

REGULAR MEETING

A Regular meeting of the Benzie County Central Board of Education was held Monday, February 10, 2025 in the Board of Education Conference Room.

Vice President Barnard called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Members Present: Mrs. Gillison, Mr. Barnard, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Campana, Mr. Kempton, Mr. Noffsinger (Tardy), Mr. Childs (Tardy), Sophie McLaren (non-voting member)

Members Absent: NONE

24-25-074 It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mrs. Gillison to approve the agenda with one amendment; the addition of *Action Item E. Approval of the Extension of the Crystal Lake Purchase Agreement through February 2025.*
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.

24-25-075 It was moved by Mrs. Gillison and supported by Mr. Smith to approve Consent Grouping items as presented.

- A. Minutes: January 13, 2025 – Organizational | Regular
January 26, 2025 – Regular**
- B. Business: General Fund Bills – 761,141.26**
- C. Support Staff Appointments:**
 - Justin Grahm – Middle School Wrestling Coach
 - William Zediker – Bus Driver, Transportation Department
 - Janice Martinuzzie – Bus Driver, Transportation Department
- D. Staff Assignment Changes:**
 - NONE
- E. Leave of Absence:**
 - FMLA Intermittent Leave – Katherine Jock – Homestead Hills Elementary – Beginning February 3, 2025
- F. Recommendation for Tenure:**
 - NONE
- G. Recommendation for Termination following Probationary Period**
 - NONE
- H. Recommendation for Termination:**
 - NONE

I. Contract Updates:

- NONE

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

District Impact Team Update: Board of Education Trustee, Matt Smith shared the following:

The last month of DIT meetings included Tuning Protocols from each building plus reviews of the Professional Development plan, our 1% plan, and an update from ISSN.

The Benzie Academy Tuning Protocol focused on how to improve their application and onboarding process. They are developing a new application that asks questions to gain clarity on why students have interest in joining the academy and their commitment level to the work required.

The High School Tuning Protocol was about attendance. We looked at percentage of students with less than 4 absences for the first semester broken down by grade level. Attendance continues to be a problem. They started making phone calls to families with multiple unexcused absences in addition to letters that already go out. There was discussion seeking creative ideas on how to improve attendance.

Middle School's Tuning Protocol discussed their tiered behavior system. We reviewed first semester data looking at number of incidents that lead to suspension (both in school and out) broken down by how many were repeat offenders. 96% of students have 0-1 offenses, which suggests the system is working for almost all students. Second semester is going to focus on the improvements to each of the three tiers: whole school, small groups, and individual supports.

Betsie Valley's tuning protocol was about iReady assessments. They completed a 3rd through 5th grade student survey, conducted a goal setting staff meeting, and executed student goal setting discussions and activities. Their next steps are reviewing winter results, reassess goals, and plan ahead for spring assessments.

The Homestead Hills Tuning Protocol was based on behavior data looking at what days, times, grade levels, and groups of students that need additional support. Some of the action steps planned based on the data is to hopefully create a new RCD Discipline Log using Google Form to help with missing information in Power School, adjusting admin schedule so that they're available to high need groups/times/locations, and conduct some counselor/teacher problem solving meetings.

Lake Ann's Tuning Protocol was about how they are using early release days that are meaningful to students and staff while increasing attendance. They've created Foundation Fridays where they are finding fun and meaningful opportunities for

students to practice lifelong skills based on the elementary REPS foundations. They've promoted this to parents, which caused a noticeable increase in attendance on these early release days compared to fall. They are now trying to find a way to track the effectiveness of the Foundation Fridays towards student learning and not just attendance.

The group reviewed the PD Plan for 2024 - 2025. They looked at what items have been completed, what are in progress, and what still needs to be done for the topics iReady, Reading League, RCD, and Restorative Practices.

We had a review of our 1% Plan. It was a discussion about a maximum of 1% of students taking Alternate Standards Assessment through MI-Access. We had a brief look at where we stand currently and had discussion reinforcing that this is for students that have a significant cognitive disability and that the student must meet all components necessary.

There was an ISSN update last week. Nothing new was presented as the group hasn't met yet, but we reviewed the High School Behavior forms and had discussions on how to move forward with something similar at the elementary level.

Student Council Report: Student Council Board of Education Representative, Sophie McLaren – Sophie shared that the student council held nominations for the 2025 Glowcoming Court, 9-11 grade each have 1 set of representatives, and 12 grade nominated 5 sets of representatives, with the queen and king being announced and crowned at the home girls' basketball game on February 21. Representatives must be in good academic standing, have no discipline issues, and must be involved in an extra-curricular activity. This year, teachers will be escorting the representatives at half-time. Snowcoming Spirit Week takes place February 18-21.

- February 18 - Jersey/Sports Day
- February 19 – Why is this in my closet? Day
- February 20 - NEON Day
- February 21 – Red and White Day

The Glowcoming Dance will be held on February 22, from 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM. The cost is \$5.00 per person with glowsticks available for purchase. Dress code is NEON, ALL WHITE, or ALL BLACK.

Administration Report:

- A. NMSLA – Superintendent Erfourth – Superintendent Erfourth shared there is no update. The next meeting is on February 12 in Lansing. Mrs. Erfourth shared with the Board of Education the Governor's proposal to kick off the budget season.
- B. Fiber Run to Betsie Valley Elementary – Technology Systems Manager, Doug Olson, Northwest Education Services. Doug was unable to attend. Ben

Courtade, LEA Technician and Network Team Co-Manager, spoke on Doug's behalf and shared the following:

1. Big Picture

- a. New district-owned fiber run to Betsie Valley 100% funded by outside sources**
- b. 50 of the 57 district school buildings in the 5-county area have this connectivity.**
 - i. 2 more in the works through the same funding mechanism**

2. Why it matters

- a. Fiber means the same connectivity as if the school were a new wing on the high school.**
- b. No longer need separate firewall, separate phone server, other redundant infrastructure – cuts down on upkeep costs.**

3. Funding

- a. E-rate normally covers 90%, will cover 95% when there is a state matching grant.**
- b. State is offering the matching grant to cover the other 5%.**
- c. Only cost to the district will be elevated costs to the E-rate consultants since a project of this size (probably around \$1 million) will trigger an audit.**
 - i. Estimated \$10,000 in consultant fees**
- d. Ongoing costs to maintain fiber will be roughly equal to current cost of Internet connection (all of it covered by 90% E-rate reimbursement)**

4. Does all of this sound familiar?

- a. We asked for board action last year to do this for both Betsie Valley and Lake Ann but had to back out when we could not get service contracts to line up to avoid having the district double-pay for service.**
- b. We hope to do Lake Ann next year but are not sure the state grant will still be available.**
 - i. The need is less there because we have a leased point to point connection.**

5. Timetable

- a. Bids due Feb. 23rd.**
- b. Bid award at next board meeting, with contract authorization contingent on securing both funding sources for 100% coverage.**
- c. E-rate and grant processes then take 3-5 months to confirm funding**
- d. Construction takes place during next school year.**
- e. New service begins July 1, 2026, which is when the existing service contract ends.**

C. Choir Trip Update – Choral Director, Kirsten Cline - Mrs. Cline shared that the High School Choir Department has decided to postpone the trip to Chicago this

year. After discussion with parent chaperones we felt the climate in large cities would be best to be avoided. Students will have the option to travel to East Lansing on 4/12/2025 to see the Broadway Musical "Chicago". Fundraising efforts for the year will help pay for that day trip.

- D. TeachMichigan Fellowship and Grant – Amiee Erfourth, Kirsten Cline, Tanika Greisiger – Mrs.Cline touched on the TeachMichigan Innovation Grant. Both she and Tanika received an Innovation Grant from TeachMichigan for their creation of the program "Balance Benzie". The program is a tiered system designed to support staff members. The program will feature wellness opportunities for staff such as stress management, community building, time management, meal planning, etc. "Balance Benzie" will be piloted in the MS/HS February 2025-January 2026 and potentially adopted by the district. Superintendent Erfourth shared that Benzie Central currently has (6) Aspiring Leaders, (1) Sitting Leader, (1) Systems Leader, (3) New Teachers, and (5) National Board-Certified Teachers. Currently, TeachMichigan is taking applications for Cohort 3.**
- E. Lake Ann Elementary Update – Principal, Sharyl Corey – Mrs. Corey shared the following:**
- Christmas Concert returns to Lake Ann Elementary
 - Character Café Paw Prints
 - Coffee and Conversation with Principal and staff
 - Early Release Day – REPS
 - Foundation Friday
 - Creating Culture
 - Early Release attendance
 - RTI – SOR – Tier 1, 2, & 3
 - Reading and Math Data
 - RIBs
- F. High School Update – Principal, Cheryl Smith – Mrs. Smith shared NWEA Growth Data for Fall 2024 and Winter 2025. The data is being used for behavior and at-risk monitoring, as well as interventions. Other updates:**
- Scheduling or 2025-26 has begun in the MS/HS BIT meetings.
 - 10th graders visited CTC
 - State testing preparation
 - Winter sports seasons are wrapping up making their way toward post-season play
 - Musical practice is in full swing with final performances scheduled for Early March
- G. Administrator Laptops – Superintendent Erfourth shared that Bernie Killeen and Corey Maslowski have secured bids for us to begin replacing the staff laptops. The Administration laptop replacement consists of principals, secretaries, central business office staff, and technology. We have run out of spare laptops and need to begin replacing current devices for administration and staff. The**

secretaries and principals require a higher processor and memory since they have to have the camera system running and usually have 3 monitors in use. We hope to replace the staff devices this summer as part of the next fiscal year's budget.

H. Resignations:

- NONE

I. Retirements:

- Kimberly Gramzow – Literacy Coach

Board of Education/Committee Reports –

A. Buildings and Grounds Committee –

1. **Bond Project Update –** President Childs shared that windows are being replaced next Friday and Cliff will be on site to monitor the work. The parts for raising the door operator over the bus lift should be here next week or the beginning of the following week but I have not received a confirmed delivery date. Spence is trying to get the date from the overhead door company.
2. **Construction Updates –** Superintendent Erfourth shared that she, along with Director of Operations, Mike Zielinski and Board President, Brian Childs met with Kingscott to review the proposed projects for summer. Summer projects include a kitchen, bathrooms and front canopy upgrades at Betsie Valley Elementary, controls for Lake Ann Elementary and Middle School, and lockers, mechanical upgrades, and flooring replacements at both the Middle School and High School.
3. **Building and Grounds Modification Requests - NONE**

B. Policy Committee – Superintendent Erfourth - NONE

C. Finance Committee –Board of Education Treasurer, Matt Smith– NONE

D. Parent Advisory Council – Board of Education Trustee, Sue Campana - NONE

E. Liaison Committee–Board of Education President, Brian Childs– NONE

F. Negotiations – Superintendent Erfourth – NONE

Audience Participation (Agenda Items Only) – Bill Kennis – 962 Michigan Ave., Frankfort, MI – Bill shared that originally, the Benzie Wellness and Aquatic Center asked for a Crystal Lake purchasing agreement extension through January 2025, and are now asking for an additional extension through February 2025. He remains steadfast that this is a great project that will benefit the community as well as Benzie Central students.

Jane Sullivan – 7041 Severence St., Benzonia, MI – Jane shared that when she originally

sent her email, she thought the Crystal Lake Property had already closed, which is why she did not include Benzie County Central Schools and/or the Board of Education. She is more than willing to work with whoever she needs to.

Discussion Topics:

A. Current District Enrollment Summary Review – Exit Out v. Transfer In – Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Pupil Accounting Specialist, Catina Crossman – Mrs. Crossman shared that there has been little to no movement in enrollment with the school of choice second semester window closing and the spring general collection approaching. Benzie Academy celebrated ten mid-year graduates in January.

B. LINQ Finance and Accounting Software Agreement – Director of Finance, Danielle Banasiak – Danielle is recommending that we terminate our contract with LINQ, providing the following points:

- **Initial Go Live Date 7/1/2023**
 - **Additional information provided to the District to inform of the actual data work required on the district end. LINQ is unable to take the data provided to them and reorganize into their templates. The District was required to manually enter all sets of data. This was not fully expressed in the consultation/demo calls.**
- **8/29/2023 – Adjusted Go Live Date**
- **5/20/2024 – Adjusted Go Live Date**
- **11/5/2024 – Adjusted Go Live Date**
- **12/1/2024 – Adjusted Go Live Date**
- **2/10/2025 – Complaint filed with the Better Business Bureau – Breach of Contract Letter from Thrun sent**

The District has been delayed on the implementation of LINQ software again, despite the promises of a Dec 1 live date. At this point, it is becoming apparent that LINQ is unable to meet the needs of the District. We have been in contact with Mackenzie Flynn at Thrun to consider the option of sending a letter to LINQ to advise them that they have breached the contract and we are pursuing Termination of Contract as a result. She has advised us that she is helping 6 other Michigan Districts through the same process, and negotiating for a refund of fees paid. She has said that she is guarded in her optimism that there will be much of a refund since their contract is very self-protective, limiting liability on their part. The District has paid a total of \$84,381.75 to LINQ, with \$47,000 of those funds being for implementation and data conversion, with the rest licensing, support, and subscription fees.

C. Crystal Lake Property – Superintendent Erfourth and Brian Childs met with Bill and Diane from the Benzie Wellness and Aquatic Center. They would like an

extension through the end of February. A \$5,000 carrying cost payment to extend the contract is to be included in the extension agreement. BWAC's Summary of Financial of Position was provided.

Action Topics:

24-25-076 It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Gillison to approve the purchase of administrator laptops to include administration, secretaries, Central Business Office, and the Technology Department/

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

24-25-077 It was moved by Mrs. Campana and supported by Mr. Kempton to approve the Fiber Run to Betsie Valley Elementary.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

24-25-078 It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Smith to approve to terminate the LINQ Finance and Accounting Software Contract.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

24-25-079 It was moved by Mrs. Campana and supported by Mr. Barnard to approve the extension of the Crystal Lake Purchase Agreement through the end of February 2025.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Audience Participation (Open Topics): Elaine Taghon – 11522 Fowler Rd., Honor, MI – Elaine shared the following statement: [Benzie Academy](#)

Rebecca Kik – 186 Rosebud Court, Traverse City, MI. – Rebecca shared the following statement: [Benzie Academy](#)

Board Communication:

- NONE

Announcements:

- Early Release – Professional Development – February 14, 2025
- NO SCHOOL – February 17, 2025
- Regular Board of Education Meeting – March 17, 2025

24-25-080` It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Smith to adjourn the regular meeting 9:03 pm.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Secretary, Board of Education

Please note that February 10, 2025 Regular Board Minutes are subject for approval on March 17, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,



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!