

REGULAR MEETING

A Regular meeting of the Benzie County Central Board of Education was held Monday, July 14, 2025 in the Board of Education Conference Room.

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

Members Present: Mrs. Gillison, Mr. Barnard, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Campana, Mr. Kempton, Mr. Childs

Members Absent: Mr. Egeler, Piper Barnard (non-voting member)

25-26-001 It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Mr. Kempton to approve the agenda with one amendment; adding Discussion Item #2: *Community Outreach for Strategic Planning Purposes and Partnerships*.

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.

25-26-002 It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mrs. Campana to approve Consent Grouping items as presented.

A. Minutes: June 9, 2025 Regular | June 23, 2025 Board Retreat – Budget Review – Budget Hearing – Regular

B. Business: General Fund Bills – \$1,022,443.20

C. Support Staff Appointments:

- Haylee Ryder – MS/HS Band Instructor
- Sarah Anderson – Junior Varsity Volleyball Coach
- Rich Gottardo – Head Middle School Football Coach

D. Staff Assignment Changes:

- Jessica Nagy – PM Custodian to Lead Custodian

E. Leave of Absence:

- Amber Pomper – Lake Ann Title I Paraprofessional – Lake Ann Elementary – Effective August 25, 2025 through December 31, 2025

F. Recommendation for Tenure:

- Cassandra Bentley – Secondary Special Education Teacher

G. Recommendation for Termination following Probationary Period

- NONE

H. Recommendation for Termination:

- NONE

I. Contract Updates:

- NONE

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

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

NWEA Data Review

Cheryl presented spring NWEA results for students in grades 9–11. While the data reveals areas of concern, particularly in English Language Arts, it's important to note that this spring marked the first implementation of the new ELA curriculum, which required significant adjustments in classroom instruction.

Next Steps Identified for Secondary Support:

- Increased, intentional check-ins with struggling students
- Parent contact to encourage participation in after-school tutoring
- Development of individualized graduation plans for at-risk students
- Creation of a Math Lab course targeting students at risk of failing Algebra I or Geometry
- Implementation of a targeted seminar class for the 2024–25 school year
- Continued focus on building a culture of investment and engagement around testing

Comprehensive School Improvement (CSI) Update

Progress was reviewed on several CSI metrics, including:

District-Wide iReady End-of-Year Progress (Spring):

- **Reading:** Students at risk for Tier 3 intervention decreased from 44% in the fall to 29% in the spring. All schools showed growth across reading domains, with the district realizing a 117% growth rate.
- **Math:** Tier 3 risk dropped from 40% to 22%. While growth is evident, students at the lowest achievement levels continue to need targeted support.

Strategic Next Steps for 2025–26:

- Continue Level Literacy classes using the Sonday System and its extensions
- Launch Math Lab and tiered seminar classes to close achievement gaps and support behavioral growth

Sustain and expand testing/attendance celebrations and incentive programs

Student Council Report: Student Council Board of Education Representative, Piper Barnard – No Update.

Administration Report:

- A. NMSLA – Superintendent Erfourth – Superintendent Erfourth shared the following: The NMSLA dinner is scheduled for Thursday, August 7 at the Hagerty Center in Traverse City. Refreshments beginning at 5:30 PM with the dinner and program to begin at 6:30 PM. Please RSVP.**

We are still waiting on a budget from the state. There is a high probability that we will not see anything until late Sept/early Oct. There are only a few days of session planned next week and only one day of overlap between the House and Senate.

- B. Early Childhood/Infant Toddler & Summer Camp – Early Childhood Coordinator, Melinda Coger – Melinda shared some minor additions to the handbook regarding discipline policies. Currently, there are (63) children at summer camp and (10) in summer school. There are (16) staff working, and waiting list at all sites except for Betsie Valley Elementary, which has (8) slots open.**

- C. Middle School Update – Principal, Alex Byland – Alex reviewed the middle school progress over the previous school year, including CSI plan, and action steps for next year. He shared the following roadmap of activities:**

- **CSI Review**
- **Attendance Data**
- **M-STEP**
- **Student behavior**
- **Grades**
- **SSIS mental health data**
- **Action steps for next year**

Highlights from his presentation included progress on reportable CSI factors that 100% of students completed MSTEP, chronic absenteeism rate decreased by 12.5 %, and the gap between general education and special education student proficiency decreased three-fold. He also shared that more than half of all middle schoolers achieved more than 1.5 years of growth on reading and math this year using i-Ready this past year. 8th grade students made almost 2 years' worth of growth in just one year using i-Ready. Mr. Byland also shared the success from the multi-tiered system of support model used to support student behavior. Data shared highlighted a 44% decrease in overall suspensions from the 23-24 school year to the 24-25 school year which translated into an increase of 45,840 additional instructional minutes (764 hours of in-class learning time). Additionally, staff also reported a significant increase in the building climate, from a 1.2 to a 3.5 (out of a 4-point scale), from fall to spring surveys.

- D. High School Update – Principal, Cheryl Smith – Cheryl presented course catalog with notable changes being honors programs will be called accelerated and the addition of a math lab to help students with Algebra 1 and Geometry.**

E. 2025/26 Course Catalogs – The Board of Education received a copy of each of the following: Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Catina Crossman shared that this is a pupil accounting formality as students are only allowed to take courses that have been board-approved. These course catalogs are up for annual approval. New course additions for the 2025/26 school year have been added.

- Elementary Course Catalog
- Middle School Course Catalog
- High School Course Catalog
- Benzie Academy Course Catalog
- Edgenuity Course Catalog
- Michigan Virtual Course Catalog

F. 2025/26 1.0 FTE Resolution - Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Catina Crossman shared that this is a pupil accounting formality. She would like the Board of Education to approve a resolution defining what a 1.0 FTE looks like at Benzie Central. The Board of Education was provided a copy of the Resolution. Students are considered a 1.0 FTE based on the full-time bell schedule as board approved in each of the building handbooks unless students are enrolled as Dual Enrolled, Early Middle College, Career Tech Center, Work-Study, or on a personal curriculum. Students must be scheduled for a minimum of 180 days and 1098 hours per year, unless otherwise indicated in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Whereas;

- *Approval for BCCS students to enroll in dual enrollment courses subject to district approval, course availability, and requirements being met by interested students*
- *Approval for BCCS students to enroll in the Benzie Early Middle College program in partnership with Baker College of Cadillac*
- *Approval for BCCS students to enroll in virtual coursework through both state and district providers (Michigan Virtual, Edgenuity and Apex)*
- *Approval of BCHS, BCMS, Benzie Academy, and Elementary Course Catalogs*
- *Approval of BCHS / MS Handbook*
- *Approval of Benzie Central Elementary Handbook*
- *Approval of Benzie Academy Handbook*
- *Approval of resolution to define a full day for students*

G. Performance Resolution MDOT – This Performance and Indemnification Resolution is required by the Michigan Department of Transportation for purposes of issuing to a Michigan Public School District an “Individual Permit

for Use of State Trunkline Right of Way,” or an “Annual Application and Permit for Miscellaneous Operations Within State Trunkline Right of Way.”

H. Resignations:

- **Wendy Kalush – High School Drama Director**
- **Joshua Lovendusky – Secondary Physical Education Teacher**

I. Retirements:

- **NONE**

Board of Education/Committee Reports –

A. Buildings and Grounds Committee –

- 1. Sinking Fund/Construction Update - Summer projects- Waiting on the mechanical contract with Hurst to be signed. All other summer contracts are signed. Bay View Flooring plans to start on 7/14 at the Middle School. AJ’s Excavating plans to start sidewalks/road on 7/23. Bouma has not provided a start date yet. Twin Bay is shooting to replace exterior doors in early Oct. Betsie Valley kitchen remodel, bathrooms, and lockers are set to be bid out on Sept 1 and a bid opening of Sept 23 with the hopes of bringing those bids to the Oct board meeting. This work would be completed in the summer of 2026.**
- 2. Bond Update – No Update**
- 3. Building and Grounds Modification Requests – No Update**

B. Policy Committee – Superintendent Erfourth – Superintendent Erfourth shared the Annual July 2025 Thrun Policy Updates:

- **16 policies were updated to reflect legal changes, citation changes, or language changes for legal compliance. These do not require any Board input.**
- **20 Updated Policies contain optional language. Most of these policies have previously been updated with the optional language selected by Benzie’s Board of Ed Policy Committee. These language options remain in effect unless clarified below. A few notable changes:**
 - **Policy 3118 Title IX Sexual Harassment was returned to the 2020 version due to presidential changes.**
 - **3121 Public School Academy Authorization was an optional policy and was not recommended to be adopted.**
 - **4408 and 4409 had previously been selected to match option 2 (non-union employees may be terminated at will). This option will be selected again with the updated legal changes proposed by Thrun.**
 - **5401 Parent Involvement in Education had an optional parent compact language section. The policy committee decided to reserve this language. Parent compacts are voluntary and are not enforceable whether language is included in the policy or not included.**

- **5420 Sex Education** this policy currently states we are only teaching communicable disease instruction however; option 2 language more closely matches instruction. Option 2 states sex education, reproductive health, and communicable disease instruction. Sex education is still optional and not required. Parent opt out options will not be impacted by selecting option 2 language.
- The policies presented do not need to be approved individually; the Board may make a motion to approve the "June 11, 2025 Thrun Policy Update" as a single action.
- C. **Finance Committee –Board of Education Treasurer, Matt Smith–** Matt shared the following: Danielle Banasiak emailed a brief update. The auditors are scheduled to come in Thursday for the preliminary, and the audit is on schedule for this year with no anticipated issues.
- D. **Parent Advisory Council – Board of Education Trustee, Sue Campana –** No update.
- E. **Liaison – Childs –** No Update
- F. **Negotiations – Superintendent Erfourth shared the 2025-2028 Paraprofessional Contract -** We have a tentative agreement on language changes and pay scale. We have typed up the contract but we will need sign off (ratification) from union members first. We are looking for approval of the tentative agreement.

Audience Participation (Agenda Items Only) – Val Gerhart – 380 Shields Dr., Beulah – Val shared that she has seen some good changes in our district this past year. She is wondering how we toot our horns in public, how do we break down walls and promote.

Discussion Topics:

- A. **Current District Enrollment Summary Review – Exit Out v. Transfer In – Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Pupil Accounting Specialist, Catina Crossman –** No Update.
- B. **Community Outreach for Strategic Planning Purposes and Partnerships - Mr. Kempton shared a proposal to seek community partnerships and input on the strategic plan from local non-profits. Superintendent Erfourth said she would share his ideas with Alpine Education and work to create a list of current District, community and non-profit partnerships.**

Action Topics:

25-26-003 It was moved by Mrs. Gillison and supported by Mr. Barnard to approve the 2025/26 Course Catalogs:

- Elementary Course Catalog
- Middle School Course Catalog
- High School Course Catalog
- Benzie Academy Course Catalog
- Edgenuity Course Catalog
- Michigan Virtual Course Catalog

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-004 It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mrs. Gillison to approve the 2025/26 1.0 FTE Resolution.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-005 It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Mrs. Gillison to approve the Annual Thrun Policy Updates – June 11, 2025 Policy Updates.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-006 It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mrs. Campana to approve the 2025-2028 Paraprofessional Contract.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-007 It was moved by Mrs. Gillison and supported by Mr. Smith to approve the Performance Resolution for Public School – MDOT.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-008 It was moved by Mrs. Campana and supported by Mrs. Gillison to approve to go into CLOSED SESSION for purposes of Superintendent Contract after second round of audience participation.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Audience Participation (Open Topics): Principal, Alex Byland asked if half day Professional Development was built in as required in the 2025-2028 Paraprofessional Contract.

CLOSED SESSION - 9:04 PM

25-26-009 It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Mr. Smith to return to OPEN SESSION – 9:13 PM

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

25-26-010 It was moved by Mrs. Gillison and supported by Mr. Smith to approve the Superintendent Contract; 5- Year Contract.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Board Communication:

- **August 7 -NMSLA Dinner – Hagerty Center**

Announcements:

- 1. Regular Board Meeting – August 11, 2025 – 7:00 PM**

25-26-011 It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mrs. Gillison to adjourn the regular meeting 9:19 pm.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Secretary, Board of Education

Please note that July 14, 2025 Regular Board Minutes are subject for approval on August 11, 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!