

REGULAR MEETING

A Regular meeting of the Benzie County Central Board of Education was held Monday, January 12, 2026 in the Board of Education Conference Room.

President Childs called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

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

Members Absent: Mr. Egeler

25-26-059 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.

Welcome and Introduction –Board of Education Members

Brian Childs, President

Matt Smith, Vice-President

Jason Barnard, Secretary

Shannon Gillison, Treasurer

Sue Campana, Trustee

Dave Egeler, Trustee

Gregory Kempton, Trustee

January is School Board Recognition Month

Thank You!

25-26-060 It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mrs. Gillison to approve Consent Grouping items as presented.

A. Minutes: December 8, 2025 Regular | December 8, 2025 Closed

B. Business: General Fund Bills – \$559,365.21

C. Support Staff Appointments:

- Camden Tharp- Substitute Bus Driver – Transportation Department
- Deborah Forrester – 6.5 Paraprofessional – Lake Ann Elementary
- Karlee Harris – 5.5 Paraprofessional – Lake Ann Elementary

- D. Staff Assignment Changes:
- NONE
- E. Leave of Absence:
- Isabella Barton – December 19, 2025 through April 13, 2026 – Maternity Leave
 - Meghan Carra – January 25, 2026 through May 1, 2026 – FMLA – Maternity Leave
 - Rebecca Kik – January 5, 2026 through January 16, 2025 – FMLA
 - Christina Gunderson – January 5, 2026 through January 16, 2025
 - Carla Van Farowe (Gipson) – January 5, 2026 through January 16, 2026 - FMLA
- 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:

The District Impact Team met on December 9, December 16, and January 6. Most of the team's work during this period focused on finalizing the District Strategic Plan in advance of its presentation to the Board of Education.

A significant portion of meeting time was spent on high-level discussion to complete and refine strategies tied to the district's goals related to attendance, communication, and instruction. The team focused on action planning and alignment to ensure the goals are supported by clear, practical strategies.

In addition to the Strategic Plan work, DIT completed two building-level tuning protocols:

Homestead Hills

The team reviewed Fall 2025 SEL web data and discussed ways to improve how incidents involving unexpected student behavior are processed and addressed. The focus was on using data more intentionally to identify predominant strengths at the class level and develop activities that build on those strengths.

Betsie Valley

The team reviewed results from a teacher belief survey and discussed how the data can be used to better support staff engagement. The conversation focused on identifying meaningful takeaways, next steps, and how the information could be shared with staff in a productive way.

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

The Student Council has not had many additions to their agenda since the December 8 Board of Education meeting. They have confirmed that they will be doing a game/activity day on January 30, the Friday before Snowcoming. The Snowcoming theme this year is Disco.

Piper was happy to report that the Versiti Blood Drive that took place on January 6 was a huge success. There are two more Blood Drives this year; March 10 and May 26.

Administration Report:

A. NMSLA – Superintendent Erfourth – Superintendent Erfourth shared the following: There was no formal meeting this month. Update on 27L funds. We are working with union leadership on an agreement to give an equal distribution of the funds to all qualified District employees and all Union Presidents were able to sign the letter of agreement this morning. We hoped to have this completed and distribute the funds on or after January 16 but it will be too late to process this addition to the January 16 payroll. It will be paid out on the next payroll.

B. Newly Certified National Board – Certified Educators

- Michaela MacGirr – Homestead Hills Elementary
- Asa Kelly – Betsie Valley Elementary

We are incredibly proud to recognize Asa and Michaela as Benzie's First two National Board-Certified Teachers which is the highest level of professional certification for teachers with about 3% of educators nationwide receiving this distinction. Teachers earning this certification must meet rigorous standards through completion of a portfolio, video lessons, reflections, and testing. This process took over 2 years and they were provided coaching support through TeachMichigan. Benzie has 3 other educators working through this program currently so we hope to see more National Board-Certified educators in the coming years.

C. Strategic Plan Update – Superintendent Erfourth shared that we are very excited to present the Strategic Plan that we have been working diligently on since August. DIT members, Steve Graetz, Alex Byland, Melinda Coger, and Matt

Smith, helped present the process, which stakeholders were included, and the new proposed mission/vision/beliefs along with the 3 goals for our plan. Goal focus areas are on communication, attendance, and instruction. The new mission statement is, *The mission of Benzie Central is to provide a high-quality education in a safe and inclusive environment that empowers every learner to reach their fullest potential.* The new vision statement is:

Benzie Inspires Greatness
Connects Community
Cultivates Learning
Shapes Tomorrow

- D. Calendar Proposals – 2026/27 and 2027/28 - These two calendar years will be Pre-Labor Day starts given that Labor Day is so late. The other change to this calendar includes: two opportunities for Parent-Teacher Conferences with one in October and one in March. We will keep the two-week holiday break. The other addition is the inclusion of Regional Staff Development Day at the ISD. This will count as a student day with the Professional Development waiver.
- E. Homestead Hills Elementary Update – Principal, Steve Graetz – Mr. Graetz shared the following [presentation](#) with the Board of Education.
- F. Middle School Update – Principal, Alex Byland – Mr. Byland shared the following [presentation](#) with the Board of Education.
- G. Resignations:
 - NONE
- H. Retirements:
 - NONE

Board of Education/Committee Reports –

A. Buildings and Grounds Committee

1. Construction Updates - Bus garage wash bay crack was fixed over break. All MEP projects and graphics at Lake Ann and MS have been completed. The thermal scan at the bus garage is planned for next week. Aluminum door and window replacement is planned for spring break.
2. Sinking Fund Projects – Summer 2026 Projects - All contracts have been signed and submittals are in progress. Grand Traverse Construction will be onsite over spring break to review Betsie Valley Elementary projects. Work is planned to begin once school gets out. We are also working out the logistics of Summer Meal Programming at Betsie Valley Elementary as much of it will be under construction.

3. Building and Grounds Modifications – No Update

- 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 on Tuesday, January 20.**

- E. Liaison – Board of Education Trustee, Greg Kempton – Greg shared the following: The committee discussed:**
 - **Talked about different types of meetings and why they weren't being counted as PD and how they could be. Teachers are required 30 hours of PD a year.**

 - **A plan for what goes on when an administration is out of the office. This issue was on the agenda but it was already resolved.**

 - **The 27L funds for loan forgiveness. The unions/associations had a discussion and decided to split it equally among all employees.**

- 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 1,249 students; 27 of those infant toddlers, 46 PK3, 52 PK4 and 9 homeschool or stand-alone students.

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 just completed (6) desk audits for the Fall 2025 General Collection (10.1.2025), and anticipate their final DS4061 in February. Spring Count Day is February 11, 2026.

- B. 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, Communication Protocols, Administration Presentations at that time. Mr. Kempton suggested we add data conversations to the agenda.**

Action Topics:

25-26-061 It was moved by Mrs. Campana and supported by Mr. Kempton to approve the Benzie County Central Schools Strategic Plan.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-062 It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Mrs. Campana to approve the 2026/27 Calendar, with the exception of the addition of January 18 as a school day.

Ayes:6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-063 It was moved by Mrs. Gillison and supported by Mrs. Campana to approve the 2027/28 Calendar as presented.

Ayes:6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Audience Participation (Open Topics): NONE

Board Communication:

- **Mrs. Campana shared the Upriver Pizza will donating a portion of their sales to the Benzie Central Bands on January 30.**

Announcements:

- 1. January 13 - Make your Meal Matter – Culvers – 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM -Partial proceeds to BCHS Travel Program**
- 2. January 16 – End of 1st Semester**
- 3. January 20 – Hilltop Coffee and Ice Cream – 10% of sales to the Benzie Central Girls Basketball teams**
- 4. January 25 – Board of Education Retreat 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM**
- 5. February 9 – Regular Board of Education Meeting – 7:00 PM**

25-26-064 It was moved by Mrs. Campana and supported by Mr. Smith to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:02 PM.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Secretary, Board of Education

Please note that January 12, 2026 Regular Board Minutes are subject for approval on February 9, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catina M. Crossman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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!