

**NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR SESSION
Performing Arts Center
1112 E. Clay Street
P.O. Box 280
New Buffalo, MI 49117
September 14, 2026
6:00 PM**

New Buffalo Area Schools will be a beacon of academic excellence and individualized learning, where every student thrives in a supportive and inclusive environment. We will lead in preparing students for future success, driven by strong community partnerships and a commitment to growth and sustainability.

1. Call to Order by President Denise Churchill - Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
2. Roll Call: Denise Churchill, Stephen Donnelly, John Haskins, Jennifer Summers, Vanessa Thun, Greg Vosberg, Lisa Werner
Also in Attendance: Mr. Adam Bowen, Superintendent of Schools
Devinnie Wysocki, Adm. Asst. to Superintendent
3. Expressions from the Public: None
4. Items too Late for Printed Agenda: None
5. Adoption of the Agenda
Motion: Thun
Second: Summers
All ayes, motion carried
6. Communications
7. Committee Report(s)
8. Presentation: Tom Whitsel – Transportation
Transportation Director Tom Whitsel provided the Board with an update on the New Buffalo Area Schools Transportation Department. He reviewed the department's continued focus on student safety, driver training, testing, physicals, and continuing education requirements. Whitsel shared that the district currently has six full-time CDL bus drivers, two daily van drivers, and three substitute drivers with CDLs, while noting the need for additional van drivers and the importance of driver retention. He also highlighted the use of BusRight, which provides GPS and live bus tracking, speed and safety monitoring, route management, and assistance for substitute drivers. Whitsel reported that 237 students have requested transportation for the school year and that the district received a perfect score on its school bus state inspections. Looking ahead, the department plans to implement electronic pre- and post-trip inspections and is working toward adding van tracking and telematics to the district's white fleet. (Full Report Attached)
9. The Superintendent recommends the Board grant tenure status to Middle School Teacher, Leanne Lamport.
Motion: Werner
Second: Donnelly
All ayes, motion carried.

10. The Superintendent recommends the Board grant tenure status to Middle/High School Teacher, Ayrielle Hoyt.
Motion: Thun
Second: Werner
All ayes, motion carried.
11. The Superintendent recommends the Board grant tenure status to Elementary School Teacher, Erin Ledyard.
Motion: Donnelly
Second: Summers
All ayes, motion carried.
12. The Superintendent recommends that the Board approve payment to NBARA for the Professional Services Agreement for the Parks and Recreation 5 Year Combined Plan Update in the amount of \$8,000, as presented in the attached proposal.
Motion: Werner
Second: Donnelly
All ayes, motion carried.
13. Remarks from the Superintendent
 - We officially welcomed back our students last Tuesday, September 8th, for a fantastic first half-day of school. The energy across both buildings has been wonderfully positive by both staff and students.
 - Prior to students returning, our staff participated in intensive professional development days. Highlights included our district staff breakfast on August 31st and an inspiring AI integration presentation by Leslie Fisher on September 2nd to prepare our educators for innovative teaching this year. The HS was engaged in PSAT/SAT data while the elementary and middle school had iPad training.
 - Last Friday, September 11th, our middle school gathered for our annual 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony. I want to thank our staff, students, Denise, and community members who helped honor this solemn day with such respect.
 - We successfully submitted our state food service documentation earlier this month and welcomed State Food Service representatives for an on-site visit on September 8th.
 - Today marks the start of auditions for our Middle School Fall Play, and our elementary students will be participating in the BCHD Dental Outreach KOHA Program this Wednesday, September 16th. Hearing and Vision Screenings are scheduled for next Monday, September 21st.
 - Our capital improvement projects are finally winding down: we received the final exhaust pipe for the boilers at the MS/HS and anticipate a test on the system followed by state inspections in the weeks to come. Concrete work is wrapping up - we have decided to wait to do the East side of the MS/HS building concrete until next summer. Next week the track areas of long jump, high jump and pole vault will receive their rubber top coat due to new surfacing of those areas and a cure time. Once that is complete, we will have the track striped. Half of the lockers have been installed in the high school. The plan is they will finish lockers on the high school side this week and then next week move on to the middle school for locker replacement. The PA System will continue to be worked on with a transfer over date during Christmas break.
 - We are excited to support our student groups in their upcoming fundraising efforts, including the World Travel Club Pickleball Fundraiser re-scheduled for September 27th.

- Next week, I will be attending the MASA Conference from September 22nd through September 25th to engage with state leadership and bring back valuable insights to support our district's goals.
- Thank you to our teachers, support staff, bus drivers, custodians, and administration for their incredible dedication over the past few weeks to ensure our school year opened smoothly and safely.

14. Remarks from the Board President and Members

President Churchill: Extended a thank you to Mr. Caudle, Mrs. Knoll, Rich Knoll, and the band for their efforts in organizing and participating in the 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony. The event was very well done, and appreciation was expressed to everyone involved. Looking ahead, it was suggested that the high school be included in the ceremony in the future. Appreciation was also shared for the Back-to-School Breakfast, noting the positive energy throughout the room. Superintendent Bowen delivered an inspiring message, and there was a strong sense of excitement among staff as everyone prepared to begin the new school year.

15. Discussion Item(s)

A. The Superintendent approved the following hires:

James Davis - MS Football Coach

Jetzibeth Rodriguez-Sanchez - Elementary Paraprofessional

Emi Johnson - BASE Lead

Olivia Coopwood - Middle School Paraprofessional

16. Other Business

17. Adjournment

Motion: Haskins

Second: Werner

All ayes, motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Vanessa Thun, Secretary
BOARD OF EDUCATION
NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS