

**CRESTON SCHOOL DISTRICT #9
REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
11 DECEMBER 2025
MINUTES**

- I. Call to Order. Jessica Sandven-Sorensen called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:04 a.m. The meeting was held in the gym. Present were Board Trustees Jessica Sandven-Sorensen, Twila Brenneman, Megan Derrington, and Nevada Hafer. Also in attendance were Dr. Cheryl Peterson, Principal, Gina McWilliam, District Clerk, Cindi Conley, Jen Johnson, Melissa Potts, and Milo Funk. Appearing via Zoom was Marcia Stolfus, Flathead County Superintendent of Schools.
- II. Minutes of 14 November 2025 Regular Meeting. Nevada Hafer moved to approve the minutes as presented. Megan Derrington seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- III. Public Participation / Correspondence – nil.
- IV. Appoint vacant trustee and oath of office
 - A. Megan Derrington moved to appoint Milo Funk to the trustee seat vacated in November by Barry Farrell. Twila Brenneman seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
 - B. Marcia Solfus, Superintendent of Flathead County Schools administered the oath of office to Milo Funk.
- V. Information
 - A. Candidates for the May 2026 Trustee Election may file a Declaration of Intent
 - B. The school prepared a framed photograph and thank you card for former Trustee Barry Farrell and will present it to him next week.
 - C. The administration is currently exploring options to ensure long-term sustainability for Creston School District. Please refer to the **“Understanding”** document for additional details. The traditions and culture that make Creston School unique—such as small class sizes and strong community relationships—will remain central to any decisions. Nothing will move forward without the voices of the board, staff, faculty, and community. Efforts will include seeking input from the community via a survey and opportunities for in person discussions. Improvements or enhancements may include adding grades 7 and 8; adding Career Technical Education to the curriculum; adding an after-school program; providing meal services and adding a school kitchen. Focus will remain on keeping our overall school size small with manageable classrooms, maintaining a five-day school week, and providing teachers and staff with competitive wages.
 - D. The District Clerk will engage the services of ANB Consulting, LLC to receive consultation and training support to strengthen the district’s regular accounting functions. The District Clerk is committed to improving the district’s accounting processes and procedures but currently lacks the expertise needed to streamline workflows and implement more efficient systems. Strong, well-structured financial processes are essential to support the district’s innovative improvement initiatives, and additional guidance will help ensure these systems are sound, sustainable, and aligned with best practices.
 - E. The Bigfork Food Pantry is interested in partnering with the school to use our location as one of their mobile food pantry sites. Discussion is underway to determine the scope of the service including days, times, occurrence, and specific location on the school grounds. The general idea is the food pantry would use the parking lot only, during non-school hours, to distribute food to the community. Additional information will be shared when appropriate.
 - F. The CEA intends to negotiate next year. The CBA has been provided to the Board for review.
 - G. The Montana Innovative Educational Program Tax Credit opportunity is shared with school families and will be included as an information item in the upcoming survey to the surrounding community. In an effort to further promote the opportunity it was suggested the information be included with mailings done by the Creston Fire Department and that we also ask for donations such as tools and materials as well as knowledge-based contributions.
 - H. District Clerk continues to attend web trainings offered by Black Mountain Accounting software, MASBO and regularly attends local District Clerk meetings.
 - I. See the attached report for principal update.
 - J. See the link for the [staff report](#).
- VI. Policies: First Reading
 - New
 - o Policy 2700: AI Integration in Education

○ Policy 8560: Display of Flags and Banners on District Property (Review in terms of weather flags) – Clarification was provided that we cannot use weather flags. Instead we will use signs as appropriate.

Amend

○ Policy 1014FE: Intent to Increase non-Voted Levy

○ Policy 1014FE-NF(1): Intent to Increase Non-Voted Levy - Notice of Intent to

Impose an Increase in levies Form

○ Policy 1111: Elections

○ Policy 1700: Uniform Complaint Procedure – Board request we use “Administrator” in place of principal or superintendent.

○ Policy 2100: School Calendar Day

○ Policy 2162: Section 504

○ Policy 2334: Release Time for Religious Instruction (First Reading of changes made). Board agreed to allow two hours of release time for religious instruction and requested to strike “optional” area.

○ Policy 2335: Human Sexuality Instruction and Identity Instruction

○ Policy 3310: Student Discipline

○ Policy 3410: Student Health

○ Policy 3510: School-Sponsored Activities

○ Policy 3612: District-Provided Access to Electronic Information, Services, Equipment, and Networks

○ Policy 5255: Disciplinary Action

VII. Consideration of Action Items:

A. Out-of-District Requests. Attendance agreements for six (6) middle school students that reside in our district, attending another district. Megan Derrington moved to approve the attendance agreements. Nevada Hafer seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Attendance agreements for 16 elementary students that reside in our students, attending another district. Megan Derrington moved to acknowledge receipt of these requests. Twila Brenneman seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

B. The District Clerk requested to process routine claims for payment without requiring the board to convene prior to issuance. This authorization will allow the District to operate more efficiently and better utilize electronic payment processing and streamline financial procedures. Individual claims of \$5000 or more will be brought to the Board for approval and prior to processing payment. Twila Brenneman moved to authorize the District Clerk to process claims for payment between board meetings, with all claims to be presented on the Claims Approval List at the next regular Board meeting for review and approval, and with the Board Chair continuing to review and sign checks as required. Nevada Hafer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Bridged Health Alliance is the newly established health and wellness benefits trust from Montana House Bill 332 (2023). The school must pay 5% of the employee cost. The addition of family coverage is optional and is the employee's responsibility. Megan Derrington moved to approve the Multidistrict and Participation Agreements to join the Bridged Health Alliance. Nevada Hafer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Transportation Handbook for 2025/2026 was updated. Nevada Hafer moved to approve the 2025-2026 Transportation Handbook as presented. Megan Derrington seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Montana Advanced Opportunities Grant. The administration has written a grant for Creston's grades 6 and potentially 7 and 8 to participate in Career Technical Education opportunities by offering modules that teach CTE skills and observations/internships in various local industries. There will be no additional cost to families and the grant will cover the cost of implementing the supplies, equipment and travel. Megan Derrington moved to approve applying for the OPI Montana Advanced Opportunities grant as written. Nevada Hafer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Claims for December 2025 was not presented for this meeting. But as approved in this meeting, the claim will be processed and available for review for the January 8, 2026 meeting.

IX. Next Meeting Dates:

A. 12 February 2026, 7:00am, Regular Meeting

B. 12 March 2026, 7:00am, Regular Meeting

X. Adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:46 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/
Gina McWilliam, District Clerk

/s/
Jessica Sandven-Sorensen, Board Chair