

## REGULAR MEETING

A Regular meeting of the Benzie County Central Board of Education was held Monday, December 11, 2023, in the Board of Education Conference Room.

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

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

**Members Absent:** Ms. Cota Hill

**23-24-052** It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mr. Noffsinger to approve the agenda as presented.

**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.

**23-24-053** It was moved by Mr. Gray and supported by Mr. Barnard to approve Consent Grouping items as presented.

**A. Minutes: November 13, 2023**

**B. Business: General Fund Bills – 895,036.77**

**C. Support Staff Appointments:**

- Lisa Purchase – Central Business Office – Finance Department
- Crystal Griffis – 5.5 Paraprofessional – Betsie Valley Elementary
- Joshua Hoffman – 6.5 Paraprofessional – Betsie Valley Elementary
- Lauren Allen – Bus Driver – Transportation Department

**D. Staff Assignment Changes:**

- Jeanne Pettengill – Intervention Specialist to 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher – Betsie Valley Elementary

**E. Leave of Absence:**

- NONE

**F. Recommendation for Tenure:**

- NONE

**G. Recommendation for Termination:**

- NONE

**H. Contract Updates:**

- NONE

**Ayes: 6**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion Carried**

**District Impact Team Update: Board of Education Trustee, Matt Smith reported the following: Since the last board meeting, as usual, each building took turns presenting a Tuning Protocol. That includes twice from Homestead Hills Elementary.**

**Homestead Hills first Tuning Protocol was based on behavior data as they asked, “How might tier 1 behavior instruction be tailored to each grade level?” Data was broken down by type of incident, location, and time of day. Also presented a problem of practice last week asking, “How might our BIT continue to make an impact on our student’s sense of membership?” The goal is to have 80% of students at or above grade level for attendance. Also, discussed how to create that sense of membership by engaging students in a variety of ways, so that they are not just physically present, but intellectually immersed, socially connected, and emotionally centered. One way they’re doing this is through their Student Council, which is a small collection of 3-5 grade students.**

**Betsie Valley’s tuning protocol started as what data can we collect to see production when implementing training practices for staff. They noticed a gap in the building’s practices versus the district’s priorities: there is a process to train staff regarding writing and referrals that utilizes common language. They are working on a system in their building to close that gap.**

**Lake Ann sought input around creating small student groups in order to deliver Tier II interventions based on SELWeb data while maintaining terms already in place through their CASEL 5.**

**The High School and Middle School asked what intervention strategies can we use to support students and teachers with the failure rates for quarter one and to help students earn first semester credit for their classes? We looked at 9th grade failure data for students with three or more Fs. The data was broken down by class, teacher, and how far below passing.**

**There were other discussions within DIT beyond the tuning protocols. A Math Curriculum update made it sound like the change to CPM has gone well. Our contract with Math Expressions for K-6 is set to expire in 2025. The committee is starting to wonder if we should consider other curriculums to replace Math Expressions at that time. However, they’re wondering if we can move 6th grade to CPM next year so that all secondary students are using the same curriculum. More than likely the Math Team will present that to the school board at some point this winter.**

**An update from ELA was focused around strengthening writing. They are starting to review some materials other than CKLA. They might pilot something next year to go along with CKLA or replace. They’re also wondering what impact literacy has throughout the school district.**

Last week, Paul Bauer, our ISD Rep came to give high level data trends regarding SELWeb and SSIS. He also shared how our behavior dashboards could be used in conjunction with our SELWeb/SSIS results to support students with interventions.

**Student Council Report:** Student Council Board of Education Representative, Jessica Whaley shared that the Student Council has implemented a new fundraiser incorporating dress up days. They charge students one dollar for each dress up day. The funds from the first fundraiser were donated to Victoria Mekas toward her cancer treatments. Going forward, it will be a 50/50; 50% to Student Council, and 50% to a local charity of choice. The Holiday Luncheon is scheduled for December 19, with the rotating activities and raffle taking place on December 20.

**Administration Report:**

A. NMSLA – Superintendent Erfourth shared the following: There was an Office of Retirement (ORS) Update. The Michigan Association of Superintendents and Administrators (MASA) will be filing an appeal regarding retirement by December 13; “Compensation in excess of an amount over the level of compensation reported for the preceding year except increases provided by the normal salary schedule for the current job classification. In cases where the current job classification in the reporting unit has less than 3 members, the normal salary schedule for the most nearly identical job classification in the reporting unit or in similar reporting units shall be used.” MASA is also looking at a potential legislative remedy for groups of less than 3 members in a school system. The Governor's State of the State is set for January 24. The Michigan Primary is set for February 27. There will be no NMSLA meeting in January, they will resume in February in Lansing. There are still budget priorities around transportation regarding cost sharing.

B. Travel Abroad Information – Educational Tours – Jill Bradford presented on the district guide to Educational Travel Abroad prepared by Educational Tours. This is NOT a school-sponsored program. This travel group currently works with Kaleva, Bear Lake, and Frankfort students. They have all elected to follow the model of not formally partnering. They have made it clear that they are NOT sponsoring or partnering with the travel group. Some districts find that supporting travel but avoiding having an official district approval process serves the district well in these ways:

- The district is able to separate itself from any tour-related issues that might arise including, for example, any financial matters related to travel costs.
- While the district is included in the traveler’s release of liability and covered under EF’s general liability protection as mentioned earlier, the district is able to further distance itself from the liability related to on-tour bodily injury or property damage.
- Many districts allow teachers to promote their travel programs in school but have parents sign an additional district waiver further acknowledging that travel is not affiliated with the district.
- It saves the district the time and effort necessary to develop and administer a travel approval process.

- C. Early Childhood Update – Early Childhood Directors, Katie Johnston and Melinda Coger – Katie and Melinda shared a presentation with the Board of Education on our Benzie Central Early Childhood Program. We have Early Childhood Programs at all three elementary buildings; Betsie Valley Elementary, Lake Ann Elementary and Homestead Hills Elementary.**

***Betsie Valley Elementary Enrollment***

- **GSRP 15**

***Lake Ann Elementary Enrollment***

- **Infant/Toddler 18**
- **Tuition 22**
- **GSRP 25**
- **Before/After Care (K-5) 50**

***Homestead Hills Elementary Enrollment***

- **Infant/Toddler 15**
- **Strong Beginnings 11 (3 open slots)**
- **Extended GSRP 16**
- **Before/After Care (K-5) 7**

This year, Mrs. Johnston teaches a high school class 7<sup>th</sup> hour in which high school students, currently 4 seniors and 2 juniors, have the opportunity to spend an hour a week in Early Childhood classrooms, focusing on health, safety, learning environments, cognitive development, physical development, language and literacy. Junior, Mya Heinz, was in attendance and spoke on her positive experience with this program thus far.

The Early Childhood Program is looking forward to hosting their Lake Ann Elementary Holiday Family Literacy night on December 12, as well as a potential start of an Apprenticeship Program with Northwest Michigan Works (NWMi Works). Certified staffing issues continue to be a challenge but are hopeful the High School child development class and the Apprenticeship Program will help with staffing.

- D. Middle School Competitive Cheer – Superintendent Erfourth – Superintendent Erfourth shared with the Board of Education that some middle school students had approached her regarding starting a middle school cheer team. Superintendent Erfourth is asking that the Board of Education approve Middle School Competitive Cheer and shared that our current Schedule B does not list Middle School Cheer but does list Freshman Cheer paid at the 4% rate. She is requesting approval to have Middle School Cheer and pay the coach at the rate of 4%. The Board of Education inquired on the following components;**
- **Participation Interest**
  - **Coach Commitment and Program Longevity**
  - **Program Cost (Coach, equipment, uniforms, transportation, etc.)**
  - **Season Timeline (practices/competitions/game participation)**
  - **Practice Space**
  - **Club v. School Sponsored**

- **Event Transportation**

**E. Middle/High School Athletic Update – Athletic Director, Eli Harris – Athletic Director Harris shared with the Board of Education a fall 2023 athletic update, including fall participation as well as awards recognitions. Currently, there are 318 students enrolled in the high school. Out of the 101 athletes, 3 are Benzie Academy students. This indicates that 31% of our high school student body and 3% of the Benzie Academy (80) were involved in athletics for the fall sports season. [Participation](#)**

### **Fall Awards Recognition**

#### **All-Conference Selections (29)**

##### **Soccer:**

**1st team**

**Emmett Jaquish**

**Evan Chandler**

**Nolan Bretzke**

**Honorable Mention**

**Conner Wenkel**

##### **Volleyball:**

**1st team**

**Ava Bechler**

**2nd team**

**Flora Zickert**

**Honorable Mention**

**Emma Brooks**

##### **Cross Country:**

**Boys 1st team**

**Lucan Louwsma**

**Ben DeRidder**

**2nd Team**

**Ethin Chandler**

**Cage Edingfield**

**Hudson Kitely**

**Honorable Mention**

**Mckai Henry**

**Logan Hewitt**

**Landon Harris**

**Kyle Vincent**

**Girls 1st team**

**Mylie Kelly**

**Ava Iverson**

**Honorable Mention**

**Tessa Buday**

**Althea Gaylord**

**Nora Grossnickle**

**Football:****1st Team****Jaxon Childers WR****Ryan Kincaid OL****Dalton Geetings WR****Jacob Gillison DB****Michael Pfeiffer LB****Tyrone Brouillet KR****Honorable Mention****Grayson Converse DL****JJ Koscielski LB****Dan Wallington QB****JJ Koscielski won the Burlsworth Character and Sportsmanship Award****Record-Eagle Dream Team (TBD)****Cross Country****Mylie Kelly****Nora Grossnickle****Ava Iverson****Cambrie Lawrence****Boys TBD****Volleyball****TBD****Football****TBD****Soccer****TBD**

**Mr. Harris also shared that six juniors attended the MHSAA Sportsmanship Summit at the Grand Traverse Resort. These students continue to represent the Benzie Central community with pride, leadership, character, good sportsmanship and class: McKai Henry, Ben DeRidder, Grayson Converse, Paige Kaple, Kadence Popour, Grace Heiges. Mr. Harris would like to see the formation of an Athletic Leadership Council here at Benzie Central, that would have a representative from each sport offered.**

**In addition, Mr. Harris provided a Turf Tank video demonstration. The Turk Tank purchase includes configurations and shipping of the robot, secure inventory and lock in installation date, as well as product training and online resources. The upfront implementation cost is \$1700.00. The One Pro Package Outright Purchase is \$52,000, and the One Pro Package Customer Care Plan is \$4,999.00 year. The Turf Tank will save time and money.**

- F. Bus Garage Bid Review – Jim Venton – Senior Project Manager– Wolgast Corporation – Mr. Venton shared the Bids for the Bus Garage project. Benzie**

County Central Schools received sealed bids on November 30, 2023, for the New Transportation Building. Wolgast Corporation has reviewed each of the bids and interviewed the low bidders. If approved, the project cost would be a total of \$3,008,777.00. This includes the Alternate A1 pricing to add a standing seam roof (add of \$15,926.00). Wolgast Corporation recommends the following contractors for the award of contracts and described amounts. [New Transportation Building - Contract Award Recommendations](#). If approved, the total contracts for this project would total \$3,008,777.00. This includes Alternate A1 pricing to add a standing seam roof (add of \$15,926.00).

- G. Bond Work Bonus – Superintendent Erfourth – Superintendent Erfourth shared that this bond bonus request is to provide a \$500.00 bonus for all of the custodial department and central business office staff for their efforts this past summer during bond projects and construction work ensuring that school could open on time.**
- H. Budget Amendment #1 – Director of Finance, Justin Weston – Director of Finance, Justin Weston shared that the 2023 Taxable values of all properties within the District's jurisdiction increased significantly since the original budget amendment in June 2023. We will levy about a million more in local taxes and receive less funding from the state, as they only make up what we would get based on the per pupil foundation allocation of \$9,608 per pupil. We originally budgeted for 1,200 pupils, but have seen a decrease due to larger graduating classes, and smaller entering classes. The state has seen an overall decrease in enrollment and birth rates. We will move forward with this Amendment at 1,140 students as we expect to see a steady decrease in enrollment. Our fund balance adopted was \$4,790,517, but ended at \$6,362,416 due to additional funds received and payments being made after the start of the year. The District's overall general fund budget is \$24,844,485, with expected expenditures of \$18,482,069, leaving the fund balance at about 34.80%. \$3,375,000 is set aside for future planning of replacement/upgrades as needed. Sinking fund will have \$3,314,692 after the winter levy. Debt Retirement will have \$2,819,551 available to cover our debt payments of \$2,568,608 through November 2024. Early childhood budget needs to be watched closely as we expand the program and hired lead teachers for those programs. Food service fund balance is higher than what the state would like it to be, we expect a letter from the state again this year and a plan to spend down the funds will be submitted. Student activities will see little to no change in balances as they are generally in/out accounts. We have several new categories this year, 22L for transportation funding. The District will receive \$365k this fiscal year, but the state has said adjustments could be coming, so don't count on it yet. 29(7) is for declining enrollment districts, this funding will be \$172,751 this year. There are several MPERS categories and additional funding to help pay down the District's overall retirement shortfall with the ORS. We will continue to do this for several years.**

**I. Resignations:**

- Michelle Laffleur – 6.5 Paraprofessional – Betsie Valley Elementary
- Ashley Alvey – Elementary Teacher – Homestead Hills Elementary – Effective December 20, 2023
- Ashley Alvey – Junior Varsity Softball Coach
- Corey Bechler – Head Varsity Girls Volleyball Coach

**J. Retirements:**

- NONE

**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**

- **Finish up remaining punch list items**
  - **Only 5 items remain—will finish up over the holiday break**
- **Get room signage installed**
- **Install added casework over holiday break**
- **Install Generator- waiting on delivery date from Manufacturer—delayed**

**High School**

- **Finish up remaining punch list items**
    - **Only 8 items remain**
    - **Will finish up over holiday break**
  - **Install 8 new wood doors prepped incorrectly by manufacturer**
  - **Install additional new wood doors**
  - **Install correct Phase 1 doors- incorrect color**
  - **Fix Gas line on roof**
  - **Resolve Cafeteria ceiling and Locker room floors issues**
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 –**
    1. **NONE**



**B. Policy Committee –**

**1. November 2023 Policy Update Summary (*Professional Staff Board Policy Update*)**

- 4108 Union Activity and Representation
- 4207 Third-Party Contracting of Non-Instructional Support Services
- 4402 Assignment and Transfer
- 4403 Performance Evaluation
- 4404 Performance Based Compensation
- 4405 Reduction in Force and Recall
- 4407 Discipline
- 4408 Termination
- 4409 Non-Renewal
- 4503 Performance Evaluation  
(Administrators)
- 4504 Performance Based Compensation  
(Administrators)

Board of Education Trustee, Matt Smith explained that Thrun Law Firm, P.C. is updating eleven (11) Board Policies to bring them into compliance with new legislative changes to the Michigan Public Employment Relations Act (“PERA”) the State School Aid Act (“SSAA”), the Revised School Code (“RSC”), and the Teachers’ Tenure Act (“TTA”). All eleven (11) policies, once approved would be adopted under one resolution.

- 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 Budget Amendment #1.
- D. Educational Foundation –** Board of Education Trustee Lori-Cota – Ms. Cota Hill was not in attendance. Superintendent Erfourth shared that the next meeting date has not been set yet.
- E. Liaison/Curriculum –**Board of Education Trustee Lori Cota Hill – Ms. Cota Hill was not in attendance. Superintendent Erfourth shared that at the last meeting, there was conversation around union representation and building administration as well as concerns around having to leave their classrooms. In addition, there was discussion on teachers being paid for one (1) eight-hour day a week, to attend meetings outside of their teaching day. There was also discussion on the importance of teachers and staffing attending professional development and staff meetings.
- F. Negotiations –** Superintendent Erfourth shared that there is currently no update.

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

**Bill Kennis, 962 Michigan Ave, Frankfort took the podium. Bill was speaking on behalf of the Crystal Lake Elementary and the Benzie Wellness and Aquatic Center. Bill was initially hopeful that this contract would be slam dunk, and he urges the Board of Education to finalize this contract the 12<sup>th</sup> time around and to get this thing done.**

**Eric Baatz, 3900 Blueberry Lane, Honor took the podium. He inquired about the bus garage parking lot and to whether or not it would be concrete and paved, or concrete and dirt. He stated he was glad to hear they were setting aside money for future new bus purchases, and wondered when that started to happen, as he many times had to drive old buses when he was a bus driver.**

**Val Gerhart, 380 Shields Dr., Beulah took the podium. She was pleased with the Early Childhood future teacher class for our high school students and inquired if a guaranteed interview would happen for these students at the completion of the necessary requirements. She too shared that the Benzie Sunrise Rotary donated \$5000.00 to Power! Book Bags and packed nearly 1500 books and literacy booklets for Benzie Central Elementary students.**

### **Discussion Topics:**

- 1. Sex Ed. Advisory Recommendation Discussion - The Board of Education further discussed the Sex Ed. Advisory recommendations as presented on November 13, 2023. Board of Education Trustee, Shannon Gillison raised concern regarding one of the proposed scenarios, and inquired if the curriculum was abstinence based. She also questioned the Planned Parenthood letterhead. Board of Education Secretary, Chris Noffsinger feels this is something for parents to teach at home, not school. Board of Education Treasurer, Scott Gray, feels it start at home as well. Board of Education Trustee, Matt Smith added that if a group of 12 individuals has met several times and recommends content, we should be in support of their suggested recommendations. It was made clear that parents/guardians do reserve the right to have their student(s) opt out of specific subjects/topics/activities.**
- 2. Crystal Lake Elementary Property Timeline Update – Superintendent Erfourth shared that she spoke with Diane Tracy earlier today. BWAC would like to proceed with the \$5000.00 option to purchase. The ad hoc committees agreed to no major changes in the contract, but the deed restrictions were removed. The most recent proposed deed restriction would include construction to start within five (5) years, with project completion within ten (10) years. We hope to bring this back in January.**
- 3. Sale of Bus Garage - A revised contract was shared with the buyer's agent. The buyer's attorney is reviewing the agreement.**

**Action Topics:**

**23-24-054** It was moved by Mrs. Gillison and supported by Mr. Smith to approve the Middle School Competitive Cheer.

**Ayes: 5** **Nays: 1** **Motion Carried**

**23-24-055** It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mr. Gray to table to approve the bus garage bid review.

**Ayes: 6** **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

**23-24-056** It was moved by Mr. Gray and supported by Mr. Noffsinger to approve the Bond Work Bonus.

**Ayes: 6** **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

**23-24-057** It was moved by Mr. Gray and supported by Mr. Barnard to approve Budget Amendment #1.

**Ayes: 6** **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

**23-24-058** It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mr. Barnard to approve the November 2023 Thrun Policy Update (*Professional Staff Board Policy Update*) Resolution.

**Ayes: 6** **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

**23-24-059** It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Mr. Noffsinger to approve the Sex Ed. Advisory Recommendations as presented on November 13, 2023.

**Ayes: 5** **Nays: 1** **Motion Carried**

**23-24-060** It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Barnard to approve the Turf Tank.

**Ayes: 6** **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

**23-24-061** It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Gray to table to approve the acceptance of the *90-day \$5000.00 deposit and inspection timeline* for the Benzie Wellness and Aquatic Center.

**Ayes: 6** **Nays: 0** **Motion Carried**

**Audience Participation (Open Topics):** – Val Gerhart, 380 Shields Dr., Beulah took the podium. She was pleased to share that the Rotary received a grant for band instrument replacement and asked if there was money set aside and if Brian Parent had a scheduled time/cycle for instrument replacement. The Rotary is also donating three (3) two-year renewable scholarships for \$1000.00 to students earning their Associates as there is high demand in the area. The Rotary believes in growing their own.

Eric Baatz, 3900 Blueberry Lane, Honor took the podium. He began with sharing that the presentation on the displays were distracting as they were constantly rotating. He also inquired about the bus pick up schedule for SEEDS students.

**Board Communication:**

1. Superintendent Erfourth shared information regarding the Board of Education Workshop to be held on January 17, 2023 at Northwest Education Services. Dinner is at 5:30 PM and the workshop itself from 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM. She is asking for an RSVP by Friday, December 15.
2. President Brian Childs shared that he received a parent letter that he had shared with the Board of Education. Per policy, you must be present for audience participation.

**Announcements:**

- December 11, 2023 Parent Financial Aid (FAFSA) Meeting 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM
- December 14, 2023 -Holiday Choir Concert
- December 16, 2023 VEX Robotics Competition
- December 18, 2023- Elementary Holiday Concert
- December 20, 2023- Early Release
- December 21, 2023 – January 2, 2024 -Holiday Break
- January 3, 2024 -School Resumes
- January 8, 2024 – Organizational and Regular Board of Education Meeting – 6:30 PM
- January 17, 2024 – Board of Education Workshop 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

**Happy Holidays!  
Welcome 2024!**



**23-24-062** It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Gray to adjourn the regular meeting 10:07 pm.

**Ayes: 6**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion Carried**

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**Secretary, Board of Education**

*Please note that December 11, 2023 Regular Board Minutes are subject for approval on January 8, 2024.*

*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!***