

Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative
Regular Council Meeting
8/20/2026

The Regular Council meeting of the Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative was held at the Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative Office on August 20, 2026 for the purpose of considering business to come before the Council. Chair, Laura Axtman, presided over the meeting.

1. Call to Order

Laura Axtman called the meeting to order at 10:13 am.

Members Present

- ☒ **Amsterdam**– John Dubose
- ☒ **Anderson**– Spencer Johnson
- ☐ **Big Sky**–Dustin Shipman
- ☒ **Ennis**– Jared Moretti
- ☒ **Gallatin Co. Supt.**– John Nielson
- ☐ **Gateway**–Kelly Henderson
- ☒ **Harrison**–Doug Pfau
- ☒ **LaMotte**– Scott Poloff
- ☒ **Monforton**– Laura Axtman
- ☒ **West Yellowstone**– Kevin Flanagan
- ☒ **Willow Creek**– Bonnie Lower

Visitors:

2. Public Comments

Staff Present Kim Wegner-McCauley, Director; Joyce Schmidt, Clerk & Business Manager;
Riley Russell, Executive Assistant

Staff Absent

3. Consent Agenda

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| Approval of | a. | Approval of June 18, 2026 GMSEC Board Meeting Minutes |
| Minutes &
Expenditures | b. | Approval of expenditures: (#318360-318373)- May, June, July |
- Motion to approve minutes and expenditures.
- Motion: Scott Poloff
- Second: Spencer Johnson - Passed Unanimously.

4. New Business:

a.) Business Manager's Report

(Informational)

Joyce reported that since the previous Board meeting in June the May through July reports have been released by the GCFD and reconciled with the GMSEC books. The ending balances by fund for those months are as follows:

MAY 2026

314	\$103,958.63	315	\$189,941.97	382	\$301,392.30
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JUNE 2026

314	\$106,008.12	315	\$106,864.41	382	\$272,928.07
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JULY 2026

314	\$106,327.78	315	\$ 62,941.48	382	\$273,940.73
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Joyce shared that the June ending total in fund 315 is less than half of what had been expected. This was the result of the second June payment for the IDEA-B grant in the amount of \$126,925 being delayed due to problems in the state system. The payment was then expected in July but was not listed in the financials released from GCFD on Monday. We have been assured the number will be in our August financials expected in mid-September.

Cooperative expenditures have & continue to be predominately labor related—payroll & related expenses for instruction, specialists & administration staff members. Our June expense comparison continued to show our shortage of school psychologists & SLPs in FY26 & since all our cooperative costs run through three funds each will reflect the staff shortages. In addition to staff costs, the Special Revenue Fund [315] includes all other expenditures. Differences of note in this fund for FY26 include the use of Rock Creek Teletherapy for some SLP services & not purchasing a new vehicle. The trend continued with spending through June across all three funds being 14% less than the same period of FY25.

July spending in FY27 is consistent with FY26.

Strom & Associates has tentatively scheduled the audit fieldwork of our FY26 books to begin October 5th.

MAC financial reports for the period of January 1st through June 30th of 2026 were due August 7th. Reports have been completed as well as submitted by all participating school districts.

5. Approval of Trustee's Financial Summary Report

(Motion/Discussion/Action)

The TFS FY26 was submitted to the OPI on August 11th prior to the MCA due date of the 15th. However, should the Board wish to change any information in the submitted report OPI will return the report for changes & resubmission.

The BCBS binder payment of \$5,820.20 has been treated as a prepaid expenditure & split between funds 315 & 382. The challenges encountered during the 3-pay payroll in early June had the coop under two different health insurance providers—MUST for June & BCBS for July & August. Further, we did not have final numbers from BCBS prior to the payrolls being processed.

While compiling the expenditures it came to Joyce's attention that the portion of the director's salary in fund 382 had been captured under the school psychologist coding rather than the administration coding. Joyce contacted our external auditor, Strom & Associates, to see if it was necessary to correct the error now or just moving forward into the new FY. The response was to just make the correction going forward.

Motion to approve the Trustee's Financial Summary Report.

Motion: Jared Moretti

Second: Spencer Johnson

-Passed Unanimously

6. Director's Report

(Informational)

i. Staffing update

We have signed on with Valley Speech Pathology for virtual speech services this year. They are a small agency working with schools in Montana. Kim was able to meet with Dakota (the director) and Cassidy (SLP) on Monday. Cassidy was able to meet with Reena at West Yellowstone yesterday to touch base and discuss caseload, etc. The fee for these virtual SLP services, will be \$85/hr. Cassidy will be working with West Yellowstone, 3 days a week. The contract with Valley Speech Pathology will save the coop an estimated \$30,000 compared to our fees with Rock Creek last year. While we feel this is a great service for this school year and are happy to have it in place for our students, the coop will continue to search for an SLP who can provide in-person services for our member districts.

We do not have Kylee available as an SLP-A this year as she took a different job. Our contract with Rock Creek has ended on good terms. Kim communicated with Kathleen about those services. Joyce has made sure all of our payments to Rock Creek are fulfilled.

We also will have a school psych intern joining us this year. Kim will work closely with him at his assigned schools and ensure services are being met at those districts. Gael is coming to us from Oregon and is eager to get started with us this year.

Child Find & Hearing Screenings

Child Find:

We are planning to approach Child Find differently this year. The number of participants has gone down over the past few years and we hope a new plan will support both the needs of the families in our member districts and the schedules of our coop staff, Family Outreach and Audiologist. We will provide a total of five Child Find days this year. We will hold Child Find days on October 13 at West Yellowstone, October 21st at Ennis (Ennis, Harrison, Willow Creek), October 27th at Big Sky, November 20th at GMSEC office (Anderson, Amsterdam, Gallatin Gateway, LaMotte, Monforton, County Schools). Then we will host a final day in April. The day in April can support any child who may have missed our fall screenings and give us a chance to connect with families prior to the end of the school year. We tend to have families reach out toward the end of the school year. Having a Child Find day in the spring can support connection with these families prior to the end of the year.

Kim visited with Shey Mayland, our audiologist, and Family Outreach and they are on board with this new approach to our Child Find screenings. This change in our plan still meets all of the criteria for Child Find and all member districts will continue to be compliant in their services to our students and families.

Hearing Screenings:

Jill Chumbley has been working on developing a schedule for hearing screenings. She has created a template and shared it out with other SLP's to coordinate with them and finalize a plan for district hearing screenings. So far she has a few screenings tentatively scheduled in September.

Annual Signatures for Interlocal Agreement

At the beginning of the year all member districts review and sign the Interlocal Agreement. Kim will send this to all of our member districts via DocuSign for signatures. This agreement states the duties of our member districts as well as the coop in order to best serve the students in our communities.

7. **Approval of Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative 2026-2027 Employee Handbook**

(Motion/Discussion/Action)

Negotiated items from spring 2026 were added to the handbook as well as some general edits.

Motion to approve the Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative 2026-27 Handbook.

Motion: Doug Pfau

Second: John Dubose

-Passed Unanimously

8. Approval of Final Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative FY 27 Budget

(Motion/Discussion/Action)

Kim shared the final proposed 2027 budget with you in the Board packet. This budget includes updated IDEA and PIG and Fund 382 funds. Compared to last year, our IDEA budget is up about \$6000, the PIG is about \$1300 higher and Fund 382 is down about \$6500. Within Fund 382, the quality educator funds are down about \$10,000 and Admin, RSBG and IBG all have small increases for this coming year. We are hoping to save some funds contracting with Valley Speech Pathology this year. We do keep the positions that are not filled listed to ensure those funds are available when filled. After updating all of the numbers for this coming school year we are feeling confident with the budget plan we have moving into this school year.

Motion to approve final Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative FY 27 Budget.

Motion: Kevin Flanagan

Second: Scott Poloff

-Passed Unanimously

9. Approval of Program Narrative revised May 2026

(Motion/Discussion/Action)

Last year OPI required all districts in Montana to update and submit a Program Narrative. This has been a long time requirement in Montana but some districts had not ever created a narrative and OPI had not been monitoring the narratives until last year. The GMSEC's Program Narrative had last been updated in 2009 . So Kim used that coop narrative as well as the

information shared from OPI to create our updated narrative for the GMSEC. The Program Narrative lists how the member districts and coop work together to ensure FAPE, Child Find, Evaluations and IEP policies and procedures are followed. If the Board approves this Program Narrative it will not need to be reviewed for five years and at that time we will review the narrative, make any changes and have the Board approve that new narrative.

Motion to approve The Program Narrative revised May 2026.

Motion: Doug Pfau

Second: Jared Moretti

-Passed Unanimously

10. Contract approvals:

i. 2026-2027 Speech Pathologist Contract Amendment:

1. Amber Fortier: MA 45/Level i, .8 FTE

(Motion/Discussion/Action)

Amber requested to update her contract from a .6 FTE to .8 FTE. The coop has availability to increase her to a .8 and support the speech caseloads of our member districts.

Motion to offer a contract to Speech Language Pathologist for the 2026-27 school year.

Motion: Laura Axtman

Second: Doug Pfau

-Passed Unanimously

ii. 2026-2027 Speech Language Pathologist Offer of Contracts:

1. 1st Contract offer for Valley Speech Pathology Virtual Speech Language Pathologist: \$85/hr (3 days a week or up to 24 hrs per week), \$73,440

(Motion/Discussion/Action)

As mentioned Kim had communicated with Dakota at Valley Speech Pathology in order to support the SLP needs within the coop. This contract includes virtual SLP services at \$85/hr for 3 days a week.

Motion to offer a contract to Speech Language Pathologist for the 2026-27 school year.

Motion: Jared Moretti

Second: Kevin Flanagan

-Passed Unanimously

iii. 2026-2027 Personnel: School Psychologist Offer of Contracts:

1. 2nd Contract offer for Lani Smith: On-call School Psychologist, \$60.00/hr

(Motion/Discussion/Action)

Lani will be available as a school psychologist to support assessment administration at our member school districts throughout the school year.

Motion to offer a contract to On-Call School Psychologist for the 2026-27 school year.

Motion: John Dubose

Second: Scott Poloff

-Passed Unanimously

iv. 2026-2027 Personnel: Director of Special Education Offer of Contract:

1. Kim Wegner-McCauley: Administrator Contract, 1.0 FTE

(Motion/Discussion/Action)

The Board approved the proposed Director contract at the June meeting but it was contingent on seeking legal counsel to support appropriate use of the language in the contract. After consulting with Kaleva Law, the proposed contract has been updated based on legal counsel recommendations.

Motion to offer a contract to The Special Education Director for the 2026-27 school year.

Motion: Doug Pfau

Second: Spencer Johnson

-Passed Unanimously

7. **Board Meeting Schedule: Projected 2026-2027 Third Thursday of the Month (Zoom/In-Person) *no less than 5 meetings per year**

- a. August 20th, 2026 In-Person
- b. October 22nd
- c. January 21st In Person
- d. February 18th
- e. April 15th (could be removed)

f. May 20th

g. June 17th In Person

8. **Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn meeting at 11:21 am.

Motion: Kevin Flanagan

Second: Scott Poloff

-Passed Unanimously.

Submitted by: _____ Date: _____

Board Chair: _____ Date: _____