

REGULAR MEETING

A Regular meeting of the Benzie County Central Board of Education was held Monday, March 9, 2026 in the Board of Education Conference Room.

President Childs called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Members Present: Mr. Childs, Mrs. Gillison, Mr. Kempton, Mrs. Campana, Mr. Egeler
Mr. Smith, Piper Barnard (non-voting member)

Members Absent: Mr. Barnard

25-26-073 It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mrs. Campana to approve the agenda

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Opening Statement:

We are a team. We leave our personal opinions at the door and we are bound by Policy 2302 to faithfully discharge the office of a board member and keep in mind our primary concern is the educational welfare of students focusing on governance and fiduciary obligations of the district including duties of loyalty and care, placing the District's interests above the Board member's personal interests.

25-26-074 It was moved by Mr. Egeler and supported by Mrs. Campana to approve Consent Grouping items as presented.

A. Minutes: February 9, 2026 Regular

B. Business: General Fund Bills – \$737,622.27

C. Support Staff Appointments:

- Elle Robinson – Early Childhood Assistant Teacher – Homestead Hills Elementary

D. Staff Assignment Changes:

- NONE

E. Leave of Absence:

- NONE

F. Recommendation for Tenure:

- NONE

G. Recommendation for Termination following Probationary Period

- NONE

H. Recommendation for Termination:

- NONE

I. Contract Updates:

- NONE

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

District Impact Team Update: Board of Education Trustee, Matt Smith shared the following:

Since the last board meeting, the District Improvement Team met three times. Conversations focused primarily on instructional priorities tied to the district's Strategic Plan, along with reviewing student achievement data and identifying supports for teachers and students.

The team had a high-level discussion about instructional goals connected to the Strategic Plan. The conversation centered on ensuring the process for developing and implementing instructional priorities is thoughtful and transparent. Key themes included engaging stakeholders early, clearly communicating expectations and measures of success, and consistently evaluating progress. There was also discussion about possible timelines for implementation, including the idea of testing a smaller step before the end of the school year.

The team reviewed NWEA data and discussed steps already being taken to improve student performance, including more intentional check-ins between students and seminar teachers, additional academic support opportunities, increased parent communication, and efforts to build a stronger culture of student engagement with assessments. At the high school level, there was also discussion about potential ways to build math intervention time into the schedule.

For K-8, the team reviewed winter iReady data, including projected proficiency rates for M-STEP and student growth from fall to winter across grade levels. These discussions also led to broader conversation about how the district allocates time and resources toward strengthening core instruction.

We had an update on General Supervision for Special Education where the team discussed priorities for the remainder of the school year. This included identifying additional training needs around progress monitoring and discussing ways to further support teachers in implementing instructional tools such as iReady. There was also conversation about strengthening the district's math intervention framework.

The team began reviewing updates to district handbooks, including incorporating the district's updated vision, mission, and belief statements and working toward consistent language across buildings related to cell phone use, Chromebook expectations, truancy, and chronic absenteeism.

Finally, the team also continued reviewing draft smart goals connected to the Strategic Plan and discussed feedback from elementary staff as the district works toward identifying clear goals and action steps moving forward.

Student Council Report: Student Council Board of Education Representative, Piper Barnard – Piper shared the following:

There is lots of activity right now. The Blood Drive is being held on the 10th. Appointment slots have increased by ten and they are almost full. The Benzie Wellness Committee has been selling Friendship Grams for \$2.00 to promote, support and maintain healthy relationships. The spring musical, Fiddler on the Roof, was a huge success this past weekend, and prom is in the planning stages.

Administration Report:

A. NMSLA – Superintendent Erfourth – Superintendent Erfourth shared the following:

No meeting today. The Meeting will be in Lansing on Wednesday, March 11th with the House and Senate Education Appropriation Chairs and cabinet members from the Budget Office.

B. 2026/27 ESS Willsub Contract - Addendum to Extend Agreement – July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027 - This is a renewal of our current contract with Willsub for substitute teachers, paraprofessionals, secretaries, custodians and coaches.

C. MS/HS Athletic Update – Athletic Director, Eli Harris – Mr. Harris shared the following:

Winter Sports Update

Participation

High School

SPORT	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
BASKETBALL	18	18	36
WRESTLING	15	0	15
BOWLING	14	4	18
SKIING	0	3	3
TOTAL	47	25	73

Currently, there are 289 students enrolled in the high school. Out of the 73 athletes, 0 were Academy students. This indicates that 25% of our high school student body and 0%the Academy (86) (15 Day Program) were involved in athletics for the Winter sports season.

Middle School

SPORT	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
BASKETBALL	18	20	38
WRESTLING	6	0	6
TOTAL	24	20	44

Currently, there are 232 students enrolled in the middle school. Out of the 44 athletes, 1 is an Academy student. This indicates that 19% of our middle school student body and 14% of the Academy (7) were involved in athletics for the fall sports season.

Dream Team, All State, Academic All State and specific conference awards yet to be named.

Winter Awards Recognition

Team Champions

Conference

Ski Coop with Glen Lake/Leland/Suttons Bay/LLSM/Frankfort

Individual

All-Conference Selections (12)

Boys Basketball

**Carson Case
Rowan Zickert
Brady Wilson
Nick Maqdissi**

Girls Basketball:

**Amaya Roper
Ashlyn Hughes
Addison Hughes**

Wrestling:

**Dayne Gillison
Lane Sanchez
Mason Childs
Jesse Mummey
David Wenkel**

Bowling

**Skarlett Duford
Che'rie Brown**

Skiing

**Moraya Mosher
Amorie Mosher
Selma Rusck**

State Qualifiers

**Dayne Gillison
Lane Sanchez
Mason Childs
David (Trace) Wenkel**

After this past weekend,

**Dayne Gillison 5th
Lane Sanchez 4th
Mason Childs 6th**

It is anticipated that there will be roughly 110 high school spring athletes, and 70 middle school spring athletes.

The Athletic Leadership Council (ALC) will be visiting district elementary buildings to read to students for March is National Reading Month. There will be CPR Certification as well as a Pancake breakfast held on March 15.

Mr. Harris shared that there would be some painting work done on the track in June, given it didn't stick last summer due to timing and temperature issues.

D. Benzie Academy Update – Principal, Cheryl Smith – Principal Smith shared the following update – [Benzie Academy](#).

E. Food Service Renewal – Chartwells K12 –

This is a standard mid-contract renewal. Per meal increases at 4% based on the Consumer Price Index. Costs are increasing by \$0.1042 per meal, and administrative fees increasing \$244.94 per month.

F. Budget Amendment #2 – Director of Finance, Danielle Banasiak -

There were several increases to revenues. Assumed local revenues decreased, this is likely due to property tax waivers at the township level, which gets reported to the state and adjusted in the State Aid. Per pupil Foundation Grant amounts increased from \$14.58pp in November to \$149.52pp in February. This still may change due to Count days and Pupil Audits. Additional increases include Spec Ed Headlee Obligation, 31aa, and Title I/II/IV as well as new restricted revenues in the FAFSA Completion Challenge and 27I(2) Educator Compensation. Some changes to expenditures: including required expenditures to offset restricted revenues with expensing deadlines, Bond arbitrage, and the shifting of Sinking Fund projects to 31aa as allowable. Overall, the impact of careful management and increased revenues has decreased the deficit budget bringing the District closer to alignment with revenues.

G. Resignations:

- Irv Meachum - Outdoor Grounds and Maintenance – Effective February 20, 2026
- Olivia Miller - Middle School – 6.5 Paraprofessional – Effective February 27, 2026

H. Retirements:

- NONE

Board of Education/Committee Reports –

A. Buildings and Grounds Committee

1. Sinking Fund Projects –

The submittals for the tile, roof colors, and awning at Betsie Valley Elementary have been approved. Measurements will be taken Wednesday for the summer projects including the kitchen remodel, bathroom remodel, and layout for a shower option.

- 2. Building and Grounds Modifications – Middle School Softball Scoreboard - This proposal is to add a scoreboard for the MS Softball field using the existing steel beams. The Softball team will cover the cost of the board and installation. Normally, we would not act in the same evening as presented, but due to timeline of materials and installation we are requesting this as an action item this evening. President Childs shared that he does not foresee any issues or problems with this.**

- B. Policy Committee – Superintendent Erfourth – FAFSA language looked over once again- requires all students to apply, but has exemptions available for different reasons including if there is a strong desire by family NOT to apply for FAFSA.**

Universal FAFSA Policy – Note: To Be Added to Existing Policy 5409, Section A., Graduation Requirements

Beginning with the class of 2027, all students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to graduate unless the student qualifies for an exemption as described in this Policy. FAFSA is required for students to access certain federal and state scholarships and loans for higher education, including some trade programs. The District will exempt a student from the FAFSA completion requirement if any of the following criteria are met:

- 1. The student’s parent or legal guardian, or the student if the student is 18 years of age or older, is an emancipated minor, or is an unaccompanied youth as defined in Policy 5307, has submitted a parental waiver to the District exempting the student from completing the FAFSA. Students may obtain the required parental waiver form from High School Counselor;**
- 2. The student is unable to complete the FAFSA because of privacy concerns;**
or
- 3. All of the following criteria are met:**
 - a. After a good faith effort by a high school administrator or designee to assist the student or the student’s parent/guardian in completing the FAFSA or obtaining a parental waiver, the student’s parent or legal guardian refuses to sign the parental waiver, is unresponsive, or cannot sign the parental waiver.**
 - b. The student is unable to complete the FAFSA as an independent student.**
 - c. The student agrees to opt out of completing the FAFSA.**
 - d. The student is otherwise on track for graduation.**

- C. Finance Committee –Board of Education Treasurer, Shannon Gillison– No Update in lieu of Budget Amendment #2.**
- D. Parent Advisory Council – Board of Education Trustee, Sue Campana – No meeting last month. Next meeting will be March 16 at 6:00 PM.**
- E. Liaison – Board of Education Trustee, Greg Kempton – Greg shared the following: Sue attended in Greg’s absence. Discussion was around the Betsie Valley Elementary Principal, Vacancy, 31aa Funding, and more support for teachers regarding progress reports.**

Ad Hoc – Campana Egeler – Discussion around the Sinking Fund renewal and whether or not plan for the August or November ballot. Egeler and Campana

will work on strategies to create a plan to get the word out about details of Sinking Fund millage ask. Has to be phrased as a “new” millage, but is a renewal with the addition of language to purchase buses. Working to dispel disinformation and educate community.

Potential to work with county to communicate information to general public.

- F. Negotiations – Erfourth – No formal request yet, but Transportation is up in June 2026 for contract negotiations.

Audience Participation (Agenda Items Only) – NONE

Discussion Topics:

- A. Current District Enrollment Summary Review – Exit Out v. Transfer In – Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Pupil Accounting Specialist, Catina Crossman –

Catina shared that we currently rest at 1,247 students; 10 of those Related Services, 25 infant toddlers, 51 PK3, 52 PK4, and 4 homeschool CTE. General Collection total 1109.

She also shared that there has been little to no enrollment movement in the last month, but continue to have several within district transfers. The district received their DS4061 for the Fall 2025 General Collection (10.1.2025) this past weekend. Mrs. Crossman certified the Spring Count (2.11.2026) in MSDS today.

Action Topics:

25-26-075 It was moved by Mr. Egeler and supported by Mr. Smith to approve the 2026/27 ESS Willsub Contract; July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-076 It was moved by Mrs. Campana and supported by Mr. Egeler to approve the Food Service Renewal Chartwell K12.

Ayes:6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-077 It was moved by Mr. Egeler and supported by Mrs. Gillison to approve Budget Amendment #2.

Ayes:6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-078 It was moved by Mrs. Gillison and supported by Mr. Smith to approve the Middle School Softball Scoreboard.

Ayes:6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-079 It was moved by Mrs. Campana and supported by Mr. Egeler to approve the FAFSA Policy.

Ayes:6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-080 It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mr. Egeler to approve to go into *Closed Session* for Purposes of Superintendent Evaluation after Audience Participation (Open Topics).

Ayes:6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Audience Participation (Open Topics): NONE

Break 8:40 PM – 8:50 PM

Closed Session – 8:50 PM

25-26-081 It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mr. Egeler to return to *Open Session* at 10:08 PM.

Ayes:6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Board Communication:

- **President Childs shared that he had been contacted via email by several individuals to name the auditorium after former band instructor, Mike Eagan. Continued discussion took place around the Hall of Heroes.**

Announcements:

- 1. March 27- End of 3rd Marking Period**
- 2. March 30- April 6 – Spring Break**
- 3. April 13, 15, 16 – Kindergarten Round-Up**
 - **April 13 – Homestead Hills Elementary**
 - **April 15 – Lake Ann Elementary**
 - **April 16 – Betsie Valley Elementary**

25-26-082 It was moved by Mr. Egeler and supported by Mrs. Campana to adjourn the regular meeting at 10:18 PM.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Secretary, Board of Education

Please note that March 9, 2026 Regular Board Minutes are subject for approval on April 13, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted,



Catina M. Crossman

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Board of Education Administrative Assistant

Schools of Choice Coordinator

Pupil Accounting Specialist

Director of Communications

Benzie County Central Schools

Go Huskies!