

REGULAR MEETING

A Regular meeting of the Benzie County Central Board of Education was held Monday, October 9, 2023, in the Board of Education Conference Room.

President Childs called the meeting to order at 7:06pm

Members Present: Mr. Childs, Mr. Barnard, Mr. Smith, Mr. Gray, Mr. Noffsinger

Members Absent: Mrs. Gillison, Ms. Cota Hill

- 23-24-036** It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Mr. Noffsinger to approve the agenda with one amendment, adding Discussion Item C. New Bus Purchase, along with Action Item G. Approval of New Bus Purchase.
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.

- 23-24-037** It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Smith to approve Consent Grouping items as presented.
- A. Minutes:** September 11, 2023
 - B. Business:** General Fund Bills – 1,568,733.13
 - C. Support Staff Appointments:**
 - Kylie Jensen – 6.5 Paraprofessional – Middle/High School
 - Ethan Edinger – Custodian – Full Time
 - Michelle Laffleur – 6.5 Paraprofessional – Betsie Valley Elementary
 - D. Staff Assignment Changes:**
 - NONE
 - E. Leave of Absence:**
 - NONE
 - F. Recommendation for Tenure:**
 - Renee Nowak – Lake Ann Elementary
 - Jalen Williams – High School
 - Jill Bradford – High School
 - Belva Whaley – High School
 - G. Recommendation for Termination:**
 - NONE
- Ayes:** 5 **Nays:** 0 **Motion Carried**

District Impact Team Update: Board of Education Trustee, Matt Smith reported the following: The DIT is back and off to an active start. The year began with an organizational meeting to see what DIT will look like this year. Discussions included how to develop agendas for the year and setting the calendar for the problems of practice.

TCRs are off to an early start with their scheduling.

We said goodbye to Cindy Hunt. As a reminder, she is from the Statewide Field Team and worked to establish the Blueprint model at Benzie and helped us “Benzify” it. Now that the system is in place and well established, it is ours to run. There was a lot of appreciation from the team members spoken to Cindy for her help over the past few years.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding ISSN. The discussion was mostly about how to make sure ISSN is consistent across the district but at the same time realizing each building is unique. Particularly when it comes to elementary versus secondary. Also discussed implementing RCD within ISSN. Reminder RCD is Responsibility Centered Discipline, which is new this year. Teachers went through training over the summer and it will be a major talking point this year. It’s been well received so far but will require consistent revisiting to make it a part of our Benzie system. This discussion also included how behavior is tracked in each building and how that data is reviewed. Brooke Laurent gave a presentation on Special Education at Benzie. She is our service area director and works as a liaison to our district. She shared that we have met the expectations for timely IEPs and for competence.

The middle school/high school presented a problem of practice regarding attendance with special education. They’re working to monitor attendance and have interventions to support attendance policies.

Last week, the DIT began a data dive into NWEA fall test results. Numbers remain somewhat consistent to last year. There is a high number of students that test partially proficient or not proficient in both math and reading. More than half of the students tested as not on track for SAT. The group began discussion on action items. We revisited items from last year and discussed what other steps we can take. The group will continue the discussion at tomorrow’s meeting after having the week to process the data and discuss with BITs.

Student Council Report: Student Council Board of Education Representative, Jessica Whaley. Jessica shared that homecoming 2023 was a success.

Teach Michigan Video was shared with the Board of Education: [Teach! Michigan](#) – 10 individuals represented Benzie County Central Schools.

Administration Report:

A. NMSLA – Superintendent Erfourth shared the following:

- Special Guest. Representative Cam Cavitt. R – Cheboygan was the guest speaker.
- Teacher evaluation bill being presented in Lansing. Currently looking at changing student growth and determining if any student growth should be factored in and if so, what is the best method of collecting growth.

- **HB 5021 – Koleszar. Retirement. Establish a default option for new hires to Pension Plus instead of 401K.**
- **HB 512- Daly Proposing the lessening of penalties imposed on schools due to clerical errors.**
- **Office of Retirement has crafted exceptions to rules that apply only to Superintendents- capping the rate of increase to 1.75% and excluding superintendents from returning after retirement. MASA is currently appealing the decision.**
- **There is consideration to codify free breakfast and lunch at schools.**

B. Superintendent Goals – Superintendent Erfourth – Superintendent Erfourth shared that she was focusing on the following goals:

I(1): The district leader ensures clear and measurable goals are established for all relevant areas of responsibility that are focused on the most critical needs for improving student achievement.

II(2): The district leader effectively supports and retains school and department leaders who continually enhance their leadership skills through reflection and professional growth.

III(2): The district leader ensures that district-level programs, curricula, and other initiatives can be adequately addressed in the time available to the district and schools.

IV(2): The district leader ensures equity in a student-centered district with input from constituents (e.g. school board, administrators, teachers, students, and parents).

V(3): The district leader ensures constituents (e.g. school board, administrators, teachers, students, and parents) perceive the district as safe and culturally responsive.

VI(3): The district leader manages the organization, operations, instructional programs, and initiatives to maximize the use of resources that promote effective instruction and student achievement.

C. Lake Ann Elementary Update – Principal, Rachel Anderson – Principal Anderson, along with Lake Ann Elementary SafeNet Staff, Marc Greene, presented on SafeNet through Centra Wellness, formerly known as Manistee-Benzie Community Mental Health. The SafeNet services at Lake Ann Elementary are provided by Prevention Specialist, Marc Greene. SafeNet is a school-based program (part of a continuum of behavior supports at Lake Ann Elementary) where students can be seen one time or more depending on their need. SafeNet provides supports for students, families, and school personal whether individual or through group interventions. The program continues to utilize check-in and check-out support as a means to help students build social-emotional skills through the Move this World Platform.

- D. Chartwells Food Service Update – Director of Food Service, Lisa Purchase – Mrs. Purchase shared that at the MS/HS level, they are focusing on a four-month project called Global Eats. Global Eats is A program that expands young palates with international cuisines and young minds with fun cultural educational activities; Mexico, India, China, and Italy. The Kindergarten through 5 initiative is Mood Boost designed to help K12 students make the connection between what they eat and how they feel. This will run for 8 weeks, November and December, once a week. They will hold their Animal Shelter Fundraiser in December, and their Student Scholarship Fundraiser in May. The food service department does continue to carry a positive fund balance, and they expect a spend-down letter from the state. Mrs. Purchase continues to explore different ways to utilize these funds.**
- E. Snow Plow Bids – Homestead Hills Elementary – Winter 2023 Only – Superintendent Erfourth shared that we are requesting the option to put out for bid snow removal and plowing for Homestead Hills. This would be for one year only as all of our other contracts are up for renewal next year.**
- F. 2023 UTGO Bonds, Series II – Draft Timeline – Director of Finance, Justin Weston, shared that we were able to successfully sell our series 2 and 3 bonds. We had 6 proposals for the \$1,060,000. Webster Bank was the bank that offered the best interest rate at 4.88%.**
- G. Option to RENEW Sinking Fund CD – Director of Finance, Justin Weston, shared that our CD is up for renewal. Our current rate is 4.44%. The new rate, should we choose to renew for another 5 months would be 4.75%. We are requesting to renew. Justin shared that we have earned over \$27,000 in interest so far.**
- H. Altria Settlement – Superintendent Erfourth shared that this is the settlement from the vaping lawsuit. This is the final settlement and was against Altria (the parent company). The amount of our settlement was \$9,163.**
- I. Resignations:**
- **Melanie Mclauchlan – 6. Paraprofessional – Betsie Valley Elementary**
 - **Lindsay Johnson – Early Childhood Assistant Teacher (Willsub)**
 - **Julie Grant – Bus Driver – Transportation Department**
- J. Retirements: NONE**

Board of Education/Committee Reports –

A. Buildings and Grounds Committee –

Bond Project Updates –President, Brian Childs shared the following update from Wolgast Project Manager, Chris Kuhl:

HH gym will be done Friday and will be available for use on Oct 23rd.

- 1. Bond Projects Update - Working on punch list items at HH, HS, BV. Boilers are being turned on and we are checking that the systems are all functioning appropriately in all buildings. D & W are still working onsite.**

President Childs shared that the Building and Grounds committee met the last two Wednesdays to do a mini page turn on the bus garage. The Board of Education was provided an image of the proposed structure.

- 2. Construction Update – Board of Education Treasurer, Scott Gray – No Update. All updates were shared in the Bond Updates.**
- 3. Building and Grounds Modifications Request –**
 - Scott Brautigam – Two New Dugouts – Middle School Softball Field**

B. Policy Committee – There is one policy update.

C. Finance Committee –Board of Education Vice-President, Jason Barnard and Board of Education Treasurer, Scott Gray – Director of Finance, Justin Weston shared that he is almost done with the audit and will finish on time given the November 1, 2023 deadline.

D. Educational Foundation – Board of Education Trustee Lori-Cota – Ms. Cota Hill was not in attendance, but it was shared that the last meeting was cancelled, but there will be community communication coming soon.

E. Liaison/Curriculum –Board of Education Trustee Lori Cota Hill – Ms. Cota Hill was not in attendance. Superintendent Erfourth shared that there was a meeting last week, in which they discussed teachers serving as stand-in administrators, as well as the elementary teaching position which will entail a performance-based interview next week.

F. Negotiations – Superintendent Erfourth shared that there is currently no update.

Audience Participation (Agenda Items Only) –

Eric Baatz, 3900 Blueberry Lane, Honor took the podium. Mr. Baatz asked if the new transportation department parking lot would be paved, and whether or not the restrooms would be ADA compliant.

Wendy Kalush, P.O. Box 426, Honor took the podium and shared that she wanted to celebrate the four teachers that were being tenured this evening.

Bill Kennis, 962 Michigan Ave, Benzonia took the podium. Bill expressed that the Board of Education had a lot to deal with from cellphones to Centra Wellness. He stated that Teach for America is inspiring, and that is what BWAC is. He noted that the Ida Tompkins building in Traverse City went to a lower bidder for a community good. He feels that BWAC would maximize the Crystal Lake property to the benefit the community at \$425,000.

Diane Tracy, 1926 Ness Rd., Frankfort addressed the Board of Education. She thanked the AdHoc for the BWAC and BCCS communications and negotiations through their attorneys. She certainly hopes the two can meet in the middle. She shared the Caleb Sutter story from 20 years ago, and reiterated the importance of being able to swim.

Discussion Topics:

1. Further Verizon Tower Discussion – Option and Ground Lease Agreement – Superintendent Erfourth shared that the Tower Company is willing to lease at \$1000 with a profit-sharing of an additional \$100 per additional carrier that utilizes the tower. If other carriers like T-Mobile or ATT were added we would get an additional \$100 per carrier per month.
2. Crystal Lake Property Discussion – Superintendent Erfourth shared that the Benzie Wellness and Aquatic Center (BWAC) has met with our ad hoc group. Their attorney has also met with our attorney to draft up agreeable language around indemnification and our bottom threshold of \$450,000. We have not been able to come to a final resolution as of yet.

Action Topics:

23-24-038 It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Gray to approve the 2023 UTGO Bonds, Series II – Draft Timeline – Ratification Resolution.

Ayes: 5 **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

23-24-039 It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Gray to approve to RENEW the Sinking Fund CD for 5 months at 4/75%.

Ayes: 5 **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

23-24-040 It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Mr. Smith to approve the Altria Settlement Resolution

Ayes: 5 **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

23-24-041 It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Mr. Noffsinger to approve the Verizon Tower Option and Ground Lease Agreement.

Ayes: 5 **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

23-24-042 It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Smith to approve two new dugouts for the middle school softball field.

Ayes: 5 **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

23-24-043 It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Gray to approve the purchase of a new bus; 2024 Thomas 77-Passenger Saf-T-Liner C2 School Bus 341TS at the cost of \$114,110.00.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Audience Participation (Open Topics): – Eric Baatz, 3900 Blueberry Lane, Honor took the podium. Mr. Baatz explained that last month he came to the Board of Education with a safety concern. He explained that it took three days to get a return call, after learning that Catina was out for three days at a conference. He inquired as to whether or not someone was checking her voicemails in her absence.

He requested a list of terms for the audience, giving the example of IEP.

He again wanted to point out that there is no such thing as free lunch, but rather tax payer funded. He also mentioned that he noticed school buses parked in certain bus drivers' residences, and questioned whether or not those buses would be covered by insurance in those locations.

Nicole Neihardt, 20215 Hatty Lane, Interlochen, took the podium. She shared that she has had children in this district since 2007, and she has never seen anything like this at Lake Ann Elementary. She shared that her son was assaulted twice by a classmate, once on October 2, and was never notified by the teacher or administrator regarding either incident. She stated that multiple children had been assaulted and she questioned whether or not something would be done with this student if the parent was not a Benzie Central employee. Mrs. Neihardt stated that when she and her husband came in to talk with the administrator, they felt she was condescending smirked, and spoke to them like they were children.

Board Communication: NONE

Announcements:

- **October 10-11, 2023- Parent-Teacher Conferences**
- **October 13, 2023 – No School**
- **November 13, 2023 – Regular Board of Education Meeting – 7:00 PM**

23-24-044 It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Gray to adjourn the regular meeting 9:02 pm.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Secretary, Board of Education

Please note that October 9, 2023 Regular Board Minutes are subject for approval on November 13, 2023.

Respectfully Submitted,

Catina M. Crossman

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Board of Education Administrative Assistant

Pupil Accounting Specialist

Director of Communications

Benzie County Central Schools

Go Huskies!