BPS Policy Committee Minutes
Thursday, July 30, 2026 @ 5:00 PM
Administration Conference Room

Present: Cheryl Madman, Terrance LaFromboise, Rebecca Rappold, Jennifer LaFromboise-Wagner, Sandra Rivas, Melanie Heavy Runner.

COMMITTEE MINUTES: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ITEMS OF DISCUSSION

Review 1000 Policies: Superintendent Rappold provided background on the district's policy review process. She explained that Browning Public Schools has been reviewing its policies over the past year. Under former Superintendent Guardipee-Hall's leadership, the district began working with the Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA) to transition all policies to the MTSBA model policy numbering system. Previously, the district maintained a large collection of policies from the National School Boards Association that used a different numbering system. After MTSBA became the district's legal counsel, the differences in policy numbering created challenges when providing guidance on policy matters. MTSBA recommended transitioning the district's policies to its model numbering system. This process began during the final four years of Superintendent Guardipee-Hall's tenure but was not completed before Superintendent Rappold assumed the superintendent position.

Superintendent Rappold stated that when she and Assistant Superintendent LaFromboise-Wagner began their roles, they resumed working with MTSBA to complete the transition. However, they discovered that the individual who had been assisting with the policy review had left MTSBA before updating the policies specific to Browning Public Schools. Although the district's policies had been transitioned to the MTSBA numbering system, several district-specific policies had been omitted.

During their first year, Superintendent Rappold and Assistant Superintendent LaFromboise-Wagner identified policies they knew the district had previously adopted but could no longer locate. They contacted MTSBA to review its recommendations for adoption and worked with Ms. Michaels to review the policies and identify those specific to Browning Public Schools that were missing. They then contacted MTSBA again, which initiated the current review process.

Superintendent Rappold further explained that, over the past seven years, policies presented to the Board for approval had been approved or revised, but the changes were not always forwarded to MTSBA. Although the district maintains records of these changes in BoardBook and official board records, the policies published on the district's website do not reflect all approved revisions. The district is working to correct these discrepancies. MTSBA no longer provides this service and will not go back to make the corrections on the district's behalf. As a result, Browning Public Schools is responsible for reviewing and incorporating the previously approved changes. Moving forward, the district will use the work completed over the past year to update and maintain its policies.

Superintendent Rappold explained that the purpose of the meeting was to establish a consistent process for reviewing district policies. Any policies requiring changes or revisions will be brought before the full Board for consideration and a recommendation on the proposed changes.

She informed the committee that the review would begin with the 1000 series of policies, which address the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees.

OTHER ITEMS OF DISCUSSION:

Superintendent Rappold explained that two policies were added to the meeting agenda for review. The first was the Student Athlete and Eligibility Policy, which needs to be reviewed so the district can move forward with a decision and, if changes are recommended, bring the revised policy to the Board for approval. The second was Food Service Policy 8210. She explained that the district's Food Service Program recently underwent an audit by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), during which it was recommended that the outdated policy be reviewed and updated. The revised policy will be brought before the Board for adoption.

Policy 3510 (P) 1: Mr. Hall recommended revising the eligibility policy from the current recommended minimum GPA requirement of 2.0 to a requirement that students pass all classes, with no failing grades. Superintendent Rappold stated that she was not involved in all of the meetings with the high school administration and coaches but explained that the recommendation stemmed from challenges with applying the current eligibility requirements to students with 504 plans. She noted that requiring students to earn a passing grade in every class, rather than meeting a minimum GPA, may be easier to accommodate and support students with 504 plans.

Assistant Superintendent LaFromboise-Wagner stated that both the high school and middle school had discussed the proposed change. She explained that the original policy was brought forward by the counselors and the previous athletic director shortly after COVID-19. Superintendent Rappold stated that Mr. Hall and Mr. Salois believed requiring students to pass all classes would better align with intercollegiate athletics and college eligibility requirements.

Assistant Superintendent LaFromboise-Wagner further explained that the policy would apply to all activities involving out-of-district trips. Therefore, the policy would need to reference Browning Public Schools (BPS) rather than Browning High School (BHS).

Mr. LaFromboise emphasized the importance of teachers entering grades consistently and expressed concern about the additional responsibilities this would place on staff. He noted that principals would need to monitor grade updates to ensure information remained current. He also asked whether the proposed eligibility policy would align with the tardy and absentee policy. Superintendent Rappold stated that she could not provide an answer at that time because the district was still working on that policy.

Mr. LaFromboise also expressed concerns about students frequently moving on and off the eligibility list. Superintendent Rappold asked whether he would recommend language addressing eligibility after a certain number of grading cycles. Mr. LaFromboise suggested that the Board could determine the appropriate language. Superintendent Rappold recommended gathering additional information before presenting the policy to the Board for consideration.

Superintendent Rappold provided background on the policy, explaining that it was previously numbered Policy 3520 under the district's former numbering system. The policy was reviewed on August 8, 2023, with the previous review date listed as October 12, 2021. However, no documentation of a formal amendment or approval was found in the Board meeting materials, indicating that the policy may have been reviewed without formal action.

Assistant Superintendent LaFromboise-Wagner stated that she had located a document dated November 22, 2021, containing a revised eligibility policy, although the document was marked with revisions and crossed-out language. She added that Mr. Wagner had informed her that the revised policy was approved but was never incorporated into the student handbook.

Superintendent Rappold stated that she would review the policy with Mr. Hall and Mr. Salois, taking Mr. LaFromboise's concerns into consideration. She reiterated that the revised policy would apply districtwide to all Browning Public Schools activities rather than solely to high school athletics.

Policy 8210: Superintendent Rappold explained that the procurement policy governs purchasing procedures in accordance with Montana law. She stated that purchases exceeding $80,000.00 must follow the applicable cooperative bidding and purchasing requirements. She provided the district's current policy, originally adopted in 2021 and last reviewed on May 26, 2021, along with the updated version recommended by the Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA) in 2023. The $80,000.00 threshold remains unchanged; however, the updated policy further defines purchasing thresholds.

Superintendent Rappold clarified that the policy applies to non-instructional operations and does not apply to curriculum purchases. It would apply to purchases related to food service, maintenance, equipment, and major or minor construction, as applicable to the established thresholds.

Mr. LaFromboise stated that all purchases are brought before the Board. Superintendent Rappold clarified that purchases exceeding $10,000.00 are presented to the Board and stated that the district should retain the $10,000.00 threshold. She explained that the current policy does not specifically identify small purchasing thresholds. Mr. Reagan had previously provided information outlining purchasing levels, with purchases from $10,000.00 through $24,999.00 classified as small purchases and purchases exceeding that amount requiring a bidding process and quotes, as applicable.

Superintendent Rappold asked whether the proposed small purchasing threshold remained reasonable. Those present agreed with the proposed amounts. Ms. Rivas stated that she believed the thresholds were appropriate, noting that many districts cannot issue checks without prior Board approval.

Superintendent Rappold also identified bid specifications and geographic preference as optional provisions in the updated policy. She asked those present to review the provisions and determine whether they were agreeable. Those present agreed with the proposed provisions.

Superintendent Rappold stated that the existing policy would be amended to reflect the recommended changes, with deleted language struck through and proposed revisions and recommendations identified in red. She clarified that this was an amendment to an existing policy rather than the adoption of a new policy. Therefore, it would not require the same first- and second-reading approval process as a new policy and could be brought before the Board for information and review.