

REGULAR MEETING

A Regular meeting of the Benzie County Central Board of Education was held Monday, January 10, 2022, in the Board of Education Conference Room. *MDHHS has amended its order to now allow for in-person board meetings that are exempt from the 25 person capacity limit. Updates can be found [here](#). It is recommended that if we are holding an in-person board meeting, we not allow virtual public comment but only allow those in attendance to comment. (If a school board is not conducting a virtual meeting in whole or in part under OMA, MASB recommends that the board limit public comment to individuals who are attending the meeting in person.)* (US) +1 440-652-2227 PIN: 523 783 252#

President Brown called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m.

Members Present: Mr. Childs, Mr. Barnard, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Pomper, Ms. Cota Hill, Mr. Noffsinger, Mrs. Johnston

Members Absent: Maya Musgrave, Student Representative (Non-voting member)

21-22-086 It was moved by Mrs. Johnston and supported by Mr. Childs to approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

21-22-087 It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Ms. Cota Hill to approve Consent Grouping items as presented.

A. Minutes: December 13, 2021 Regular

B. Business: General Fund Bills – \$682,115.76

C. Support Staff Appointments:

1. Mark Dobrzynski – Head Coach – Girls Varsity Basketball

D. Staff Assignment Changes:

1. David Egeler (Willsub Long Term Substitute teacher for Wakako Wynkoop) to Heather Ramirez – Long Term Substitute teacher

E. Leave of Absence:

1. Wakako Wynkoop – (continued extension)

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

District Impact Team Update: Board of Education Secretary, Stephanie Johnston, shared that the DIT team has only had two meetings due to the Holiday Break. Early Childhood Gold data was shared uncovering low math skills early on and high positives in classroom climate, teacher sensitivity, behavior management, productivity, and emotional support. Student data for social emotional skills was very high at 65% for the fall. We examined the data from the Special Education Surveys. Sharyl Corey met with the Special Education PLC group on Friday to share the DIT's thoughts.

Student Council Report: Student Council Board of Education Representative, Maya Musgrave. Maya was not in attendance. The next student council report will be on February 21, 2022 at the regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting.

Administration Report:

- A. NMSLA – Superintendent Erfourth shared the following January 10, 2022 NMSLA Update. Representative John DeMoose met with area superintendents to hear about areas of priority and to share the work he is doing in Lansing. Superintendents highlighted the concerns about pupil attendance and requested flexibility with how we count student attendance given the amount of illness and contact tracing that has occurred this year. [House Bill 5523](#) which contains supplemental funding for the Department of Health and Human Services passed. This bill includes \$300 million for COVID-19 tests for schools. [House Bill 4294](#) passed. This bill would allow districts to use a current employee as a substitute teacher, even if they do not have a teaching certificate. The person would need to have a high school diploma or equivalent and be employed by or work for the district. It specifies that the employee would be paid the higher of either their normal salary or the substitute pay rate. This provision would sunset on June 30, 2022.**

January 14, 2022 the Consensus Review Conference will take place, The State of State Address Press Release will be held virtually on January 16, 2022 and the Executive Budget should be released on February 2, 2022.

- B. 2020-21 Audit Review - Dennis, Gartland & Niergarth / Julie Burks, CPA - Julie Burks, CPA from Dennis, Gartland & Niergarth presented the audit information to the Board via google meet this year. She noted opportunities for the District to strengthen some internal controls, reporting, and operating efficiencies. The following opportunities have been discussed with District Administration; timely reconciliation of bank accounts, inventory tracking for the District, and timely audit package submission with the Michigan Department of Education. Ms. Burks noted that the District lacked readiness of the audit which delayed fieldwork from early August to mid-September, then to mid-October. Due to significant staff turnover, changes in software, and delays in preparedness, the District missed the Michigan Department of Education's filing deadline of November 1st, 2021. The District met the next deadline of December 1, 2021, resulting in state aid payments being received in December 2021. Ms. Burks reviewed several graph summaries, highlighting that the District increased the General Fund Balance by \$1.8M in 2020/21 resulting in a Fund Balance percentage of 33% of expenses. This number is high, but signifies that the District is in a strong financial position, much due to the additional federal funds awarded to the District. The state expects Districts to be at 5% or higher. This allows the District to plan for future expenditures and meet immediate or necessary needs. Ms. Burks wrapped up by thanking the District and the Board of Education for their continued partnership with Dennis, Gartland & Niergarth.**

- C. Transportation Building, High School Locker Room Remodel, Weight Room Addition, and Betsie Valley Elementary Remodel Bids – Project Manager, Kris Gerke, Wolgast Corporation – Mr. Gerke shared that this bond passed after many failed attempts, under two different superintendents, and most importantly this bond was budgeted prior to COVID-19. Currently the Lake Ann Elementary Addition is under contract, the New Elementary Bids should come out around January 19, 2022, both the High School Locker Room Remodel and Weight Room Addition came in 30% over budget, as well as Transportation coming in 30% over budget, and Betsie Valley Elementary 20% over budget. Mr. Gerke reiterated that construction costs are 20-30% higher, and in addition there are supply chain issues. With all that into account, difficult decisions need to be made.**
- D. Bright Light Technology – R-Zero Update – Superintendent Erfourth – Superintendent Erfourth shared that the RZero machines have arrived. We are currently using them. The machines take seven minutes to clean 1,000 square feet, and will not turn on if they detect any type of motion in the room/area. The bipolar ionization technology has also been installed. The bus units have not been installed as they need to make modifications to the design since our buses do not have air conditioning.**
- E. Early Childhood Update – Early Childhood Coordinator, Amber Wilson – Mrs. Wilson shared the fall highlights. Currently there are three programs at Lake Ann Elementary with 45 students enrolled, and two classrooms at Crystal Lake Elementary with 30 students enrolled. For the first time since the launching of the Early Childhood Program, they are fully staffed. In addition, 65% of students are meeting or exceeding in social-emotional domain as of 11/17/2021 checkpoint, compared to 43% 2021 and 38% 2020. All Early Childhood staff are in higher education. All staff completed the fall semester on the Dean’s List. Katie Johnston completed her Master’s Degree in Early Childhood. There are ongoing MTSS meetings at both the building and district level on a monthly basis to review data and provide support for all students providing the systems and structure we need for full-inclusion preschool. The program is flourishing, with a wait list at both Lake Ann Elementary and Crystal Lake Elementary. Mrs. Wilson thanked her staff for stepping up, and caring and loving on our youngest students who have only know life during this COVID-19 Pandemic. In closing Amber shared a staff survey with the Board of Education that included the following questions; Years in district, years in Early Childhood, What brought you to Benzie Central, Why you are in Early Childhood Education, and what is your best memory from your time with Benzie Central Early Childhood. Superintendent Erfourth recognized the work Amber Wilson has been doing with supporting professional development in the district with relationship building and supporting students in crisis, along with the fact that Amber is growing her early childhood staff and has also secured over \$100,000 in grant funds this year alone. Amber is an important asset to our district.**
- F. Generator Proposal/Bid Update – Superintendent Erfourth – Superintendent Erfourth shared that commercial generators are running twelve to eighteen months out. We would like to place an order for a generator for the high school**

campus as well as two smaller generators for Lake Ann Elementary and Betsie Valley Elementary. The new elementary has a generator built into the bid package.

G. Letter of Agreement between Benzie County Central Schools and Benzie County Central Secretarial Association – Superintendent Erfourth recommended to the Board of Education a letter of agreement that would amend their current contract, offering 14,000 toward full family insurance coverage. Superintendent Erfourth is waiting to hear back from Michigan Education Association Director, Joe Washington and Benzie County Central School Secretarial Association Union President, Lara Bishop.

H. Resignations:

- **Madison Lutzke – Volleyball – Head Varsity Coach**
- **Lisa Dood – Secondary Mathematics Teacher – High School – effective January 21, 2022**

I. Retirements:

- **Dan Long – Benzie Academy and Computer Technology Teacher – Secondary – Extended Retirement Date – January 22, 2022 to February 1, 2022**

Board of Education/Committee Reports –

A. Buildings and Grounds Committee –

1. **Bond Project Updates – Superintendent Erfourth shared that DTE has approved Henry Road moving to the east side of the substation. They have also stated that we would need to be 25 feet from the substation fence. They have also approved the crossing that was originally approved for the District. Matt Skeels and Aaron Felske are working together to get an updated sketch to DTE with the new requirements. Matt Skeels and I will work together on granting an easement for the Road Commission. Board of Education Trustee, Brian Childs, spoke on behalf of the CORE team recommending the following: reallocate transportation funds, move forward with Betsie Valley Remodel, Locker Room Remodel is a definite need, place hold on Weight Room Addition contingent upon New Elementary Bids.**

B. Policy Committee –

The Policy Committee met to review the following policies on December 13, 2021. The will be voted on this evening.

1. ***Policy 2201 Board Powers/General Powers and Policy 4601 General: These existing policies provide authority to the Superintendent to manage the day-to-day operations of the district even where there is not a specific policy addressing a particular issue. This change is intended to address changes to health and safety circumstances that occur as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.***

2. ***Policy 3119 Experimental or Pilot Programs: This optional new policy provides a framework for implementing pilot or experimental programs in the district.***
3. ***Policy 4205 Hiring and Background Checks: This existing policy was updated to include confidentiality measures for maintaining criminal background check information and reference 4205-AG-1.***
4. ***4205-AG-1 Criminal Justice Information Security (Non-Criminal Justice Agency): Thrun Law Firm has been in contact with the Michigan State Police (“MSP”) to develop this Administrative Guideline to ensure compliance with state and federal requirements for maintaining criminal background information for employees and applicants. The MSP reviewed this Administrative Guideline and approved its contents. If your district is undergoing an audit by the MSP, the district must provide this Administrative Guideline to pass the audit. Because this Administrative Guideline is not optional, it is being provided to all policy subscribers. For those districts that subscribe to the Administrative Guidelines and Forms, the previous 4205-AG is referred to 4205-AG-2 in the updated Table of Contents.***

In addition, the following policy will be reviewed and up for vote this evening, as a result of our audit.

5. ***Policy 2306 Board Member Compensation***

C. Finance Committee – Former Board of Education Treasurer, Amber Pomper, shared the following on behalf of Director of Finance, Justin Weston:

The Central Business Office has worked with Mr. Eli Harris (Athletic Director) to set up and implement ArbiterPay or ArbiterSports. This will help Mr. Harris with paying District sports officials quicker for the games they officiate for the District. We set up a holding account with ArbiterPay. We have to fund this account ahead of time and Mr. Harris can pay officials after the game is complete. Rather than waiting for a check to be cut from the District, he can set up payments directly to officials. ArbiterPay will also take care of issuing 1099's to every official who needs it.

I worked with Mr. Marc Alderman to submit an application for the 99h Robotics Competition Grant with the State of Michigan. We are waiting to find out if we will be approved for this grant.

I recently submitted a Direct Application with FEMA for Emergency Response/Protective Measure Funding. We are waiting to find out if there will be any questions to need to answer in addition to the application we submitted or if any additional documentation will be required for their review. The grant total was \$310,493.50.

Food Service was approved for their National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grant. The amount requested and approved for \$4,983 which will help secure the following items for the Betsie Valley Elementary kitchen: (1) Stainless

Steel Top Work Table and (1) Hotplate Countertop Electric with four round plate elements.

Early Childhood received two additional grants: Fall 2021 Child Care Relief Fund Grant for Crystal Lake Elementary \$46,9675.00 and Fall 2021 Child Care Relief Fund Grant for Lake Ann Elementary \$82,872.50.

The state extended the deadline for the Consolidated Application which is our Title Funding for the District. This now can be submitted by January 24th, 2022. We continue to move work over to Lauren Rose Lightfoot who joined our office at the end of October. She has been a great addition to the Central Business Office and Benzie Central.

We will have an intern beginning on January 13th who will be working in our office two hours daily. This will allow us to begin our process of ensuring we are reconciled for this year, now that we have officially closed FY21.

D. Educational Foundation – NONE

E. Liaison/Curriculum –NONE

F. Negotiations – We have three units to negotiate, paraprofessionals, custodians, and teachers.

G. Benzie Academy – Superintendent Erfourth shared that she and Middle/High School Principal, David Clasen, are working toward securing a counselor for Benzie Academy. They are hoping to conduct interviews at that end of this week.

Audience Participation (Agenda Items Only) – Lorriane Nordbeck, 5376 Benzie Hwy., Benzonia, took the podium to share her disappointment. She stated that given the year was 2022 that she would think that girls and boys sports would get the same respect and importance. She feels this is not true. She questioned as to whether or not the Board of Education knew how the new girls Varsity Basketball Coach was hired. Mrs. Nordbeck continued by sharing that Jeff Nordbeck, current Junior Varsity girls Basketball Coach, and former Varsity girls Basketball Coach Mark Blazejewski, were assisting during this time to handle the departure of Sarah Ross. Jeff and Mark, along with parent help, had things under control, so that the school could do due process and hire a new varsity coach. Mrs. Nordbeck wanted to know why a hasty decision was made. She feels a process was not followed like it was for the boys with applications, committee review, interviews, and recommendation for hire. She hopes going forward that Benzie Central will follow proper protocols.

Superintendent Erfourth addressed Mrs. Nordbeck, to share that the hiring process used is not the normal process and was conducted that way due to the head coach leaving the position during the season.

Discussion Topics:

1. **Return to Benzie Plan – Superintendent Erfourth shared the OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS) order. If the order moves forward, she will work with union leaders to begin collecting vaccination status for all employees. Those that have not been fully vaccinated will need to test weekly. This testing will be done on Mondays. No date is set yet to begin this.**

Action Topics:

**21-22-088 It was moved by Mrs. Johnston and supported by Mr. Barnard to approve the reallocation of Transportation Building Bond Funds for the Betsie Valley Elementary Remodel, Locker Room Remodel, Weight Room Addition, and New Elementary.
Ayes: 6 Nays: 1 Motion Carried**

**21-22-089 It was moved by Mrs. Johnston and supported by Mr. Barnard to approve the High School Locker Room Remodel Bids.
Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion Carried**

**21-22-090 It was moved by Ms. Cota Hill and supported by Mrs. Johnston to table the Weight Room Addition Bids, contingent upon New Elementary Bids.
Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion Carried**

**21-22-091 It was moved by Ms. Cota Hill and supported by Mrs. Johnston to approve the Betsie Valley Elementary Remodel Bids.
Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion Carried**

**21-22-092 It was moved by Mr. Childs and supported by Mr. Barnard to approve the Letter of Agreement between Benzie County Central Schools and Benzie County Central Secretarial Association.
Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion Carried**

**21-22-093 It was moved by Ms. Cota Hill and supported by Mrs. Johnston to approve the Return to Benzie Plan.
Ayes: 5 Nays: 2 Motion Carried**

**21-22-094 It was moved by Mrs. Johnston and supported by Ms. Cota Hill to approve Policy 2201 Board Powers/General Powers and Policy 4601.
Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion Carried**

**21-22-095 It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Mr. Childs to approve Policy 3119 Experimental Pilot Programs.
Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion Carried**

**21-22-096 It was moved by Mr. Childs and supported by Ms. Cota Hill to approve Policy 4205 Hiring and Background Checks.
Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Motion Carried**

21-22-097 It was moved by Mrs. Johnston and supported by Mr. Childs to approve Policy 5205-AG-1 Criminal Justice Information Security.

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

21-22-098 It was moved by Ms. Cota Hill and supported by Mrs. Johnston to table Policy 2306 Board Member Compensation until the February 21, 2022 meeting.

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

Audience Participation (Open Topics): NONE

Board Communication: NONE

Announcements:

- **Commencement – Sunday, June 5, 2022 – 3:00 PM**

21-22-099 It was moved by Mrs. Johnston and supported by Mr. Barnard to adjourn the regular meeting 9:51 PM.

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

Secretary, Board of Education

Please note that January 10, 2022 Organizational and Regular Board Minutes are subject for approval on February 21, 2022

Respectfully Submitted,

Catina Crossman

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Board of Education Administrative Assistant

Benzie County Central Schools