.

s/Annette Galahan, District Business Manager/Clerk

s/Jennifer Nicholson, Board Chair