

## REGULAR MEETING

A Regular meeting of the Benzie County Central Board of Education was held Monday, November 13, 2023, in the Board of Education Conference Room.

President Childs called the meeting to order at 7:05pm

**Members Present:** Mr. Childs, Mr. Barnard, Mr. Smith, Mr. Gray, Mr. Noffsinger, Mrs. Gillison

**Members Absent:** Ms. Cota Hill

**23-24-045** It was moved by Mr. Gray and supported by Mr. Smith to approve the agenda with one amendment, removing Action item F; *Approval to List Crystal Lake Property.*

**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.

**23-24-046** It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mr. Noffsinger to approve Consent Grouping items as presented.

**A. Minutes:** October 9, 2023

**B. Business:** General Fund Bills – 3,972,761.57

**C. Support Staff Appointments:**

- Jenny Weisman- Part-Time Custodian– Middle/High School
- Wallace “Chip” Fryer – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher – Lake Ann Elementary

**D. Staff Assignment Changes:**

- NONE

**E. Leave of Absence:**

- NONE

**F. Recommendation for Tenure:**

- Elaine Taghon – Benzie Academy
- Josh Crocker – High School

**G. Recommendation for Termination:**

- Employee A – Early Childhood Lead Teacher

**H. Contract Updates:**

- Melinda Coger – Early Childhood Director

**Ayes:** 6

**Nays:** 0

**Motion Carried**

**District Impact Team Update:** Board of Education Trustee, Matt Smith reported the following: Over the past month, we've had tuning protocols from each building.

- Homestead Hills asked how can we best support Tier 1 instruction given students with varying needs.
- Lake Ann is looking to introduce new documentation for office referrals. They asked for feedback on the form and suggestions on how to calibrate staff into implementing it.
- Betsie Valley shared detailed behavioral data. They broke down the incidents in many ways including time of day, day of week, grade, and type of behavior. Noticed a few trends including a spike before lunch, not after as expected. This data resulted in a discussion on how to improve behavior in Tier 1.
- High School and Middle School discussed LIFT Meetings. Specifically, they asked if the frequency, timing, and topic of LIFT meetings are appropriate for the needs of the teachers so we can maximize outcomes for both the teachers and students. They also discussed next steps to move the work forward.

In addition to the tuning protocols, we had an update from Early Childhood. There are 64 kids enrolled at Lake Ann, 67 at Homestead Hills, and 15 at Betsie Valley.

Also, the last update from Special Education is we completed our Benzie Action Plan for General Supervision. Their focus is now on data review for students.

**Student Council Report:** Student Council Board of Education Representative, Jessica Whaley was not in attendance. No update.

#### **Administration Report:**

- A. NMSLA – Superintendent Erfourth shared the following: Special Guest Sheryl Kennedy – Office of Public and Governmental Affairs, Michigan Department of Education- She shared the work that was completed during this legislative session including the repeal of A-F grading system of school districts, 3rd grade retention bill, teacher reciprocity, teacher retirement and return to work, budgetary priorities, along with an update to teacher evaluations. The update includes: Changing rating levels from four to three: effective, developing, and needing support, clarifies that a negotiated evaluation system must, at a minimum, meet the requirement in this law, and require that 20% of the evaluation is to be based on student growth and assessment data or student learning objectives. Growth and assessment data and student learning objective metrics would be determined at the local level. The Senate Education Committee began hearings on [Senate Bill 463](#) which mandates completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) as a graduation requirement. The supplemental transportation categorical now includes intermediate school districts. The nature of the formula was changed. The new formula is based on density per square mile instead of miles driven, basing it on the percentage of transportation costs last year. Benzie's transportation allocation is \$365,478.94 as of now. We will receive around 33k a month. This number may change/update in the Spring when they do a final evaluation. In addition, both Charter Accountability and Political

Update 54-54 were highlighted. There is Criminal Sexual Conduct K-12 included in the proposed bill. This bill would expand criminal and civil statutes of limitations for sexual misconduct crimes; create a two-year window for claims to be filed retroactively; as well as eliminate governmental immunity if the governmental entity knew or should have known of the sexual misconduct and failed to report it to law enforcement. Office of Retirement Services was a talking point. ORS has two categories of employees for retirement calculation purposes: The first group includes an employee who works in a job classification with three or more members. Typical examples of classifications in this group are teachers, bus drivers, and other support employees. In some school districts, but not all, assistant superintendents and other administrators fall in this group. For this group, a salary increase can *only* be considered compensation for retirement purposes if the employee's "normal salary schedule" allows for that salary increase. This means that some administrators will have greatly affected retirements under this decision.

- B. Return to Learn (COVID) Plan – Superintendent Erfourth – Superintendent Erfourth shared that this is an ESSER requirement through the end of this year. We need to review our policy twice a year. There are no changes to the current plan.
- C. Fall 2023 General Collection Update – “Count Day” – Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Pupil Accounting Specialist, Catina Crossman – Mrs. Crossman shared with the Board of Education the Uncertified DS4061, as well as enrollment summaries as of October 4, 2023 for each of our six buildings. This fall the district sits at a total FTE of 1179.77. Mrs. Crossman explained that FTE count being lower than head counts results in shared time students, and homeschool and non-public school district residents who attend CTC. In addition, she shared that this total did not include our preschool population, with the exception of our preschool students receiving special education 1754/1755 services. Catina explained to the Board of Education that this is an unofficial, unaudited DS4061. Field Audits will take place in December for all elementary buildings, as well as our middle school building.
- D. School of Choice Summary – Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Catina Crossman – Mrs. Crossman shared a 2023/24 Schools of Choice Summary with the Board of Education, including students that were non-residents enrolled at Benzie Central vs. residents enrolled in other districts. Catina explained that preschool students are not coded as non-residents, but that she tracks them for her own records.
- E. i-Ready Proposed Program Pilot – Superintendent Erfourth – Superintendent Erfourth shared that i-Ready is a testing platform and intervention/support program for students. i-Ready is a diagnostic, computer-adaptive assessment (like NWEA). If we moved to using i-Ready, we would no longer use NWEA. We are required to use a diagnostic assessment at least twice a year per the state. This program could eventually take the place of Aimsweb, Accelerated Reader,

IXL, EPIC, and other online platforms that we use. This would enable teachers to have all student assessment and intervention support housed in one location along with a teacher toolbox of lesson plans and support materials. Homestead Hills would be the pilot school along with MS/HS special education teachers.

F. Sex Education Advisory Recommendations – Carmen Briggs – Carmen shared that the Sex Ed. Advisory Board is recommending approval for the following items:

- [Sexting](#) [MS Lesson](#) [TCAPS Sex and Law](#) [HS Consent Scenarios](#)
- 2 Minutes Will Change the Way You Think About Consent Video Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laMtr-rUEmY&t=1s>

Should the recommendations be approved in December, Mrs. Crossman will update the website accordingly.

G. Homestead Hills Elementary Update – Crystal Lake Community Mentors - Principal, Steve Graetz, Jen Rosa, & Al Jongekrijg – Principal Graetz presented the Board of Education with a photo of the Homestead Hills Elementary ribbon-cutting ceremony. With that, he shared that the staff and students alike take great pride in the new buildings, and feel honored to be there. Homestead Hills Elementary Title I/Reading Interventionist and Crystal Lake Mentor Coordinator, Jen Rosa, along with Al Jongekrijg touched on the Crystal Lake Community Mentors Program. Homestead Hills Elementary, in partnership with the Benzonia Public Library, has developed the Crystal Lake Community Mentors program. This is a program that trains caring adult volunteers to become mentors in our school. All mentors in this program have passed a full background check. Each mentor spends one hour per week working individually with the same student throughout the school year. Teachers fill out a referral form to Jen, a parent consent letter is issued, the student is paired with a mentor that they meet with at least once a week for 30 minutes. The program allows for students to have a positive adult role model encompassing play, friendship, support and connection. There are currently fourteen members within the program.

H. Benzie Academy Update - Principal, Kyle Taylor, Teacher, Elaine Taghon, and Counselor, Rebecca Kik – Principal Taylor shared that the student theme is, “It’s all about you”. Lead Teacher Mrs. Taghon shared that there were 84 students enrolled on Count Day (10/4/23).

- 18 students receive special education services
- Updated information 11/13/23. 88 students enrolled, 20 receive special education services. 8 students attend the Career Tech. Center, 2 are dual enrolled with Northwestern Michigan College, and 1 is in the Engineering Academy. As of November 8, there were 17 completed classes. The Benzie Academy currently has 25 seniors. Of the 25, 6 could finish and graduate at semester time. Academy Counselor, Rebecca Kik shared the Map of Success with the Board of Education. Students will be attending the Building Tomorrow Event which is a hands-on

construction and automotive career and college readiness event for high school students. In addition, several students will attend a college visit to Ferris State University, as will also be hosting a Skilled-Trades Panel. Mrs. Kik shared several student testimonials.

- I. **Homestead Hills Elementary – Snow Plow Bids – Superintendent Erfourth** explained that this contract is for 2023 only, as it will be on the district snow plow bid next winter when we renew the three-year contract for all buildings. There were four bids. Director of Operations, Mike Zielinski, is recommending low bidder, A.J.'s Excavating at \$5750.00.
- J. **2022/23 Audit Review – Julie Burks- Dennis, Gartland, Niergarth - Julie Burks**, our Audit Manager at Dennis, Gartland & Niergarth presented to the Board of Education. Julie presented a high-level review of Benzie's Financial Net Position, much of which can be swayed heavily by the state pension liabilities. A small change can impact the District's net position by millions of dollars, which is why there is a total net position change of \$4,111,125 in 2023. Long-term debt totals \$37,247,413, interest expense for the year ended June 30, 2023 was \$956,408 and interest paid was \$1,254,898. For the District's General Fund, Revenues were \$16,407,578, while expenditures were \$15,737,232 with an annual net of \$670,346. This made the ending fund balance \$5,692,070 by June 30, 2023. Ms. Burks showed several graphs. The general trend showed that the increase in revenues was the same in expenditures over the past five years. The areas of Instruction and Supporting Services showed the highest expenditure increases, as the district's expenditures are mostly payroll. Finally, Ms. Burks reviewed the three material weaknesses found in the District, mostly all year over year repeats due to the District's size. She stated that it is important that the Bank Reconciliations be prepared and reviewed monthly. Last, it was mentioned that the District's Food Service Fund has an excess fund balance, this is an immaterial instance of noncompliance. The District continues to work with MDE to spend down this balance. Overall the District is doing well and has a healthy fund balance.
- K. **Resignations:**
- Candice Swander – Middle School Softball
  - Annalise Tallent – 5.5 Paraprofessional – Betsie Valley Elementary
  - Ashley Lindstrom – Teacher – Betsie Valley Elementary – Effective November 24, 2023.
- L. **Retirements:**
- Barbara Powell – Counselor – Effective February 2, 2024.

**Board of Education/Committee Reports –**

**A. Buildings and Grounds Committee –**

- 1. Bond Project Updates –President, Brian Childs shared the following update from Wolgast Project Manager, Chris Kuhl: Remaining work at Benzie County Central Schools.**

**Homestead Hills Elementary:**

- Classroom Signs
- Punch list will be 98% finished by this weekend
- Generator installs
- Owner Training
- Locker island top install
- New Casework installs – Strata Building 4-6 weeks out
- Add new hardware to HM doors messed up by Manufactory
- BCC/BFS Final once Generator is installed
- Dedication Plaque and Wayfinding sign
- Install Added scoreboard at gym

**High School:**

- Punch list finish
- Basketball equipment installs
- ERV- fixes- waiting on replacement parts
- Split system at Sheriff office- waiting on replacement part
- Working added heaters at rooms
- Gas at science rooms 508/507
- Replace phase 1 wood doors with correct color
- Replace 8 wood doors messed up by Manufactory
- Finish laminate box enclosure at fume hood
- Install added urinal screen in HS boy's bathroom
- Added Casework-
- Finish Palm at end caps in science rooms
- Locker room floor fix
- Miscellaneous paint punch list- coming Thursday
- BCC/BFS Final scheduled for 11-29 @11am
- CBO doors- 11-9-23
- Add exterior doors- PR issued
- Added interior doors-PR issued

**Betsie Valley Elementary**

- Punch list items

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 –**  
 President Childs shared that the Building and Grounds Committee approved a screen wrestling, which will operate on a track system. Baseball will be submitting a request for approval for a pole barn for storage and locker rooms.
  - 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 – Mr. Gray shared that the update for this evening was the 2022/23 Audit Review.**
  - D. **Educational Foundation – Board of Education Trustee Lori-Cota – Ms. Cota Hill was not in attendance, but it was shared that the next meeting will be held on November 15 at 7:00 PM.**
  - E. **Liaison/Curriculum –Board of Education Trustee Lori Cota Hill – Ms. Cota Hill was not in attendance. No Update.**
  - F. **Negotiations – Superintendent Erfourth shared that there is currently no update.**

#### **Audience Participation (Agenda Items Only) –**

**Wanda Shreiner - 1261 Michigan Ave., Frankfort took the podium. She shared that she was a retired Ohio teacher and was speaking on behalf of the Benzie Wellness and Aquatic Center. She explained that she voluntarily has been teaching swimming lessons for the last three years, and that you cannot put a price tag of the smiling faces of children who learn to swim or read. Wanda expressed that the BWAC needs the Crystal Lake Elementary property, and that her heart is full for this community.**

**John Rothhaar – 3719 Orchard Lane, Beulah – John took the podium speaking as a board member of the Benzie Wellness and Aquatic Center. He thanked Superintendent Erfourth and the Board of Education sub-committee for their time and work on the proposed sale of the Crystal Lake Elementary property. In sum, he feels they are very close, and would be appreciative to close the gap.**

**John Marshall – 5731 Crystal Drive, Beulah – John took the podium sharing support for Wallace Fryer as a fantastic educator as his teaching position was approved this evening. He also shared appreciation for Amber Pomper, Winona Roper, and Kim O'Connor in the audience for their work at Lake Ann Elementary. John spoke on behalf of the BWAC for general change, adding that it may even help with our enrollment. He referred to the old Benzonia High School and how that building struggled for occupancy**

and as well as have a positive impact on the community. He feels that it would be fantastic for the BWAC to occupy the Crystal Lake Elementary location, and wants to prove that Benzie is the best in the Northwest.

Bill Kennis, 962 Michigan Ave, Frankfort took the podium. Bill touched on the positive audit report, as well as the Crystal Lake Mentor Program. He feels the proposed community center would benefit parents and tots, and grow our community. Bill concluded sharing that when “Benzie wins, we all win”, and he thanked Superintendent Erfourth and the Ad-Hoc Committee stating, “It’s the tough that makes it good.”

Diane Tracy, 1926 Ness Rd., Frankfort addressed the Board of Education. She feels that we are pretty close to the finish line and still believes that this is a great site for the BWAC. Healthy community equals healthy schools. She shared that since the October 2023 Board of Education meeting, the BWAC had received two grants; Seabury Foundation and Rotary Charities Site Discovery Seed Grant. She feels this is pivotal for them, and they are well informed, have full support, and believes the community center will complete the community.

Amber Pomper, 6803 Rayle Rd. – Amber took the podium and asked if approved, would i-Ready be used for the remainder of the school year. She also asked if it would replace NWEA and Aimsweb.

#### Discussion Topics:

1. Crystal Lake Property Discussion – Board of Education Treasurer, Scott Gray, shared that the sub-committee is giving the Benzie Wellness and Aquatic Center two weeks to submit a \$5000.00 non-refundable deposit. They then have 90 days to take care of their inspections and get their funding in place and agree to the terms or they can walk away minus the initial deposit. Mr. Gray felt that the inspections and funding allocation should have already been in order.
2. Bus Garage Property Discussion – Superintendent Erfourth shared that the bus garage project has gone out for bid with the bid opening set for November 30, 2023 at 3:00 PM.

#### Action Topics:

23-24-047 It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Mr. Noffsinger to approve the Return to Learn (COVID) Plan with No Changes.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

23-24-048 It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Smith to approve the i-Ready Proposed Pilot.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried



**23-24-049** It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mr. Barnard to approve the Homestead Hills Elementary 2023/24 Snow Bid for AJ's Excavating in the amount of \$5,750.00.

**Ayes: 6**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion Carried**

**23-24-050** It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Gray to approve the 2022/23 Audit Review.

**Ayes: 6**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion Carried**

**Audience Participation (Open Topics):** – Diane Tracy, 1926 Ness Rd., Frankfort took the podium. She thanked the Board of Education for the recap and motivation during the Crystal Lake Elementary property discussion and looks forward to sharing where they are at in the process in the very near future.

Ashley Lindstrom, 6536 Center Rd, Thompsonville took the podium. She shared that as teachers, they want what is best for the kids. She urged the Board of Education to follow up with the staff. She feels the staff cannot do what is best for kids if they do not have what they need. She pleaded with the Board of Education to check on the teachers and staff.

Kendra Kohn, 14716 Beagle Blvd., Beulah took the podium. Kendra shared that she attended Benzie Central Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and that she has never seen anything like this. Although she understands IEP's, she would like to see plans put in place for those students who do not have IEP plans, so that they are not being assaulted daily like her Kindergarten student is.

Brady Streeter – 12668 Cinder Rd., Beulah – Brady took the podium with concerns of bullying toward his daughter. Brady shared that his daughter has informed multiple adults regarding these incidents, and that they have only received three phone calls. Brady asked the Board of Education for a written response for action being taken.

**Board Communication: NONE**

**Announcements:**

- **Congratulations to the cast and crew of *The Play That Goes WronG***
- **November 14, 2023 – National Honor Society Induction Ceremony – 7:00 PM**
- **November 16, 2023 – Versiti Blood Drive – 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM**
- **November 18, 2023 – Vex IQ “Full Volume” Robotics Tournament – 9:00 AM**
- **November 22, 2023 – Early Release**
- **November 23 & 24 2023 – Thanksgiving Break**
- **December 11, 2023 – Regular Board of Education Meeting – 7:00 PM**
- **Happy Birthday to Board of Education President, Brian Childs**

**Happy Thanksgiving!**

**23-24-051** It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Gray to adjourn the regular meeting 9:03 pm.

**Ayes: 6**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion Carried**

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**Secretary, Board of Education**

***Please note that November 13, 2023 Regular Board Minutes are subject for approval on December 11, 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!***