

Minutes of Regular Meeting

The Board of Education Jenison Public Schools

A regular meeting of the Board of Education of Jenison Public Schools was held on Monday, March 23, 2026, beginning at 6:00 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 6:00 pm.

Members Present:

Eric Hartman, DC,
President

William Waalkes,
Vice President

Chris Reed, PhD,
Treasurer

Jen Postema,
Secretary

Jennifer Griffin, DPM
Trustee

Donna Mooney
Trustee

Shannon Hogan,
Trustee

Others Present:

Brandon Graham, PhD,
Superintendent

Leslie Philipps,
Assistant Superintendent /
Title IX Coordinator

Christine Marcy,
Director of Finance and
Operations

Kristy Rogalla,
Co-Director of Teaching and
Learning

Alana Kooi,
Co-Director of Teaching and
Learning

Julie Roby,
Director of Student Services

Rachael Postle-Brown, PhD,
Bursley Principal

Amy Wierzbicki,
Pinewood Elementary
Principal

Ben Huff,
Director of Brand
Communication

Katie Moy,
Chief of Staff

Public Comment

Megan Nollet (7619 Chickadee Dr, Jenison) - She spoke on behalf of the Wilderness Academy Advancement Committee and shared several positive updates. The Wilderness Academy held its first read-a-thon, which was a great success. Three classes raised over \$13,000 and logged a total of 17,000 reading minutes in just two weeks. As a reward for meeting their goal, every student had the opportunity to pie the principal, fulfilling Mr. O'Connell's promise. He has also been nominated for the GR Kids' "Most Inspiring Teacher" award. The group has voted and is hoping that photos from the pie event will help his chances. In addition, mid-March progress monitoring showed a noticeable increase in student engagement, with more students willing and excited to read aloud. A Read-In is scheduled for April 2, which will also be the day when a parent and teacher will do an ice pool plunge to celebrate

the success of the read-a-thon. The school had a great STEM Night in March focused on birds. Students met a screech owl brought by Ms. Sarah from ODC and participated in hands-on activities such as painting birdhouses for the Hollow and creating recycled bird feeders. 45 students participated, and there was strong community involvement, including volunteers from the high school Green Club and AP Environmental Science class. Looking ahead, the committee will meet with ODC to plan interpretive signage for the native plant pollinator garden. ODC has generously offered to create this sign at cost for the academy. Another milestone, Wilderness Academy is now officially recognized on Google. Upcoming events and recognitions include Paraprofessional Appreciation Day on April 1 (with special recognition to Brooke, Jamie, and Rebecca), Teacher Appreciation Week in May, and a Culver's Night on April 28. Overall, there has been a very encouraging level of engagement across the school.

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

Approval of Agenda:

Mrs. Postema 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:

Dr. Reed motioned to approve the minutes from the March 6, 2026, Board of Education Meeting. Mrs. Mooney seconded the motion. The Board of Education voted to approve the minutes as presented with a vote of 7-0.

2. Approval of Literacy Curriculum Purchase:

Mrs. Postema motioned to approve the Literacy Curriculum Purchase as presented. Mr. Waalkes seconded the motion. The Board of Education received a memorandum from the Office of Teaching and Learning regarding the proposed purchase of a new K–6 literacy curriculum. The memo outlined the need for the new curriculum due to recent Michigan legislative mandates under Public Act 146 of 2024, which requires districts to adopt evidence-based literacy materials, and is supported by state grant funding for the 2025–2026 school year.

Mrs. Kristy Rogalla, Mrs. Alana Kooi, Dr. Rachael Postle-Brown, PhD, and Mrs. Amy Wierzbicki, along with Mrs. Julie Roby, presented an overview of the curriculum selection process, state requirements, implementation timeline, and funding. In the summer of 2025, there was a 35m grant that schools could apply for from the Department of Education; there was some uncertainty about what curriculum it would cover. In the meantime, the District was made aware of the upcoming literacy mandates and the need to adopt an evidence-based literacy program from a state-approved list in order to remain eligible for state funding. The District secured \$489,896 in grant funding.

Initially, the State had a small timeframe for the grant money to be spent, but didn't have the list of vendors out yet. Fortunately, the State extended the timeframe to use the funds, and also released an approved list of curricula aligned with the grant and the evidence-based literacy curriculum. The goal was to find a curriculum that would fit the district criteria: Spanish option, meet the required state mandate for K-5th grade, meet the needs of the district, and be able to meet the funding timeline and be able to implement by the start of the 2026-27 school year (enough time for teachers to learn this Spring and summer to implement in the fall). From the list, the District wanted to have the curriculum that was comprehensive (there was a list that had comprehensive, comprehension, foundational, and narrative oral language). With the extension of the grant funding timeline, the literacy team was able to visit area schools that were using two potential vendors. They were able to see the curriculum used in action, ask lots of questions to the districts and teachers, and many questions were answered. They were also able to review the curriculum using a special scoring document. The Teaching and Learning

team found that HMH Into Reading would be the best fit based on the criteria and best meet the district's Tier 1 core literacy curriculum for grades K–6 (English and Spanish).

HMH Into Reading is grounded in scientifically based best practices and is designed to support knowledge-building through literature. The program offers structured literacy instruction, streamlined planning for teachers, and comprehensive standards alignment. This recommendation aligns with Public Act 146 of 2024 (K–12 Literacy and Dyslexia Law), which requires districts to implement high-quality, evidence-based literacy materials.

HMH Into Reading was selected following a rigorous review because it explicitly meets the rigorous requirements of Michigan's Dyslexia Literacy Law. The program provides: Science of Reading (SoR) Alignment (The curriculum utilizes a structured literacy approach, now restricted under state law); Explicit Phonics & Decoding (It provides the systematic, cumulative instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics necessary to support students with characteristics of dyslexia.); Reciprocal Reading & Writing (The program integrates writing instruction directly with reading, satisfying the state's mandate for "Reading & Writing Reciprocity" to ensure students can translate decoding skills into encoding (spelling/writing).); and, MTSS Integration (The materials include robust screening and intervention tools that align with the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework required by the state for early identification and support.).

Adoption of this program will ensure compliance with state law, support improved literacy outcomes, and allow for a timely transition ahead of the 2027–2028 implementation deadline. Mrs. Rogalla was able to strategically bring the cost of the curriculum down, and negotiated the final cost for the six-year program to \$1,120,543.23 with the 35m Grant (\$489, 896), reducing the District's responsibility to \$630,647.23. The District will continue to pursue additional funding opportunities, including exploring more grant opportunities to help offset the cost, as well as reviewing the current curriculum that may no longer be needed due to the new curriculum.

Dr. Graham thanked the team for all their work with literacy. There are approximately 15 members on the committee. He also shared appreciation to Mrs. Kooi for all her work on obtaining grants, who has secured between \$2-3 million dollars for the district.

The Board of Education voted to approve the Literacy Curriculum Purchase as presented with a vote of 7-0.

Recess:

Dr. Hartman called a recess at 7:07 pm for a brief break.

Reconvene:

The meeting reconvened at 7:13 pm.

Discussion Items:

1. Vision 2031

Dr. Graham presented an overview of *Vision 2031*, the district's upcoming strategic plan. He emphasized that while the plan will not address every topic, its primary focus is to strengthen student learning and ensure all students are well prepared for the future. The plan is grounded in the district's mission, "Empowering every student to succeed," and its vision to be the best school district in Michigan, providing clarity, alignment, and purpose to lead well, support staff well, and ensure every student has what they need to succeed.

Dr. Graham recapped the 2021-2026 strategic vision: Strengthening Student Learning (Build a secondary level system of common assessments, and drive elementary achievement and growth through data-informed collaboration.); Character Building Culture (Foster a culture of character, belonging, and positive behavior.); Invest in People (Strengthen collaborative teaching and learning through full PLC implementation and data.); Engage Community (Build strong family partnerships and engagement.); and, Continuous Improvement (Advance safety, security, and facilities through strategic investment and design.).

The development process for Vision 2031 includes six phases. He reviewed the timeline of the six phases. Phase 1 (Oct-Nov), Cabinet development (previously acknowledged as the Central Office Team, but that has more individuals in that team. He expressed his gratitude to the individuals who are on the cabinet including Mr. Huff, Mrs. Moy, Mrs. Rogalla, Mrs. Roby, Ms. Marcy, Mrs. Philipps, and Mrs. Kooi.); Phase 2 (Dec - Jan) Staff & Admin Feedback (the team went to every staff meeting and met with staff); Phase 3 (Feb - Mar) Family & Student Feedback (received surveys back there were 630 families, 1806 students, and 265 staff who filled out surveys); Phase 4 (Apr-May) Alignment & Internal Launch; Phase 5 (Jun-Jul) Board Approval & Pre-Launch; and, Phase 6 (Aug) Public Launch.

He shared a diagram about moving forward. Starting at A, the district can keep on going on the same good path (B) or keep improving and doing great things along another path (C). Dr. Graham noted the goal is to build on current success while moving the entire district forward and elevating outcomes for all students.

Key foundational areas of who JPS is include: People & Culture (Supporting staff, competitive recruitment and hiring, and elevated staff professional learning); Finance & Resource Alignment (Strategic budgeting and maintaining a healthy fund balance.); Innovation & Special Program (ECC, El Puente, Wilderness Academy, and JIA); and, Wildcat Way & Belonging (Culture and Climate).

He shared an overview of the survey themes from Staff, Families, and Students.

How to prepare and bring this all together? The plan is centered on three priority areas: Student Learning, Connections, and Transition and Pathways. Student Learning (ensuring high-quality instruction and strong supports so every student grows and succeeds) - Building Comprehensive Systems of Supports (Every student receives the exact support they need, precisely when they need it); Ensuring High-Quality Curriculum, and Practice through PLC's (Instructional foundation will be consistent, reliable, and driven by evidence); and, K-12 Focused: Literacy is Everyone's Role (Establish a clear, consistent K-12 literacy framework so every teacher helps students become strong readers, clear writers, and critical thinkers, driving higher achievement for all). Connection (Strong relationships fuel student success) - Relationships and Student Ownership & Engagement (When students, families, and staff feel seen, valued, and supported, achievement grows); and, Student Ownership & Engagement (Learning deepens when students understand why it matters and have a voice shaping their experience). Transition and Pathways (Preparing students for every major transition - and for life beyond JPS.) - Strengthening Key Transitions (Create intentional, consistent support systems for students, families, and teachers at every transition point); Pathways for Post-Secondary Success (Expanding our understanding of what success looks like after graduation.); and, Enrollment & Student Integration (Supporting new-to-JPS and mid-year transfer students).

He then asked the Board, "What's missing?" He asked the Board to review the identified priorities and suggest any additions. The Board then met in small groups to discuss and later reconvened to share their ideas with the full group.

2. Round Table:

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

- **Wildcat Gala:** The gala will be held on Tuesday, March 24, 6:00-8:30 pm (Red carpet beforehand, 5:30-6:00 pm) at the JCA and will focus on recognizing the elementary students. It will be a great time to celebrate students.
- **JHS Musical:** It's the last week of the High School musical, *The Little Mermaid*. Performances will be on March 26-28. The high school students have put a lot of work into this production.
- **Bond Sale Update:** The District received an AA3 rating! It's a good rating, pretty much the highest for schools. A strong credit rating can significantly lower interest costs.
- **JCA Manager Interviews:** The interviews will be held on Wednesday.
- **Kindergarten Video:** Mr. Waalkes mentioned he was impressed with the video about the Kindergarten overview, and it was well done.

Adjournment:

The President of the Board of Education, Dr. Hartman, adjourned the Jenison Public Schools Board of Education meeting at 8:23 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)
April 2026	Mon, Apr 20	
May 2026	Mon, May 11	
June 2026	Mon, Jun 8	
July 2026	Mon, Jul 13	