

## REGULAR MEETING

A Regular meeting of the Benzie County Central Board of Education was held Monday, December 8, 2025 in the Board of Education Conference Room.

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

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

**Members Absent:** Mr. Childs, Mr. Smith

**25-26-044** It was moved by Mrs. Gillison and supported by Mrs. Campana to approve the agenda

**Ayes: 5**

**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.

**25-26-045** It was moved by Mr. Egeler and supported by Mrs. Gillison to approve Consent Grouping items as presented.

**A. Minutes: November 10, 2025 Regular | November 10, 2025 Closed**

**B. Business: General Fund Bills – \$625,480.39**

**C. Support Staff Appointments:**

- Katelyn Scott – Early Childhood Assistant Teacher – Lake Ann Elementary
- Rachel Higgins – High School Drama Director – Spring Musicals

**D. Staff Assignment Changes:**

- NONE

**E. Leave of Absence:**

- Tom Luebke – Intermittent FMLA

**F. Recommendation for Tenure:**

- NONE

**G. Recommendation for Termination following Probationary Period**

- NONE

**H. Recommendation for Termination:**

- NONE

**I. Contract Updates:**

- NONE

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion Carried**

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

**Superintendent Erfourth shared the following on Smith's behalf –**

- **Strategic Plan Development**

The Strategic Plan has continued to be a major focus throughout the past month. The team has spent significant time refining the district's four problem statements and discussing strategies to achieve the goals associated with each area. Recent work has centered on communication, ELA, math, and attendance, with additional discussion about potentially combining ELA and math into a single Tier 1 instructional problem statement.

Good progress is being made, and the DIT anticipates having material ready to present to the Board later this winter.

- **General Supervision**

The team reviewed the purpose and role of General Supervision within the ISD structure. Benzie's 2025 Determination is *Needs Intervention*. Results showed improvement from 2024, though compliance dropped due to one missed box on an IEP, which has since been corrected.

The group also reviewed district priorities identified collaboratively by administrators and discussed the corresponding General Supervision Action Plan.

- **SELweb Data Review**

The Fall 2025 K–5 SELweb data was reviewed. Overall, results were largely positive across buildings. One area that stood out was students' perception of whether their peers care about them, which scored lower than other domains.

DIT members broke into small groups to brainstorm as many ideas as possible to broaden thinking around next steps. The group then reconvened to share themes and discuss possible approaches to strengthening this area of student experience.

- **Team Updates**
- **Literacy Team**
- **Developed a walkthrough tool to collect building-level literacy data.**
- **Continued work on creating a Tier 2 literacy system.**
- **ISSN**
- **The ISSN group began work to gather baseline data on restorative practices across the district.**
- **A staff survey is being developed to determine what practices are currently in place.**
- **Once the data is collected, the team hopes to identify areas where additional support or training may be needed.**
- **Math Team**
- **Elementary teachers are currently piloting the Math Expressions curriculum.**
- **Beginning in January–February, they will pilot i-Ready Math, with a recommendation expected for the Board in April.**
- **Secondary team is exploring additional math supports, including a two-pronged approach: support within current math classes and the use of Delta Math diagnostics to help students recover credits.**
- **Technology Team**
- **Provided an update on future course offerings and potential online curriculum.**
- **Preparing for a proposed required elective in 2027–28, with interest in piloting it a year earlier.**

- Seeking DIT approval before going to the Board; a formal approval vote is expected at an upcoming meeting.
- Tuning Protocols
- Homestead Hills

The Homestead Hills Tuning Protocol centered on implementing the district's new Strategic Plan attendance goals. The group began building a chart outlining strategies under consideration, including each strategy's intended purpose, anticipated launch timeline, measures of effectiveness, and responsible staff. Additional considerations were discussed to ensure the chart captures all relevant components as the work moves forward.

- Middle School

The MS Tuning Protocol focused on attendance data. The team reviewed month-over-month attendance by grade level and examined the percentage of students attending 90–100% of the time compared to those attending at lower thresholds (85–89%, 80–84%, 69–79%, and below 69%). Discussion followed regarding how data is being tracked, ways to improve data collection, and how the information can be used to guide more meaningful conversations and interventions.

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

The Student Council is planning their holiday celebration around the holiday luncheon on December 19. There will be various rooms holding activities, as well as a basketball game. The council continues to have discussion around snowcoming and spirit week theme days.

**Administration Report:**

- A. NMSLA – Superintendent Erfourth – Superintendent Erfourth shared the following: 31aa update - Currently, school districts are being encouraged to apply for the 31aa funding, with a potential for the courts to hear the case on Dec 19, and if legislative language does not change districts could opt out of 31aa funding. Bills to watch are: HB 5044 which allows for ABA/medically necessary treatment in schools by private organizations and is currently opposed by MDE and MEA as schools are able to provide services without having to contract with private agencies; HB 5032 prohibits the use of school aid dollars for campaign related expenses with concerns about this bill limiting district's from

having transparency with communicating to the community why they are requesting bonds or millages; HB 5310, 5311 and 5312 requiring changes on mandatory school of choices laws. There are only 2 days left in this calendar year for legislative action. The Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference is planned for January 9th which sets the tone for budget for Fiscal Year 2027. The Governor's State of the State Address will occur the week of January 26 and this will kick off the official start of budget talks for Fiscal Year 2027. The next NMSLA meeting is set for February 11th in Lansing.

**B. Early Childhood Update- Early Childhood Director, Melinda Coger – Melinda gave updates on our various early childhood programs and activities:**

- Lake Ann Elementary Infant Toddler
- Lake Ann Elementary PreK
- Lake Ann Elementary GSRP
- Homestead Hills Elementary Infant Toddler
- Homestead Hills Elementary PreK
- Homestead Hills Elementary Strong Beginnings
- Homestead Hills Elementary GSRP
- Betsie Valley Elementary GSRP
- Early Childhood High School Course
- Northwest Education Services – Widely Held Expectations Data

**C. Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) Update -Superintendent Erfourth – Superintendent Erfourth shared the following: The Middle School was designated for support based on a subgroup, special education outcomes, being in the bottom 5% in the state. The identification is based on some lagging indicators, including MSTEP data, to make determinations. Principal Byland, Cindy Hunt (NorthWest Ed), and myself will work with a state-level partner to review our plan, hold quarterly check in meetings, and continue to support data collection. Principal Byland has put many supports into place in the last two years and we continue to see data trending in a positive direction. The CSI plan, along with the General Supervision Plan for Special Education, and our Strategic Plan will support actions identified to close gaps and increase proficiency for all students.**

**D. MS/HS Athletic Update – Athletic Director, Eli Harris – Mr. Harris shared the following Fall 2025 Sports Update:**

**Participation**

**High School**

<b>SPORT</b>	<b>BOYS</b>	<b>GIRLS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>FOOTBALL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>CROSS COUNTRY</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>SOCCER</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>VOLLEYBALL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100</b>

Currently, there are 317 students enrolled in the high school. Out of the 100 athletes, 1 is an Academy student. This indicates that 31.5% of our high school student body and 1.5% of the Academy (64) were involved in athletics for the fall sports season.

**Middle School**

<b>SPORT</b>	<b>BOYS</b>	<b>GIRLS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>FOOTBALL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>POP WARNER (6TH)</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>10</b>
<b>CROSS COUNTRY</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>SOCCER</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>VOLLEYBALL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>35 (10 6th)</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>101</b>

Currently, there are 235 students enrolled in the middle school. Out of the 101 athletes, 0 is an Academy student. This indicates that 43% of our middle school student body and 1% of the Academy (5) were involved in athletics for the fall sports season.

## Fall Awards Recognition

### All-Conference Selections (22)

#### Soccer:

**Rex Gray**

#### Volleyball:

**Madison Swander  
Sara Wallington  
Hannah Bott**

#### Cross Country:

##### Boys

**Jackson Schaub  
Eli VanPoortfliet  
Wyatt VanPoortfliet  
Walter Armstrong  
Ethin Chandler  
Cage Edingfield  
Kyle Vincent**

##### Girls

**Avery Kelly  
Ava Iverson  
Maggie McClellan  
Ingrid Molins Rallo  
Mathilde Cornet Vieilly**

#### Football:

**Rowan Zickert QB, DB  
Lane Sanchez kicker  
Parker Pritchett LB, RB  
Jesse Mummey DL  
Dayne Gillison WR  
Finn Smith WR**

### All-Region Selections (5)

#### Cross Country:

**Avery Kelly  
Maggie McClellan**

**Jackson Schaub  
Eli VanPoortfliet  
Wyatt VanPoortfliet**

**Academic All-State (8)****Cross Country:**

Avery Kelly  
 Maggie McClellan  
 Eli VanPoortfliet  
 Jackson Schaub  
 Kyle Vincent  
 Ethin Chandler

**Volleyball:**

Moraya Mosher  
 Hannah Bott

**Team Academic All-State****Volleyball****Boys Cross Country**

**E. Agreement for E-Rate Consulting – July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2031- Director of Finance, Danielle Banasiak - The change from the last contract to this one includes a 5-year agreement instead of a 1-year agreement. Our consultant has supported us with funding for technology through the bond projects, internet access for buildings, fiber projects, and the direct fiber project from the HS to BV. This renewal, per contract terms, is for discounted internet with a 5-year contract duration.**

**F. 2025/26 Budget Amendment #1 – Director of Finance, Danielle Banasiak – Danielle shared the following: There were minor adjustments to revenues and expenditures with the disclosure of the state budget. The District received the one-time payment for 271(4) MPSERS cost offset of \$96,233.99, while this helps, it does not replace the \$700,000 deficit created by the loss of other MPSERS funding. The District is currently in formula, the state has calculated a per pupil discretionary payment of \$14.58. Currently expenditures still outpace revenues by approximately \$521,807, reduced from a deficit of \$815,729 in the initial budget. We will continue to creatively address this deficit and bring attention to the MPSERS funding problem at the state level.**

**G. Resignations:**

- **Tammy Lung – Early Childhood Lead Teacher – Effective December 19, 2025**

**H. Retirements:**

- **NONE**



**Board of Education/Committee Reports –**

**A. Buildings and Grounds Committee**

1. **Sinking Fund Projects – Betsie Valley Elementary kitchen door replacement is scheduled over break along with repairing the crack in the bus wash bay. Lake Ann Elementary mechanical controls project is almost complete with mapping the system being the final piece. Aluminum door replacement will take place over spring break. Contracts for the Summer 2026 projects have been signed. We expect to start seeing submittals soon.**

2. **Building and Grounds Modifications – The curtain in the mezzanine is up.**

**B. Policy Committee – Superintendent Erfourth – No Update.**

**C. Finance Committee –Board of Education Treasurer, Matt Smith– No Update.**

**D. Parent Advisory Council – Board of Education Trustee, Sue Campana – The PAC will meet in January.**

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

- **Questions about a plan for a specific classroom. The plan was implemented November 17.**
- **Middle School shared with administration that the staff is happy, but there are concerns surrounding lunch time and all students eating at once.**
- **High School met with the principal about attendance requirements for IEP's; how much time they are given before meetings.**
- **Conversation on 27L and 27K and student loan forgiveness.**

**F. Negotiations – Superintendent Erfourth – No Update.**

**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 1,250 students; 27 of those infant toddlers, 45 PK3, 53 PK4 and 9 homeschool or stand-alone students. As of December 8, we sit at 1,116 students and 1,110 FTE's.

The full-time equivalent (FTE) is the per pupil allotment. In Michigan, the per pupil allotment is the foundation allowance per pupil, which is multiplied by a school district's State Aid Membership, or pupil blend count, to determine the total foundation allowance. The pupil blend count is generally calculated using 90% of the current year's fall FTE and 10% of the preceding year's supplemental February FTE. Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) is a measure of student attendance, with specific rules for calculating it, particularly for special education students.

### **B. Calendar Discussion**

- **2025/26 – Graduation Time Discussion – Most years, graduation is on the first Sunday in June. This year the first Sunday is not until June 7. May 31 would be the “normal” Sunday we would hold graduation. Matt McKinley has requested that we consider moving graduation start time to 1:00 PM. His daughter is graduating at 4:00 PM and he would really like to be at both ceremonies. Mrs. Crossman shared that as of October 20, Jostens orders were placed with both time and date solidified, so changing the time would not be the route to take without incurring added fees and potential time delays.**
- **2026/27 - Union membership have provided input on the calendar for the next 2 years. Both years have a late start due to when Labor Day falls. They are requesting that we consider starting before Labor Day for the next two years. This would require approval from the State through a waiver in which Mrs. Crossman would apply for is approved. The District determines the start date but the calendar is a negotiated topic. If the Board is interested in a pre-Labor Day start, Superintendent Erfourth will work with the Liaison team to finalize the calendar details. One other recommendation that the calendar committee suggested was to bring back spring conferences. We are in agreement and would need to work out the logistics with this.**
- **2027/28 - Union membership have provided input on the calendar for the next 2 years. Both years have a late start due to when Labor Day falls. They are requesting that we consider starting before Labor Day for the next two years. This would require approval from the State through a waiver in which Mrs. Crossman would apply for is approved. The District determines the start date but the calendar is a negotiated topic. If the Board is interested in a pre-Labor Day start, Superintendent Erfourth will work with the Liaison team to finalize the calendar details. One other recommendation that the calendar committee suggested was to bring back spring conferences. We are in agreement and would need to work out the logistics with this.**

**C. FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)**

- FAFSA Requirement
- FAFSA Challenge

High School Counselor, Jeanett Pritchett, and Maggie Bacon, BEST Benzie County Local College Access Network – Both Jeanett and Maggie shared with the Board of Education the FAFSA Requirement and Challenge. They are proposing to make FAFSA a Graduation Requirement. There will be time allotted and support given to complete the online FAFSA process. A waiver can be signed by the parent/students themselves, or by a school representative should the family/student wish to exempt themselves from the process. This requirement and challenge open doors for student to receive allocated money for college or trade school. Michigan achieved its highest FAFSA completion rate since 2019 for the Class of 2025, with a 56.9% completion rate, and now ranks in the Top 20 nationally.

This requirement may challenge students to learn about what doors can open for them and how to receive allocated money for college or trade school.

**D. January Board of Education Retreat Date and Proposed Agenda Items – The Board of Education agreed upon Sunday, January 25 from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM for the Board of Education Retreat date/time. They will discuss the Strategic Plan at that time. Additional proposed agenda items should be shared with Superintendent Erfourth and Catina Crossman for agenda consideration.**

**Action Topics:**

**25-26-046 It was moved by Mr. Egeler and supported by Mrs. Campana to approve the 2025/26 Budget Amendment #1.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion Carried**

**25-26-047 It was moved by Mr. Egeler and supported by Mrs. Gillison to go into Closed Session for Purposes of *Superintendent Goals Update* after Audience Participation (Open Topics)**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion Carried**

**Audience Participation (Open Topics): NONE**

**Closed Session for purposes of *Superintendent Goals Update***

**9:06 PM – Break**

**9:15 PM – Closed Session Begins**

**25-26-048 It was moved by Mr. Egeler and supported by Mrs. Campana to approve to go back into *Open Session*. 9:36 PM.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion Carried**

**Board Communication:**

- Superintendent Erfourth shared the following: As you know, we launched our National Board-Certified Educator fellowship across Michigan in 2023. This inaugural cohort represents the first group of educators we have supported through the full credentialing process, and we are proud to invest deeply in the highest-impact educators in the state as they pursue this important and prestigious certification. We're thrilled to share that Asa Kelly and Michaela MacGirr have achieved National Board Certification. As part of our first-ever credentialing cohort, this accomplished group now joins a very selective group of educators in Michigan; fewer than 1% of teachers in the state hold National Board Credentials. These educators have worked diligently for more than two years to demonstrate their skills and expertise to an external committee, often committing an additional 15–20 hours each month to their craft, reflection, and submissions. Certification is already rare, and certifying on the first attempt is even more so. This milestone is both impressive and historic for our program. TeachMichigan remains with educators throughout their full credentialing journey, even when it takes more than three years to certify, and we are proud to see members of our inaugural cohort reach this finish line.

**Announcements:**

1. Holiday Choir Concert – December 11
2. Lake Ann Elementary Craft Fair – December 13 – 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM
3. Elementary Holiday Programs
  - December 15 – Betsie Valley – 6:00 PM at Betsie Valley
  - December 17- Lake Ann – 6:00 PM at Lake Ann
  - December 18- Homestead Hills – 6:00 PM - Auditorium
4. Holiday Break – December 22- January 2
5. School Resumes – January 5
6. Organizational Board Meeting – January 12 – 6:30 PM
7. Regular Board Meeting – January 12 – 7:00 PM

**25-26-049** It was moved by Mrs. Campana and supported by Mr. Egeler to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:39 PM.

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion Carried**

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**Secretary, Board of Education**

***Please note that December 8, 2025 Regular Board Minutes are subject for approval on January 12, 2026.***

***Respectfully Submitted,***

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catina M. Crossman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

***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!***