Deer Lodge School District #1
444 Montana Avenue, Deer Lodge, MT 59722
(406) 846-1553

Board of Trustees

School Board Meeting Minutes

Central Park Center
444 Montana Avenue, Deer Lodge, MT 59722
3/10/2026 6:30 pm

Call to Order

Members Present: Chair Scott Perkins, Trustee Jennifer Nicholson, Trustee Rex Anderson, Trustee Missy Merrill, Vice Chair Bart Smith, Trustee Clark, Trustee Applegate, Trustee Rabel and Trustee Will Graveley (arrived at 7:42 pm).

Members Absent: None.

Administration Present: Superintendent Eric Gustafson, Principal Rick Chrisman, Principal Shelly Burton, Business Manager/Clerk Tara Johnson and Assistant Business Manager LeeAnne Pomeroy

Pledge of Allegiance

Recognition of Visitors

Courtney Raseley, Ida Miller, Kaelinne Daniel, Shane Olsen, Tanya Rodriguez, Mark Morrison, Courtney Prosenick, Clint Stevenson, Sara Foster, Toni Chew, Sean McConnaha, Bob Schalk, Jessie Fischer, Holly Sheldon, Tom Cotton and Nolan Boyle.

Public Comment

This is the time for comment on public matters that are not on the agenda. Public matters do not include any pending legal matters, private personnel issues or private student issues. Please do not attempt to address such issues at this time or you will be ruled out of order. The Board cannot enter into a discussion during General Public Comment.

None

Correspondence

Resignation letter from Renda McCrum.
2 year resignation letter from Karen Herrin.
Resignation letter from Katie Crofutt.
Negotiations open letter from PCTA.
Negotiations open letter from Teamsters.

Approval of Minutes

Trustee Anderson made a motion to approve the February 10th, 2026 meeting minutes.
Trustee Rabel seconded the motion.
Motion carried unanimously.

Board Members: **Chair Scott Perkins, Vice Chair Bart Smith, Trustee Melissa Merrill, Trustee Jennifer Nicholson, Trustee Will Graveley, Trustee Robert Rabel, Trustee Kathy Clark, Trustee Rex Anderson and Trustee Katie Applegate**

Administration: **Superintendent Eric Gustafson, Principal Katie Crofutt, Principal Shelly Burton, Principal Rick Chrisman, Business Manager/Clerk Tara Johnson and Asst Business Mgr LeeAnne Pomeroy**

Old Business

- Reading and Adoption of Amendments to the following Policies:
  - 5255-Disciplinary Action
    Trustee Merrill made a motion to approve and adopt the amendment to policy #5255.
    Trustee Clark seconded the motion.
    Motion carried unanimously.
  - 5122-Fingerprints and Criminal Background Investigations
    Trustee Merrill made a motion to approve and adopt the amendment to policy #5122.
    Trustee Smith seconded the motion.
    Motion carried unanimously.
  - 8301-District Safety
    Trustee Merrill made a motion to approve and adopt the amendment to policy #8301.
    Trustee Nicholson seconded the motion.
    Motion carried unanimously.
  - 2600-Work Based Learning
    Trustee Merrill made a motion to approve and adopt the amendment to policy #2600.
    Trustee Rabel seconded the motion.
    Motion carried unanimously.
  - 5120-P(1)-Hiring Process and Criteria-Fingerprint Background Handling Procedure
    Trustee Merrill made a motion to approve and adopt the amendment to policy #5120-P(1).
    Trustee Nicholson seconded
    Motion carried unanimously.
  - Notice Form 5430-NF(1)-Volunteers-Chaperone Letter of Understanding
    Trustee Rabel made a motion to approve and adopt the amendment to policy #5430-NF(1).
    Trustee Clark seconded the motion.
    Motion carried unanimously.
- Reading and Adoption of New Policies
  - 3665-Student Safety
    Trustee Merrill made a motion to adopt new policy #3665.
    Trustee Nicholson seconded the motion.
    Motion carried unanimously.
  - 8560-Display of Flags and Banners on District Property
    Trustee Rabel made a motion to adopt new policy #8560.
    Trustee Smith seconded the motion.
    Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

- Early Retirement Incentive
  Trustee Anderson made a motion to approve the Early Retirement Incentive presented to offer to Principal Rick Chrisman.
  Trustee Smith seconded the motion.
  Motion carried unanimously.
- Principal Search
  Trustee Nicholson made a motion approving the Superintendent to advertise for a 7-12 Principal with the possibility of an additional duty of Athletic Director.
  Trustee Merrill seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

- **Hire Bus Driver**
  Trustee Anderson made a motion to hire DJ Prosenick as a bus driver.
  Trustee Merrill seconded the motion.
  Motion carried unanimously.

- **Addition to Substitute List**
  Trustee Smith made a motion to add Kris Bledsoe to the Substitute List.
  Trustee Rabel seconded the motion.
  Motion carried unanimously.

- **Out of District Agreements**
  Chair Perkins closed the meeting due to privacy rights at 7:10 pm.
  Chair Perkins opened the meeting at 7:12 pm.
  Trustee Merrill made a motion to approve the presented Out of District Agreements minus the two from Avon.
  Trustee Clark seconded the motion.
  Motion carried unanimously.

- **Set Elementary Building Reserve Levy Amount**
  Trustee Nicholson made a motion to set the Elementary Building Reserve Levy Amount at $375,000 spread out over 5 years at $75,000 per year.
  Trustee Anderson seconded the motion.

  Trustee Nicholson amended her motion to set the Elementary Building Reserve Levy Amount at $300,000 spread out over 3 years at $100,000 per year.
  Trustee Smith seconded the motion.
  Motion carried unanimously.

- **Set High School Building Reserve Levy Amount**
  Trustee Anderson made a motion to set the High School Building Reserve Levy Amount at $300,000 spread out over 3 years at $100,000 per year.
  Trustee Rabel seconded the motion.
  Motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Graveley arrived and was not present for any vote prior to this.

- **Notice of Intent to Raise Non-Voted Levies**
  Trustee Merrill made a motion to approve the Notice of Intent to Raise Non-Voted Levies.
  Trustee Smith seconded the motion.
  Motion carried unanimously.

- **Renewal of Tenured Certified Staff**
  Trustee Smith made a motion to renew the following Tenured Certified Staff: Andrew Badgero, Mary Badgero, Karissa Bates, Tammy Beck, Susan Bleken, Alexis Bowdish, Rebecca Clute, Tom Cotton, Jami Eads, Sara Foster, Amber Gates, Dawn Hagan, Brian Hansen, Cory Hansen, Laura Hayman, Tammy Heaney, Karen Herrin, Zana Hogan, Shelby Huber, Maggie Hunter, Britten Jay, Patricia Liedes, Bill Lombardi, Sean McConnaha, Mark Morrison, Shane Olsen, Marie Porter, Courtney Prosenick, Marisa Rivera-Kohn, Veronica Sallee, Francis Spring, Clint Stevenson, Kirk Walker and Patricia Witt.
  Trustee Perkins seconded the motion.
  Motion carried unanimously.

- **Renewal of Certified Staff up for Tenure**
  Trustee Anderson made a motion to renew Certified Staff member up for Tenure Nolan Boyle.
  Trustee Nicholson seconded the motion.
  Motion carried unanimously.

  Trustee Anderson made a motion to renew Certified Staff member up for Tenure Holly Sheldon.
  Trustee Rabel seconded the motion.
  Motion carried unanimously.

  Trustee Clark made a motion to renew Certified Staff member up for Tenure Miranda Bignell.
  Trustee Merrill seconded the motion.
  Motion carried unanimously.

- **Renewal of Non-Tenured Certified Staff**
  Trustee Anderson made a motion to renew contracts of the following Non-Tenured Certified Staff: Tristen Clark, Dani Crowe, Katlin Despain, Wade Harper, Alicia Matthew, Natalie Renk, Tanya Rodriguez, Jaicee Senecal and McKenna Stefalo.
  Trustee Rabel seconded the motion.
  Motion carried unanimously.

- **Renewal of Tenured Certified Staff with Required Roll Call Vote**
  Trustee Merrill made a motion to renew Tenured Certified Staff member Laurel Smith.
  Trustee Rabel seconded the motion.
  Roll Call Vote: Trustees Perkins, Anderson, Rabel, Applegate, Clark, Graveley, Merrill and Nicholson voted Yay. Trustee Smith abstained. Motion carried.

  Trustee Merrill made a motion to renew Tenured Certified Staff member Kacie Perkins.
  Trustee Nicholson seconded the motion.
  Roll Call Vote: Trustees Smith, Anderson, Rabel, Applegate, Clark, Graveley, Merrill and Nicholson voted Yay. Trustee Perkins abstained. Motion carried.

- **Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured**
  Trustee Smith made a motion to non-renew Certified member Erin Good.
  Trustee Merrill seconded the motion.
  Motion carried unanimously.

  Trustee Rabel made a motion to non-renew Certified member Courntey Rasely.
  Trustee Smith seconded the motion.
  Motion carried unanimously.

Principals' Report

Principal Chrisman- Working with our School Psych on getting our kids evaluated. We made a triage list and are working on that. Kinder Roundup is coming up. We have about 20 kids signed up for kindergarten roundup, we have 3 preschool kiddos that will join them and we are looking at 3-4 possible red shirts. Rough estimate right now is 27. 1st grade we are looking at 35. And 2nd grade for next year we are looking at 40. 3rd grade 43, 4th grade 38, 5th grade 46 and 6th grade 33 for a total of 262. As a board you made a decision to eliminate an administrator and move 7th and 8th to the High School and I believe when you are looking at 262 students in K-6, that you made the right decisions.

Principal Crofutt- Enrollment is holding steady at 153. We have pre-service teachers in our building right now that has been a great experience. Our PAC is working on the discipline matrix right now.

Principal Burton- Working on the discipline matrix this week. We are also working on a community engagement project. Testing is still in full swing.

Superintendent's Report

There are poster boards in the other room in regards to the bond election. There was a Chamber Dinner a few weeks ago where I was supposed to present but unfortunately could not do so, so Chris presented instead and did a great job. The HS Atrium interior doors should be installed as early as next week.

Business Manager

- **Monthly Reports – Revenues and Expenditures**
  Binders were updated.
- **Health Insurance Committee**
  A meeting was held yesterday. We are expending close to a million dollars on health benefits right now. This is something that is going to have to be discussed during negotiations as we can not continue to fiscally afford this.
- **Set Finance Committee Date**
  Will get together with Will, Rex and Scott to find a date that works.
- **Claims –**
  Trustee Anderson made a motion to accept the claims.
  Trustee Applegate seconded the motion.
  Motion carried unanimously.

Future Agenda Items

Canvass votes, possible policies

Chair Perkins adjourned the meeting at 8:21 pm.

Chair Scott Perkins **Clerk Tara Johnson**