

# Minutes of Regular Meeting

## The Board of Education Jenison Public Schools

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A regular meeting of the Board of Education of Jenison Public Schools was held on Monday, September 8, 2025, beginning at 6:30 pm in the Jenison Center for the Arts Boardroom.

**Call to Order:**

President of the Board of Education, Dr. Hartman, called the Jenison Public Schools Board of Education meeting to order at 6:30 pm, following a short break after the SEAB Hearing.

**Members Present:**

Eric Hartman, D.C.,  
President

William Waalkes,  
Vice President

Chris Reed, Ph.D.,  
Treasurer

Jen Postema,  
Secretary

Jennifer Griffin, DPM  
Trustee

Shannon Hogan,  
Trustee

Donna Mooney  
Trustee

**Others Present:**

Brandon Graham, Ph.D.,  
Superintendent

Leslie Philipps,  
Assistant Superintendent /  
Title IX Coordinator

Christine Marcy,  
Director of Finance and  
Operations

Mary Darnton,  
Food Service Director

Alana Kooi,  
Co-Director of Teaching and  
Learning

Amy Wierzbicki,  
Pinewood Principal

Katie Moy,  
Executive Manager of  
Superintendent, BOE, &  
Communications

**Recognition:** Parent Liaisons Team: Kris Faber, Rachelle Gelder, Jenny van Biljon, and Mary Veldink

Dr. Graham shared a brief but heartfelt message about the incredible individuals who make up the Parent Liaison team. These dedicated team members work to support Jenison Public Schools students and families by connecting them with the resources and assistance they need.

Mrs. Wierzbicki, Pinewood Elementary Principal, also spoke about the impact of the Parent Liaisons. She explained how the team serves as a vital link between families and community organizations, with over 40 agencies currently partnering with JPS to support more than 350 students and their families. Mrs. Wierzbicki added that the team works tirelessly, day and night, year-round, to ensure that no family goes without the help they need. She expressed her deep gratitude for the district’s decision to establish this team, saying she truly can’t imagine doing this work without them.

Dr. Graham echoed Mrs. Wierzbicki’s sentiments, noting that every parent sends their very best to Jenison Public Schools. He added how essential it is to have a caring team in place when families face

a crisis. He described the Parent Liaisons as the “angels” of the district. They are people who walk alongside those in need, finding solutions and providing support every step of the way.

**Recess:**

Dr. Hartman called a recess at 6:35 pm to congratulate the individuals recognized.

**Reconvene:**

The meeting reconvened at 6:38 pm.

**Public Comment:**

Mary Martin (no address given)- She expressed her concerns about the books available in schools, stating that she believes parents should have the opportunity to approve the books in school libraries and classrooms. She also inquired whether parents are allowed to review or have access to the books used throughout the district.

Megan Nollett (7619 Chickadee Dr, Jenison)- She invited the Board members to participate in a work day at the Wilderness Academy on September 11, with two available shifts (3:30-5:30 pm and 6:00 - 8:00 pm). The goal of the event is to help prepare the area for future trails and planting efforts. She shared her gratitude to the many generous donations from several local nurseries, and over 1,200 native plants have been provided for the project. They are looking forward to next spring and the many projects the parents have planned, including the installation of bilingual signage in both English and Spanish.

Liz McVoy (7380 Iron Dr, Hudsonville) - She shared a letter on behalf of several parents expressing concerns about the recent decision to lock the south gate on the Kids First Campus. While they understand the District’s reasoning regarding unauthorized use of the property, the parents feel that the gate offered a safer walking route for students. With it locked, students are left with less safe routes to school, no viable transportation alternatives, and reduced public access. They feel that the current safety concerns do not justify the closure, and asked for alternative solutions for the gate access, such as locking the gate only during school hours, opening it before and after school, increasing monitoring, and holding individuals accountable for any misuse. They urged the District to prioritize student and family access over the restrictions.

Dr. Hartman thanked the public for their time and comments provided to the Board of Education.

**Approval of Agenda:**

Dr. Reed motioned to approve the agenda as prepared. Dr. Griffin seconded the motion. The Board of Education voted to approve the agenda as presented with a vote of 7-0.

**Action Items:**

**1. Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Waalkes motioned to approve the minutes from the August 18, 2025, SEAB Hearing and Board of Education Meeting. Dr. Reed seconded the motion. The Board of Education voted to approve the minutes as presented with a vote of 7-0.

**2. Approval of Financial Report:**

Mrs. Postema motioned to approve the August Financial Report as presented. Dr. Griffin seconded the motion. Ms. Marcy noted that the financial report for July and August looks different compared to the year-end figures reported in June. She added that she will provide an update on the audit in the coming

weeks, with a formal review in October. The Board of Education voted to approve the financial report as presented with a vote of 7-0.

### **3. Approval of Out-of-State Trips:**

Mrs. Postema motioned to approve the out-of-state trips as presented to the Board of Education. Mrs. Mooney seconded the motion. Dr. Graham explained that any student trip outside the state requires approval from the Board of Education. He emphasized the value of these experiences, noting that the opportunity to travel beyond Jenison is incredibly meaningful for students. He also reassured that student safety is the District's top priority. The District continuously monitors conditions at the destination and carefully considers whether it is safe for students to travel or if the trip should be rescheduled. In addition, student groups often wear brightly colored shirts to help easily identify and distinguish the group, especially in large cities, such as during the East Coast trip.

High School

Orchestra:

- Walt Disney World, Orlando, Florida, November 24-30, itinerary attached.

Marching Band:

- September 20-21, Bands of America Northwest Ohio Regional Championships, University of Toledo, OH. Depart 4:30 am; return approx. 3 am Sunday (no hotel stay)
- November 14-16: Bands of America Grand National Championships, Indianapolis, IN.

Varsity Winter Guard:

- February 20-22: WGI Indianapolis Regional Championship
- March 13-15: WGI Avon (IN) Regional Championship
- April 8-12: WGI World Championships - Dayton, OH

DECA:

- Ultimate DECA Power Trip, November 20-23, Washington DC
- District 2 Competition, December 15, GVSU
- Sports & Entertainment Marketing Conference, January 28-Feb 1, Orlando, FL
- State Career Development Conference, March 5-7, Detroit, MI
- International Career Development Conference, April 24-28, Atlanta, GA

Art/French:

- Chicago Art Institute: annual trip to Chicago, Friday October 17. Millennium Park, Art Institute of Chicago, Café Lea, Boat Tour. Day trip, no overnight.

Junior High

- The East Coast Trip leaves on Friday, May 29, 2026, and returns on Thursday, June 4, 2026. The trip explores Boston, New York City, Gettysburg, and Hershey Park.
- The Costa Rica Spanish Immersion Trip leaves on June 12, 2026, and returns on June 26, 2026. It explores Costa Rica and Panama. Clare Chamberlin is the main contact and organizer of this trip.

The Board of Education voted to approve out-of-state trips as presented with a vote of 7-0.

### **4. Approval of 7th-grade Reproductive Health Presentation Changes:**

Dr. Reed motioned to approve the 7th-grade Reproductive Health presentation changes as presented. Dr. Griffin seconded the motion. The recommended changes to the 7th-grade reproductive health curriculum were presented during two public hearings, during which Board members provided feedback. There was interest in exploring additional curriculum options, and was encouraged to continue reviewing other available resources. It was also noted that offering more context when presenting biological information related to sexuality can help with the students' understanding of the material. Additionally, the Board expressed its appreciation to the SEAB Committee for their dedication and the time they have committed to thoughtfully reviewing and developing the curriculum. The Board of Education voted to approve the 7th-grade Reproductive Health presentation changes as presented with a vote of 6-1 (NAY - Hogan).

**5. Approval of Book Purchase:**

Mrs. Postema motioned to approve the book purchases as presented. Dr. Reed seconded the motion. Ms. Marcy shared with the Board of Education that approximately \$120,000 remains from the 35j grant, which was awarded to improve Kindergarten through 5th grade literacy initiatives. The Teaching and Learning team would like to use the remaining funds before the grant expires on September 30, 2025, and would like to purchase additional classroom and library books. With the approval now, it will ensure orders can be placed and processed on time, allowing materials to be available for staff and students as needed. Mrs. Alana Kooi added that there is a master list of books (and often chosen due to teacher request, curriculum ratings, review, and age appropriateness). Dr. Graham added that parents should have access to what books students read. Ms. Marcy shared her gratitude to Mrs. Kooi for all her hard work on finding grants for the District, and that not many other districts went out for this grant, which allowed JPS to receive a substantial amount. She is thankful for all her work and hours dedicated to helping the district. The Board of Education voted to approve the book purchases as presented with a vote of 6-1 (NAY - Hogan).

**6. Approval of Food Service Prices Increase:**

Mrs. Postema motioned to approve the Food Service price increase as presented. Ms. Hogan seconded the motion. Ms. Marcy stated that Mrs. Darnton is doing a tremendous job with the Food Service Program. She also noted that the State of Michigan has not yet passed the State budget, which could impact funding for the student meal programs. With this uncertainty, the Food Service Department wants to prepare for any changes that may result from that, including the possibility that free meals for students may no longer be funded. Ms. Darnton provided documentation to the Board of Education regarding an increase in meal prices. A price adjustment of \$0.75 for breakfast and \$0.50 for lunch, effective October 1, 2025, is recommended if the Michigan School Aid Budget for 2025–26 is not passed or if the Michigan School Meals (MSM) program is not extended beyond its current expiration date of September 30, 2025. The MSM program, included in the State of Michigan's School Aid Budget for both the 2023–24 and 2024–25 fiscal years, currently provides free meals to all K–12 public school students in Michigan, with funding secured through September 30, 2025. The Food Service Department has worked to control costs through expanded scratch cooking and continued use of local food vendors. However, food costs have increased by over 40% in the past three years. In the absence of continued state funding, paid meal prices must be reestablished beginning October 1, 2025. From 2018 to 2025, the district did not raise meal prices due to a positive fund balance and state and federal programs covering meal costs. Without the MSM program, the district will revert to the traditional federal reimbursement model, likely resulting in lower per-meal revenue and an anticipated 25–30% drop in meal participation. The district does not qualify for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), as its Identified Student Percentage (ISP) is below the required threshold. Federal regulations prohibit using the district's excess fund balance to offset meal prices. Ms. Darnton also provided a regional comparison of proposed meal pricing from nearby districts. The Food Service also wants to prepare just in case the State doesn't continue the free meals, so that families can apply for adjusted pricing for the meals. They want the applications to be sent out immediately. She also added that the Food Service team remains committed to supporting students and families. The program continues to partner with 14 local farms, ensuring high-quality, locally sourced meals. Families are always welcome to contact the Food Service office with questions. The department works closely with the Parent Liaison team to connect families with outside resources when needed. She also added that the program's guiding principle is to "Feed kids first, and figure out money later." There is also a donation fund available to help cover student meal debt. Currently, outstanding debt is minimal and often related to students purchasing milk without meals when families forget to add funds. The State helped pay off older debt, but the District also had to reduce its own outstanding balances to qualify for the free meal program. The Board of Education voted to approve the Food Service prices increase as presented with a vote of 7-0.

**7. Approval of Longitudinal Evaluation of the Unified Champion Schools Program Study:**

Mrs. Postema motioned to approve the Longitudinal Evaluation of the Unified Champion Schools (UCS) Program Study as presented. Dr. Reed seconded the motion. Dr. Graham provided the Board of Education with an update on the Unified Champion Schools Program Study. Special Olympics North

America, the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration, and Special Olympics Michigan are partnering on a three-year study to evaluate the long-term impact of the Unified Champion Schools (UCS) program on students, schools, and communities. The study aims to evaluate the long-term impact of the Unified Champion Schools (UCS) program on students, schools, and communities. It will focus on outcomes such as student social skills, self-determination, school and social connectedness, and post-school success, while also identifying broader benefits for school culture and community inclusion. Participating schools will begin with an initial survey and assessment, and students (both UCS participants and comparison groups) will be interviewed twice each year for the duration of the study. Graduates will also be followed to measure long-term effects. To support participation, students will receive a \$25 gift card for each completed survey or interview, and school liaisons will receive \$250 annually. The study is set to begin once approval is granted, with permission forms distributed as soon as possible and the first round of data collection expected in October or November. The insights gained will help strengthen and expand the UCS program in the years ahead. Dr. Graham added that the University of Minnesota reached out to the District and asked if it was okay to participate. There is no cost to the District for participating. Dr. Graham will provide the board members with the dates for the Unified Sports events. The Board of Education voted to approve the Longitudinal Evaluation of the Unified Champion Schools Program Study as presented with a vote of 7-0.

## **Discussion Items:**

### **1. MASB Delegates:**

MASB's 2025 Delegate Assembly will begin Thursday, October 23, at 7 p.m. at Grand Traverse Resort and Spa in Acme. Delegates selected by boards of education across the state will decide MASB's positions on a wide variety of issues affecting education. All delegates and alternates must be school board members. All delegates must be certified and submitted by Thursday, October 2. Ms. Moy will certify delegates on behalf of the board. The Board will discuss who will be the voting delegates and who will be attending during the September workshop.

### **2. Superintendent Update:**

Dr. Graham also briefly shared a few district events, happenings, and updates with the Board of Education.

- **Back to School:** It's been a great start to the school year! Enrollment is close to what we had last year, approximately 5800 students enrolled (not all full-time).
- **Wildcat Festival:** The annual Wildcat Festival took place on Thursday, August 28, and was a tremendous success! Many thanks to the JHS Student Council for their hard work in planning and running the event. Special recognition goes to Zibby Zuber for playing a key role in organizing, as well as to Mrs. Tracy Mossburger and Mr. Kelly Cole, the dedicated Student Council advisors. The festival featured games, face painting, inflatables, a petting zoo, and a variety of food trucks. All set up outside the stadium. It was a fantastic evening for the entire Jenison community to come together and have a good time. Nearly 3,000 people were in attendance.
- **Bursley Update:** The remediation work has been completed and officially approved to use the building. Dr. Graham shared his appreciation to Ms. Marcy and Mr. Hitsman for working tirelessly to ensure everything was completed. Students began the school year two and a half days later than others. The District has six "Act of God" days for the year. If it's a mild winter, there should be no issue. However, if there are many snow days, the District will apply for a waiver. Dr. Graham expressed his gratitude to both staff and families for their flexibility and support during the delayed opening, especially since staff couldn't access their classrooms until late Thursday evening and Friday, just before school started on Monday. Dr. Graham jokingly said that many of the rooms are now so spotless they could rival an operating room, almost literally.

- **Tennis Courts:** The new tennis courts are nearly complete. The final painting and net installation are underway, with everything on track for use very soon. A small ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for the morning of October 3 at approximately 8:00 a.m. The high school will be hosting a tennis invitational that day and is excited to use the new courts for the event. While a few finishing touches remain on the concession building, the courts themselves will be ready for play. A fun fact: the amount of concrete used in the project is equivalent to what would be needed for 250 home foundations. With post-tension technology, the concrete is incredibly durable and is built to last for a very long time, maybe outlasting many in the room.
- **Kindergarten Tailgate:** The annual Kindergarten tailgate will be held this Friday, September 12, celebrating the Class of 2038! It's an exciting time to celebrate the Kindergarteners at the game. One of the highlights will be the Kindergarteners going through a tunnel formed by older students. The Kids Cat Game is also scheduled for that night, adding to the excitement.
- **Wildcat Way Recognition:** The Wildcat Way recognition has started with a trait being celebrated each month and ending with a special celebration at the Wildcat Gala in March.
- **School App:** The app officially launched on September 2 and has already seen strong interest, with nearly 1,900 downloads on iOS and 458 on Android.
- **Yale Educators Award:** Jenison High School Counselor Jenny Riha and Teacher Tracy Mossburger have been selected as recipients of the 2025 Yale Educator Award, sponsored by the Yale Office of Undergraduate Admissions. This prestigious award recognizes outstanding educators from around the world who inspire and support their students in achieving excellence. Of the 302 nominees from 38 states and 22 countries, only 61 teachers and 26 counselors were chosen. Mrs. Riha and Mrs. Mossburger were nominated by Jenison Class of 2025 valedictorian Bomin Koo, now a freshman at Yale. Recipients were honored with official awards and congratulatory letters in September, and their schools were notified of this notable achievement.
- **High School & Junior High Tour Rescheduled:** The new date is Tuesday, September 23.
- **JCA Water Pipes:** Construction on the JCA water pipes is scheduled to begin on September 22 and may continue through the 23rd and possibly the 24th. During this time, the JCA staff will either work remotely or work at other buildings. The project is expected to be completed before the PD day on September 26.
- **Board of Education Tailgate:** A special tailgate for the Board of Education and Administration will be held on Friday, October 10, following the Homecoming parade and before the football game. The team will be playing Rockford High School that evening. Spouses are encouraged to attend and join in the festivities. The parade starts at 4:00 pm.

#### **Adjournment:**

The President of the Board of Education, Dr. Hartman, adjourned the Jenison Public Schools Board of Education meeting at 7:31 pm with acclamation.

Respectfully submitted,

Jen Postema, Secretary  
Jenison Public Schools Board of Education

#### **Future Meetings:**

Month:	Regular Meeting (held at 6:30 pm):	Workshop (held at 6:00 pm)
September 2025	Mon, Sept 8	Mon, Sept 29
October 2025	Mon, Oct 13	Mon, Oct 27
November 2025	Mon, Nov 17	
December 2025	Mon, Dec 8	
January 2026	Mon, Jan 12	Mon, Jan 26
February 2026	Mon, Feb 16	
March 2026	Mon, Mar 9	Mon, Mar 23
April 2026	Mon, Apr 20	
May 2026	Mon, May 11	
June 2026	Mon, Jun 8	
July 2026	Mon, Jul 13	