

REGULAR MEETING

A Regular meeting of the Benzie County Central Board of Education was held Monday, May 11, 2026 in the Board of Education Conference Room.

President Childs called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

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

Members Absent: NONE

25-26-090 It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Mr. Egeler to approve the agenda with the following amendment: Add Action Item K. Approval to go into Closed Session after the second round of Audience Participation for purposes of personnel issue.

Ayes: 7

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.

25-26-091 It was moved by Mrs. Campana and supported by Mr. Smith to approve Consent Grouping items as presented.

A. Minutes: April 13, 2026 Regular

B. Business: General Fund Bills – \$561,059.03

C. Support Staff Appointments:

- Saturnrina Newburn – Secondary Math Teacher – 2026/27
- Morgan Zywicki – Secondary Physical Education and Health - Middle School 2026/27
- Kaitlyn Pluimer – Special Education – Betsie Valley Elementary 2026/27

D. Staff Assignment Changes:

- Jeanne Pettengill – 3rd Grade Betsie Valley Elementary to Middle School English – 2026/27

E. Leave of Absence:

- NONE

F. Recommendation for Tenure:

- Angela Norvell – Lake Ann Elementary

G. Recommendation for Termination following Probationary Period

- NONE

H. Recommendation for Termination:

- NONE

I. Contract Updates:

- NONE

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

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

Since the last board meeting, the District Impact Team has continued operating in a slightly different format as much of the recent work has centered around implementation of the district’s Strategic Plan and the systems needed to support progress toward the identified goals in instruction, attendance, and communication.

A significant portion of the discussion focused on instructional consistency across the district. Conversations included ensuring pacing aligns with district standards, reinforcing the use of approved instructional materials, and identifying “non-negotiables” that help create consistency between classrooms and grade levels. The team also discussed ongoing monitoring processes, including monthly classroom checks, walkthroughs, pacing guide reviews, and progress monitoring measures designed to help evaluate implementation throughout the school year.

The group also reviewed the distinction between leading measures and lagging measures tied to student achievement. Leading measures included items such as walkthrough data, pacing integrity, and progress monitoring, while lagging measures included student assessment data such as iReady, NWEA, and M-STEP results. The discussion centered on how these measures can work together to better inform instructional decisions and track progress toward district goals.

Additional conversation focused on the district’s ongoing CSI data collection and preparation for the upcoming MICIP planning deadline in June, along with work connected to the School-Wide Assist Plan. The team also discussed the development of monitoring dashboards for each Strategic Plan goal area. These dashboards are being organized into shared folders to help centralize information and improve the district’s ability to track progress and monitor implementation over time.

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

Teacher Appreciation went very well. Several snacks and food options were offered, with the Taco Bar offering up a lot of feed back as being well received. This year, more students participated in supporting.

The Interact Club is planning to have a Phone Free Field Day on May 13. Currently, 63 students are signed up to join the “no cell phone outdoor activity”.

The National Honor Society will be voting on their NHS board, and the May 26 is the final blood drive of the year.

Piper reported that Prom went very well. She already has some ideas on who may take her place for the 2026/27 school year as the Board of Education student representative.

Administration Report:

- A. NMSLA – During the meeting, we were provided an update on the day and hours bills that are pending. There is currently no movement on them yet and we are being encouraged to contact our representatives to encourage them to move the bills forward for action. We also discussed the budget and are still waiting on final updates which will likely occur after the May Consensus Revenue Estimate Conference. Our advocacy efforts should be focused on weighted formulas, transportation categorical increase, and language changes to 31aa. There is currently no interest in Lansing to increase the retirement offset and all branches have included a reduction in retirement funding for the next budget. The NMSLA Summer Conference is planned for August 6 at the Hagerty Center in Traverse City.**

- B. Last Day of School – Pending Weather Closures – 75% attendance and Legislation- Superintendent Erfourth shared several options with the Board of Education regarding filling the necessary requirements for day 10 and 11 which included possible legislative forgiveness, waiver flexibilities, or potentially having staff make up a day on June 11.**

- C. Roadmaster Driving School, LLC Annual Renewal - Superintendent Erfourth shared that this is a contract renewal. Ron is looking to renew his contract to lease space for the Roadmaster Driving school. He will provide \$3/student as reimbursement.**

- D. Open Enrollment Policy – Superintendent Erfourth shared the Inter-District Cooperative Enrollment Agreement 2026-29. We will review this annually. By agreeing to the ISD agreement, we will no longer need to complete student release forms but will instead use the 4-page form in the agreement. This will only need to be completed the first time a student enrolls with us. She also discussed 105c, which is students from outside of our district. Students can also enter through a student release. 105c provides protection in the event that the other school district refuses to cover costs for special education.**

- E. Northwest Education Services – 2026/27 General Fund Operating Budget – The Board of Education was provided the Northwest Education Services 2026 Budget Overview (General, Special, and Vocational). A Regional Summary was provided that offers information from 2025/26 and illustrates the value of regional programs, collaboration and economics of scale in support of local public-school districts served by the ISD. The Benzie Central Report Summary offers information from 2025 and 2026 and illustrates the value of regional programs, collaboration, and economics of scale in support of Benzie County Central Schools.**
[2026/27 Budget.](#)
- F. Sinking Fund Ballot Language – Director of Finance, Danielle Banasiak- The ballot language was updated to remove the purchase of real estate, but all other allowable items were maintained. The millage rate was set to 0.70 mills, a reduction of .20 mills from the 2017 Sinking Fund. Board approval is requested to allow for submission to the county clerk before the 5/12/26 4:00 PM deadline.**
- G. Headlee Override Ballot – Director of Finance, Danielle Banasiak- Ballot language was presented at 2.5 mills, this will allow the District to levy the full 18 mills limit on Non-Homesteaded properties until the Operating Millage renewal in 2029. This amount will allow for a buffer, ensuring the District does not drop below the 18-mill rate that the State expects the District to levy when calculating the per pupil allocation in State Aid payments. An 8-year study of rollback amounts has shown a trend indicating a continuation of .97 rollback rates, suggesting that a cautious approach to an override rate is best. Board approval is requested to allow for submission to the county clerk before the 5/12/26 4:00 PM deadline**
- H. E-Rate Contracts – Director of Finance, Danielle Banasiak – The Verita Fiber Maintenance contract was presented. The estimated costs are "worst case scenarios" anticipating multiple breaks and repairs in a year. The District would be responsible for 10% of the estimated costs, as 90% would be billed to Erate. Board approval is requested to finalize the contract.**
- I. Sinking Fund Update – Director of Operations, Mike Zielinski – Mr. Zielinski shared the following update with the Board of Education. [Sinking Fund Update.](#) Mike gave each project number of 1, 2, or 3. Number 1 representing safety and security, number 2 as energy savings, and 3 representing failing infrastructure and district needs.**

J. 2026/27 Middle School Handbook Updates – Principal, Alex Byland – Mr. Byland shared the following updates:

- Updated Mission Statement
- Updated Vision Statement
- Board of Education/Staffing Position Updates
- Tardy/Skipping Consequences Updates
- Cell Phone Use Language Contingent upon approval of Policy 5209.

K. 2026/27 High School Handbook Updates – Principal, Cheryl Smith – Ms. Smith shared the following updates:

- Updated Mission Statement
- Updated Vision Statement
- Board of Education/Staffing Position Updates
- Addition of 2026/27 Calendar
- Top Ten Release Date
- Attendance: 9 UNX days or 72 class periods. 10 UNX days or 80 class periods.
- 18-year-old student language now aligns with Board Policy 5104
- Tardy/Skipping Consequences Updates
- Cell Phone Use Language Contingent upon approval of Policy 5209.
- Dress Code – Hats
- All Benzie Central Codes of Conduct apply to visiting to students.

L. 2026/27 Benzie Academy Handbook Updates – Principal, Cheryl Smith – Ms. Smith shared the following updates:

- Updated Mission Statement
- Updated Vision Statement
- Board of Education/Staffing Position Updates
- Work Permits Updated language
- Truancy – Ms. Smith shared the new policy implemented this year is helping.
- Course Progress

M. Resignations:

- Carla Gipson Van Farowe – Middle School Teacher – Effective April 21, 2026
- Isabella Barton – 6.5 Paraprofessional – Middle School – Effective May 8, 2026
- Eric Perez – 3rd Grade Teacher- Lake Ann Elementary – Effective June 10, 2026

N. Retirements:

- **Steve Cox – Special Education Teacher – Betsie Valley Elementary – Effective June 10, 2026**
- **Susan Dameron – Kindergarten Teacher – Homestead Hills Elementary – Effective June 10, 2026**
- **Maria Hathaway – 6.5 Paraprofessional – Betsie Valley Elementary – Effective June 10, 2026**
- **Joseph Trudeau – Math Teacher – High School – Effective June 10, 2026**

Board of Education/Committee Reports –

A. Buildings and Grounds Committee

- 1. Sinking Fund Projects – We have a quote of \$174,445 to replace the 1964 windows at Betsie Valley. The window order needed to be placed this week in order for them to arrive in August. The windows will be paid for with the school safety funding 31aa. We also are reviewing a few other school safety upgrades including another camera, moving a camera, purchasing new door cameras for MS and CBO doors, adding signage at schools, adding card readers on doors, and upgrading hardware on LA and auditorium doors.**

BV Plan- replace VCT flooring with LVT in K, 1, 2 classrooms and K hallway. This work will occur June 11/12. Abatement will begin on June 15. We will still plan to have food distribution at BV but SEEDS will move to the MS. Locker replacement will begin Aug 1. All other timelines for work at BV are not yet available. We are working with Matt from GT Construction on timelines.

MS- Locker replacement to begin June 11. Window replacement timeline TBD.

HS- Locker replacement to follow. Window replacement timeline TBD.

LA- Locker replacement to follow MS/HS. Will be in July. Door replacement TBD.

Summer Camp will be at LA this summer.

- 2. Building and Grounds Modifications – NONE**

B. Policy Committee – Superintendent Erfourth –

- **Inter- District Enrollment Policy – The Board of Education was provided with track changes in red for the following sections:**

4. Enrollment processes

- **Strike June 30 deadline and CHANGED to cut-off 15 days prior to count day.**

18. Dispute Resolution

- **Concerns about abuse of dispute resolution. CHANGED to include ISD as final decision-making in the event of a dispute.**

- **Cell Phone Policy - Thru Board Policy 5209 (Student Use of Cell Phones and Electronic Communication Devices) has been updated to comply with these latest legal developments. The policy committee met to review this policy. The committee is recommending that elementary students keep devices powered off and in their lockers all day. MS students will keep devices powered off during the entire school day but may keep the device with them. Devices that are not powered off will be taken according to the handbook procedure. HS students will keep phones powered off during class periods and may have them during lunch. They may also carry the phone with them but it must be powered down. If the Board of Education cannot come to an agreement this evening it can be tabled until the June 8 Meeting.**

C. Finance Committee –Board of Education Treasurer, Shannon Gillison– No Update

D. Parent Advisory Council – Board of Education Trustee, Sue Campana – Sue shared that following update from the April 20 meeting:

The [Parent Advisory Council Meeting 4-20-26](#) for Benzie County Central Schools focused on district funding updates, strategic planning, and school-specific news.

Funding & Planning Updates

- **Sinking Fund:** Discussion on the fund that expires at the end of 2026, which is strictly for infrastructure repairs and cannot be used for salaries.
- **Operating Mileage:** Clarification that the 18-mill levy applies only to businesses and second homes, not primary homestead properties.
- **Strategic Plan:** The plan is officially approved with a heavy focus on improving communication.
- **Parent Survey:** The council discussed updating the survey to include feedback on the Bus Right app, text notifications, and instructional quality.

School Roundtable Highlights

Betsie Valley	New principal Lisa Migazzi starts in July; Family Prom (April 24); Spring Carnival (May 15).
Homestead Hills	Bake Sale fundraiser for 5th-grade camp (Thursday, April 23); Girls' Night Out (Friday, April 24); Summer camp is currently full.
Lake Ann	Electing a new PTO board as leadership steps down; Spring Carnival (May 15).
MS / HS / Academy	Prom (May 2); Graduation (May 31); Spring Band Concert (May 14).

Future Considerations - The council is evaluating its current format to see if a different configuration would better meet parent needs. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 27, at 6:00 PM, with both in-person and virtual options.

- E. Liaison – Board of Education Trustee, Greg Kempton – Greg shared the following:**

The Liaison Committee met regarding the following:

- Discussed the support in the classroom for teachers that have 4 or more students with IEPs.**
- Some schedule issues were happening that occurred for a few weeks but it has been addressed.**
- Discussed the potential of a Professional Development day for a makeup day for teachers.**

- F. Ad Hoc – Campana Egeler – Mr. Egeler shared that he would make updates to the informational handouts shared at the April meeting once the ballot language is solidified.**

- G. Negotiations – Erfourth – Superintendent Erfourth shared that Transportation negotiations are currently ongoing. We have met once and have another meeting coming on May 13.

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 the district Enrollment Summary as of May 1 and shared an [enrollment breakdown presentation](#) dating back to the Fall of 2017.

The following numbers were shared:

- Overall Enrollment by Population
- Infant Toddler
- Early Childhood
- K-12 Resident Enrollment
- School of Choice Enrollment (both 105 and 105c0)
- First day building enrollment comparison from fall 2017 through fall 2025
- DS4120 Fall count numbers from fall 2017 through fall 2025
- Kindergarten Round-Up numbers for fall 2026 (this number will change)
- 2026 graduations numbers for both Benzie Central High School and Benzie Academy

Action Topics:

25-26-091 It was moved by Mrs. Campana and supported by Mr. Smith to approve the 2026/27 Elementary Handbook as presented on 4.13.2026.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-092 It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mr. Barnard to approve, *contingent upon state forgiven legislation*, June 10 remains the last day of school for students, with the possibility of June 11 being a full day of Professional Development for teachers.

Ayes:7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-093 It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Mr. Egeler to approve the Roadmaster Driving School, LLC Annual Renewal.

Ayes:7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-094 It was moved by Mrs. Gillison and supported by Mr. Barnard to table the approval of the Inter-District Open Enrollment Policy and 105c Release Agreement until the June 8 meeting.

Ayes:7 **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

25-26-095 It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mrs. Campana to approve the Northwest Education – 2026/27 General Fund Operating Budget.

Ayes:7 **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

25-26-096 It was moved by Mrs. Campana and supported by Mrs. Gillison to approve the Sinking Fund Ballot Language.

Ayes:7 **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

25-26-097 It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Mr. Smith to approve the Headlee Override.

Ayes:7 **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

25-26-098 It was moved by Mrs. Campana and supported by Mrs. Gillison to approve the E-Rate Contract.

Ayes:7 **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

25-26-098 It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mr. Egeler to approve the Twin Bay Contract.

Ayes:7 **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

25-26-099 It was moved by Mr. Egeler and supported by Mrs. Campana to approve to go into Closed Session after the second round of Audience Participation for purposes of personnel issue.

Ayes:7 **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

Audience Participation (Open Topics): - NONE

Closed Session 9:45 PM

25-26-100 It as moved by Mr. Egeler and supported by Mr. Barnard to return to Open Session at 10:07 PM.

Ayes:7 **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

Board Communication: President Childs inquired about supporting a staff members family as their son will be undergoing a transplant. Superintendent Erfourth said she would look into the legalities of this.

Announcements:

1. **May 14 – Spring Band Concert – 7:00 PM**
2. **May 21 – Seniors Last Day of School**
3. **May 22 – Early Release**
4. **May 25 – No School – Memorial Day**
5. **May 28 – Senior Awards Night**
6. **May 31 – Commencement – 3:00 PM**
7. **June 8 – Regular Board of Education Meeting**
8. **June 10 – Last Day of School**
9. **June 22 – Board of Education Meeting**
 - **Board of Education Retreat – 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM**
 - **Board of Education Budget Review – 6:30 PM – 7:00 PM**
 - **Regular Meeting 7:00 PM**

**Benzie County Central Schools is pleased to announce their 2026 TOP TEN.
Ethin Chandler ((Valedictorian), Carson Case (Salutatorian), Piper Barnard, Adam
Coyne, Audrey Wilhelm, Elsa Carter, Mya Main, Dayne Gillison, Moraya Mosher, and
Rowan Zickert.**

25-26-101 It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mrs. Gillison to adjourn the regular meeting at 10:13 PM.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Secretary, Board of Education

Please note that May 11, 2026 Regular Board Minutes are subject for approval on June 8, 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!