

**Board of Education
August 19, 2025 – 5:30 PM
Conference Room A/B/C
1819 East Milham Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Virgil “Skip” Knowles, Mr. David Webster, Mr. James Devers, Ms. Lynne Cowart, Mr. Randy VanAntwerp

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ADMINISTRATION/STAFF: Dr. Dedrick Martin, Ms. Mindy Miller, Mr. Scott Thomas, Mr. Eric Stewart, Ms. Sarah Mansberger, Ms. Paige Daniels, Ms. Stephanie Brown, Ms. Angela Telfer, Ms. Rachel Roberts, Ms. Meredith Lewis, Ms. Sandy Barry-Loken, Mr. Mark Palmer, and Ms. Jackie Martell

OTHERS PRESENT:

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Knowles called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments

III. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes – July 15, 2025
- B. Approval of New Hire
- C. Approval of Monthly Financial Report
- D. Approval of Head Start Financial Report

Mr. VanAntwerp moved; Mr. Devers supported approving the consent agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

- A. YAA Monitoring Report – Stephanie Brown
The YAA Monitoring Report was presented to the Board of Education.
- B. Educator Supports Update – Stephanie Brown
An update for the Educator Supports Center of Excellence was presented.

V. CENTER OF EXCELLENCE UPDATE

A. Early Childhood Update –Rachel Roberts

KRESA'S Kalamazoo County Great Start Collaborative's Highlights were attached to the board agenda.

The Governing Body's Monthly Report for ongoing monitoring in accordance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) were attached to the board agenda.

B. Special Education Update –Angela Telfer

Overview

Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA) was selected by the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education (MDE-OSE) to participate in the 2024–2025 "Data Use and Action" process. This program is part of a broader corrective action plan mandated by MDE-OSE to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities across the state.

Background

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), §300.604, the MDE has authority to require Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) with a "Needs Intervention" status for three consecutive years to take specific corrective measures. Based on technical assistance requirements and ongoing performance indicators, KRESA was identified as an ISD in need of targeted support. Participation in this initiative was required by MDE-OSE.

KRESA conducted a county-wide review of district data and selected Vicksburg Community Schools to partner in this process. Vicksburg was chosen due to its exemplary participation rates in state assessments, which exceeded those of other districts in the region. Consistent with county-wide trends, this district showed a significant difference in academic outcomes between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.

Process & Implementation

Throughout the 2024–2025 school year, KRESA and Vicksburg Community Schools engaged in a structured eight-step process designed to:

- Analyze local special education data
- Identify evidence-based strategies
- Implement action plans to enhance student outcomes

This collaborative effort was aimed at strengthening instructional practices and increasing measurable achievement for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

Results & Impact

The attached report details the impressive outcomes of this work, specifically focusing on reading achievement among eleven 4th-grade students with IEPs at Sunset Lake Elementary School. The results demonstrate substantial progress, particularly given the short duration of the intervention.

Next Steps

KRESA will continue to support ongoing efforts to improve State Performance Plan Indicators and collaborate with districts to ensure sustained growth for students with IEP's by replicating this process with all the other districts in our county in the coming years.

C. Career Connect Update – Eric Stewart, Sarah Mansberger & Paige Daniels

Secondary Programs Student Enrollment Update: Enrollment for Career Connect Secondary Programs is as follows for the 2025-2026 school year:

Program	2025 - 2026 Enrollment	2024-2025 Enrollment
Career and Technical Education	1147	917
Early /Middle College	186	192
Education for the Arts	412 *	763

**EFA Enrollments: Please note, this figure includes estimates of local course enrollments and will be finalized as we receive final enrollments from local districts. Additionally, the 2025-2026 enrollment total is for first semester only, whereas 2024-2025 is inclusive of the full school year.*

Enrollment is open through September 5, and some fluctuation can be expected during this time period.

Career Connect Campus Tours: Since the grand opening, the Career Connect Campus has conducted dozens of tours for interested community members and business partners. Below are some examples:

- Four Community Tours. We hold two of these per month; interested community members can sign up on our website.
- Company Tours:
 - Pfizer

- Stryker
- W. Soule
- Denooyer Auto Group
- Mol-Son
- Nulty Insurance
- Educational Partners
 - Western Michigan University, including new President Russ Kavalhuna
 - KVCC full administrator team, including President Dr. L. Marshall Washington
 - Glenn Oaks Community College, including new President Dr. Brian Newton
 - Portage Public Schools administrator team
 - Schoolcraft Community Schools
 - Harper Creek Community Schools administrator team
- Groups/Events
 - Quarterly Upjohn Institute Breakfast
 - Southwest Michigan First and foremost
 - SW Michigan American Public Works Association
 - Global Ties- Delegation from 14 African countries

D. Educator Supports Update –Stephanie Brown

Youth Advancement Academy Monitoring

Educator Supports Coordinator completed the annual review of Youth Advancement Academy (YAA) highlighting its ongoing efforts to support at-risk students in grades 7–12 through individualized instruction, social-emotional learning, and targeted academic interventions. The academy focused on improving math performance, though only 38% of students met the growth goal. Attendance improved following staff changes, and SEL programming was expanded using the TRAILS model. Instruction was delivered via the Imagine Purpose platform, with new policies to reinforce engagement and integrity.

YAA served 83 students, all economically disadvantaged, with 18% receiving special education services. Course completion totaled 77 semesters, with one student graduating. Staff and students appreciated the supportive environment but noted challenges with staffing, leadership consistency, and restrictive policies. Compliance with special education requirements was mostly met, with technical assistance provided to

address minor issues. Overall, YAA demonstrated progress and a commitment to continuous improvement despite persistent challenges.

Supporting Districts with the 2025-26 School Year

Educator Supports Professional Learning Catalog offers a wide range of supports designed to meet the diverse needs of educators across the region. The catalog includes offerings in instructional practices, leadership development, student support services, and specialized content areas.

Districts can access workshops, coaching, and customized training aligned with state standards and local priorities. Categories include literacy and math instruction, social-emotional learning, MTSS

implementation, special education compliance, and data-driven decision-making. Many sessions are eligible for SCECHs and can be tailored for in-district delivery. Educator Supports also provides ongoing technical assistance and consultation to help districts implement and sustain effective practices. For personalized support, districts are encouraged to contact Educators Supports directly to coordinate offerings that best meet their goals.

Leadership Networks are designed to support various educator groups for the upcoming school year. These include:

- Kalamazoo County Council of Principals (High School)
- Greater Kalamazoo Alternative Education Principals Network
- Southwest Michigan Principals Network (Elementary and Middle)
- Kalamazoo County Instructional Council
- EL Consortium of Southwest Michigan Regional Network
- Coaching Collaborative
- Math Instructional Leaders Network

E. Operational Supports Update

1. Business Services Update – Scott Thomas Summer and Year End Activities

The summer is a very busy time for KRESA's Business Office. Our payroll staff are extremely busy closing out all the payroll contracts for the year that is ending, including those staff terminating or retiring at the end of the school year, as well as setting up payroll contracts for all the staff and new hires for the start of the upcoming school year.

Business Office staff are also very busy closing the financial records for the year in preparation for our financial audits. The Business Office manages roughly a quarter of

billion dollars, so there are a lot of transactions to review and grants to balance. Financial auditors from both Yeo & Yeo CPAs and Plante Moran will be auditing KRESA and the four LEAs we serve books beginning the week of August 18 through most of September. They are also on site during this time for several weeks.

Career Connect Campus

We continue to manage the finances and budget for the Career Connect Campus building project and work through many contract issues with our architect, construction manager and owners' rep professional firms. I am happy to report that many of these issues have been recently resolved.

2. Communications & Community Engagement – Sandy Barry Loken

New KRESA Website

We are thrilled to launch KRESA's new – and much improved website on Friday, August 15th. Goals of the new site include:

- Aligning the site's look, feel, and messaging with KRESA's Centers of Excellence
- Positioning the website as a central hub for communication, feedback, and connection
- Driving program enrollment through strategic design and tracking
- Enhancing user experience through accessibility, clarity, and organization

Visit us at www.kresa.org

Career Connect Campus Tours

We are receiving significant requests from the community for additional opportunities to tour the Career Connect Campus. We're offering monthly opportunities for individuals to sign up for a tour and also are responding to individual requests from Business & Industry and other community partners. Community members can view available tour dates and register for a time to visit us on our website at: Career Connect Campus Tours.

3. Human Resources Update – Meredith Lewis Celebrating a Strong Start to the School Year: Successful Recruiting and Hiring

We are entering the new school year with historically low vacancies, thanks to strong summer recruitment and our focus on internal career development. This summer, five staff members were promoted from Para/Technical Assistant to Teacher/Instructor roles, reflecting both the talent within our organization and our commitment to creating clear

career pathways. In addition, 14 new certified staff have joined us since mid-June or will be starting in the coming week. These results demonstrate the success of our recruitment strategies and our ongoing dedication to developing and retaining exceptional staff.

Humanex Survey Results/Culture & Belonging Roadmap

The Director of Culture and Belonging facilitated 21 meetings with administrative groups between May and August to analyze Humanex culture survey data and plan for Culture and Belonging related Continuous Improvement work for the 2025-2026 school year. Dr. Owen-Rogers will be providing support in facilitating data analysis conversations and professional learning aligned with Culture and Belonging themes with various groups of staff as part of beginning of the year meetings into the Fall.

Union Negotiations

At our July 15 meeting, KRESA presented a comprehensive proposal to the KCTEA negotiation team. The teams met again on July 29, at which time the KCTEA bargaining team did not present any new proposals. Instead, they provided a written summary of their current position and formally requested mediation. KRESA responded with a counterproposal, contingent on the union presenting our most recent offer to its members for a vote. The union bargaining team declined this condition and opted to proceed with mediation. A state-appointed mediator will meet with both parties in August to begin that process.

4. Technology & Operations Update – Brian Schupbach

The playground remodeling projects at WoodsEdge and West Campus are ahead of schedule. It is anticipated that they will be completed by the end of this month.

For the Career Connect Campus, there are just under 1400 punch list items outstanding. Any items that could impact instruction are being prioritized. Contractors are working additional hours to close out punch list items and ensure the best experience possible for students.

The project to improve emergency notification and paging is currently underway for WoodsEdge Learning Center, Commons, Valley Center, and West Campus locations. This new system will match the system at the Career Connect Campus and will create a unified clock/bell/public address that can provide audible and visual alerts in emergency situations. We plan to have this project completed by the end of this month.

VI. Superintendent Report – Dr. Dedrick Martin

Superintendents Instructional Retreat

On July 29, I joined fellow Superintendents from Kalamazoo County for a full-day Instructional Leadership Retreat facilitated by Rachel Feder. The retreat was designed to:

- Strengthening collaboration across districts
- Align around a shared, student-centered goal
- Engage in candid dialogue about successes and areas for growth

WMU Partnership Meeting

Recently, we met with the new President of Western Michigan University and members of their leadership team to discuss current partnership efforts and explore opportunities for growth and improvement. The conversation focused on several key areas:

Identified Regional Gaps & Needs

- Teacher Pipeline – “Missing Middle”: There is a significant gap in support for paraeducators, CTE professionals, and early childhood staff who are working full-time but aspire to earn teaching certification. These individuals face barriers such as inflexible and costly licensure pathways and the requirement to complete full bachelor’s degrees even when certification is the primary goal.
- Tuition & Affordability: Many KRESA professionals lack access to financial support for traditional certification routes.
- Pipeline Development & Retention: KRESA is actively working to strengthen the regional teacher pipeline and ensure students in programs like the Future Educator Academy (FEA) remain on track toward teaching careers post-graduation.

Existing Programs & Models

- Talent Together: A statewide initiative offering no-cost certification pathways through paid apprenticeships for current school employees and new entrants.
- Future Educator Academy (FEA): Provides high school students with foundational teaching skills, classroom exposure, and mentorship. Retention through certification and employment remains a key concern.

Current Partnership with WMU

- A longstanding 30+ year relationship includes:
 - Early Childhood Education coursework
 - Integrated Behavior Analysis programs
 - Financial Literacy workshops in collaboration with Haworth College of Business

Opportunities for Future Collaboration with WMU

- Credit Articulation & Program Transfer: Interest in streamlined articulation pathways and training on Transferology, a course equivalency tool.

- Dual Enrollment / Early Middle College: No current partnership exists—identified as a significant opportunity.
- Deeper Engagement with CEHD: Potential collaboration in areas such as Literacy Essentials, Michigan Science Standards, Project-Based Learning, and Behavior Management.

Career Connect Campus Visit – Congresswoman Haley Stevens

Last week, we had the honor of hosting Congresswoman Haley Stevens at the Career Connect Campus. During her visit, she expressed enthusiastic praise for the facility, noting that it is the most impressive career campus she has visited nationwide.

Congresswoman Stevens is actively working to connect us with individuals and organizations across Michigan and the country who are invested in workforce development. These connections aim to foster collaboration, share best practices, and expand opportunities for our students and staff.

Her visit reinforces the value and impact of our ongoing efforts in career and technical education, and we look forward to building on this momentum through new partnerships and initiatives.

VII. Thrun Law Notes

A. Correspondence/Informational

VIII. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION

- A. Approval of 2025-2026 Proposed Board, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Conferences.

Mr. Webster moved, Mr. VanAntwerp supported the approval of 2025-2026 Proposed Board, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Conferences.

Motion carried unanimously.

- B. Approval of Social Media policy as presented.

Ms. Cowart moved, Mr. Devers supported the approval of the social media policy as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

- C. Superintendent requests that the Board of Education ajourn into closed session to discuss contract negotiations.

Mr. VanAntwerp moved, Ms. Cowart adjourning to closed session at 6:16.

Motion carried unanimously.

IX.ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Cowart
Board Secretary

Jackie Martell
Recording Secretary

Minutes Approved on