

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING

Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, January 9, 2025 6:00 PM

Governing Board:

Misty Cox
Austin Babcock
Ashley Koepnick
Taylor Bell
Frank Nevarez

Also Present:

Melody Herne, Superintendent
Lynn Leonard, Finance Director
Bridget Hillman, Admin Asst.
Josh Fant, IT Director

OPENING

Permission to Open January 9th Meeting

Superintendent Herne thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. She stated that this is our organizational meeting and requested a motion to enable a board member to open and preside over the meeting.

Motion was made by Board Member Babcock to give Board Member Cox permission to open the January 9, 2025, Governing Board Meeting for Mingus Union High School District #4. Second was made by Board Member Bell.

Roll Call Vote:

Board Member Misty Cox – Aye
Board Member Austin Babcock - Aye
Board Member Ashley Koepnick - Aye
Board Member Taylor Bell - Aye
Board Member Frank Nevarez - Aye

Motion passed 5-0.

Superintendent Herne gave the meeting over to Board Member Cox.

Call to Order

Board Member Cox called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Roll Call

Board Member Misty Cox, Board Member Austin Babcock, Board Member Ashley Koepnick, Board Member Taylor Bell, and Board Member Frank Nevarez, are all present.

Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was led by Principal Dave Beery.

Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed.

Adoption of Agenda

Motion was made by Board Member Babcock to adopt the agenda as presented. Second was made by Board Member Cox.

Roll Call Vote:

- Board Member Misty Cox – Aye
- Board Member Austin Babcock - Aye
- Board Member Ashley Koepnick - Aye
- Board Member Taylor Bell - Aye
- Board Member Frank Nevarez - Aye

Motion passed 5-0.

Student Recognition

Presentation and certificates for student recognition were presented by Superintendent Herne and Principal Beery.

Employee Recognition

Presentation and certificates for employee recognition were presented by Superintendent Herne and Principal Beery.

Board Member Cox congratulates all the students and faculty. She also expressed her appreciation for all their hard work.

REPORTS

Superintendent 's Report

Superintendent Herne reported on several events and recognitions that students have received before, during, and after winter break. Upcoming events: January 21, 2025, Future Freshman Night, January 11th, 12th, 17th, 18th, and 19th 2025, ATORT Styles on Broadway, January 23, 2025, Board Work Session. Our website will also have all our upcoming events posted.

Mingus Recognitions and Highlights

FFA – FFA members attended Arizona National Horse Judging contest and Skill-A-Thon December 14, 2024, at Westworld of Scottsdale. Mingus students placed 3rd and 4th in horse judging. We had multiple students place in the Skill-A-Thon with Dawson Rice receiving the Champion placement. Announced on December 19, 2024, Trenton Castro is the recipient of the National FFA Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Grant. The FFA Senior Team attended the Arizona National Livestock Show December 28th -31st, 2024 and competed in the Livestock Skill-A-Thon with Trenton Castro placing 5th and Dawson Rice placing 10th.

Interact Club – During the holiday season the Interact Club hosted a can food drive that benefited the Old Town Mission. Over 1,300 food items were collected with Mrs. Lyon’s honors geometry class donating 475 items. The club also participated in adopt-a-grandparent with the residents of The Haven during the holiday season. The Rotary Club of the Verde Valley sponsored the shopping trip for the residents.

Student Council – Student Council participated in the Toys for Tots toy drive with the student body and staff donating 105 toys. Mrs. Dorr’s Advisory class was the top contributing class and received a treat for this accomplishment. Individual MUHS students received gift cards for donating four or more items. On December 14, 2024, students helped distribute the toys to families.

Arizona State Board of Education – Mica Altringer has been awarded as Student of the Month for January by the Arizona State Board of Education. She will receive this award at the January 27th AZSBE meeting.

Link Crew – In November the Mingus Link Crew leaders attended the Link Crew Student Leadership Conference at Coconino High School in Flagstaff.

Career Chat – The Counseling Team hosted a Career Chat December in the library during lunch. The topic for this Career Chat was cosmetology and barbering. Over fifty students participated in this event.

Verde Valley Firefighter – Firefighter Joe Odell replaced components on several ADE Defibrillator machines on the MUHS campus. He also equipped Mingus Union High School with a new AED Defibrillator for the baseball and softball area at no cost to Mingus. Superintendent Herne thanked the Verde Valley Fire Department and Firefighter Joe Odell for their partnership and service.

Art in the Clark Student Art Show – MUHS Visual Arts students participated in the Art in the Clark Student Art Show. Over 80 drawings, paintings, sculptures, and prints were entered by Mingus students. The show was on display for the community from December 5, 2024 – January 7, 2025.

Board Member Report(s)

Board Member Nevarez and Board Member Koepnick expressed their thanks and appreciation for the opportunity to attend the ASBA New Board Member Orientation Conference. It was a wonderful experience to learn what to expect as a board member and to hear from other newly elected board members along with veteran board members from around the state.

PRESENTATION AND INFORMATION

Administration Information

Principal Beery informed the board regarding his attendance at the AVID Principal’s Collaborative Conference, FLEX, and Student Attendance Appeal Process. Questions were answered as they were brought forward.

Student Council Presentation - Student Council members presented current Student Body events and future activities. Items Include: Senior Parking Spots, MUHS Council of Distinction Application, November Blood Drive, Christmas Parade, Toys 4 Tots Drive and Holiday Bash Movie Night, MUHS Unified Sports, Winter Spirit Week and Candy Cane Project. Future Student Council Events: Winter Sports Assembly, Student Council AASC State Convention in Tucson Magnet High School January 22nd – 25th 2025, Vitalant Blood Drive January 29, 2025. The Student Council Representatives thanked Mrs. Lyons, staff chaperones, Principal Beery, Superintendent Herne and the Board for their support.

AVID Information

AVID students presented to the board how the AVID class has helped support them during their education. They expressed that AVID has helped them with grades, gain confidence, organizational, and critical thinking skills. By working with their peers and Mrs. Bodam, the AVID class has helped them grow in all areas of school and life.

Board Member Cox thanked the students and congratulated them on a wonderful presentation.

Board Meeting Minutes Not Previously Approved

Motion was made by Board Member Babcock to approve the Minutes for November 14, 2024, Regular Meeting and December 11, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Second was made by Board Member Koepnick.

Roll Call Vote:

Board Member Misty Cox – Aye
Board Member Austin Babcock - Aye
Board Member Ashley Koepnick - Aye
Board Member Taylor Bell - Aye
Board Member Frank Nevarez - Aye

Motion passed 5-0.

Public Comments

At the conclusion of the call to the public, Board members may respond to any criticism made by an individual who addressed the Board. Board members may also direct staff to review the concern or request the item be discussed at a future meeting. Board members may not discuss or take legal action on matters raised during this open call to the public. If you have submitted a Request to Speak form, the Board President will call upon you and ask that you please identify yourself by clearly stating for the record your name and address. Citizens are asked to restrict their comments to three (3) minutes. Groups wishing to speak should select a spokesperson to represent the view of the group. (Board President may refrain from reciting this section if no RTS forms have been submitted).

Michael Nisito – Thanked the Board Members for their service. He encouraged the community to support the Board. They represent the community and we, the community, need to inform them of our wants and needs. He also invited all community members to come to the board meetings and pay attention to the agendas and be informed of what is being discussed. We, the community, are part of the system that is educating the students of our community.

Paula Herald – Expressed her thanks and appreciation Over the years she has expressed her concerns but does not want the hard work of the Board and administration to be overlooked. When looking over the agenda for this meeting she was concerned about some of the attachments that were posted, namely financial records, bookstore activity and Human Resources reports. When finding out this has been done in the spirit of transparency, it is appreciated. Secondly, she thanked Dr. Herne for her visibility and engagement with the student body. The students have noticed this and so have the parents.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Superintendent Herne thanked the Board for attending training and working hard to be prepared for meetings. Then Superintendent Herne and Finance Director Lynn Leonard reviewed with the Board what consent agenda items are, how they are placed on the agenda, how they can remove items from the consent agenda, and why they are described as routine items.

ACTION ITEMS - CONSENT

9.1 Approval of Routine Vouchers

Expense, Payroll, and Bookstore Activity

9.2 Personnel

HR Report, Classified, Certified

Motion was made by Board Member Cox to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Second was made by Board Member Nevarez.

Roll Call Vote:

Board Member Misty Cox – Aye

Board Member Austin Babcock - Aye

Board Member Ashley Koepnick - Aye

Board Member Taylor Bell - Aye

Board Member Frank Nevarez - Aye

Motion passed 5-0.

ACTION ITEMS

Selection of the 2025 Governing Board President

Superintendent Herne reviewed state statute regarding the selection of a Governing Board President. Superintendent Herne requests a motion to be made.

Motion was made by Board Member Koepnick to appoint Board Member Misty Cox as the 2025 Governing Board President. Second was made by Board Member Bell.

Board Member Cox accepts the nomination for Governing Board President.

Roll Call Vote:

Board Member Misty Cox – Aye
Board Member Austin Babcock - Aye
Board Member Ashley Koepnick - Aye
Board Member Taylor Bell - Aye
Board Member Frank Nevarez - Aye

Motion passed 5-0.

Selection of the 2025 Governing Board Vice-President

Superintendent Herne reviewed state statute regarding the selection of a Governing Board Vice President. Superintendent Herne requests a motion to be made.

Motion was made by Board Member Bell to appoint Board Member Ashley Koepnick as the 2025 Governing Board Vice President. Second was made by President Cox.

Board Member Koepnick accepts the nomination for Governing Board Vice President.

Roll Call Vote:

Board President Misty Cox – Aye
Board Member Austin Babcock - Aye
Board Member Ashley Koepnick - Aye
Board Member Taylor Bell - Aye
Board Member Frank Nevarez - Aye

Motion passed 5-0.

Superintendent Herne expressed her thanks to all Board Members and especially President Cox and Vice President Koepnick. The time that will be necessary to fulfill the duties of Board President and Vice President is a huge commitment. Board relationships are one of the many goals for Superintendent Herne and communication is key.

Determination of the 2025 Regular Board Meeting schedule of the Governing Board

Superintendent Herne reviewed state statute and county requirements regarding regular board meeting schedule. The current regular meeting schedule is the second Thursday of each month at 6:00pm on the Mingus Union High School Campus. By policy and statute if a meeting needs to be changed the Board President has the ability to do so.

Superintendent Herne requests a motion to be made.

Motion was made by Board Member Nevarez to approve the calendar year 2025 General Board Meetings. Mingus Union High School District #4 will hold General Board Meetings the second Thursday of each month at 6:00PM on the Mingus Union High School Campus. Second was made by Board Member Babcock.

Roll Call Vote:

Board President Misty Cox – Aye

Vice President Ashley Koepnick - Aye
Board Member Austin Babcock - Aye
Board Member Taylor Bell - Aye
Board Member Frank Nevarez - Aye
Motion passed 5-0.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Strategic Planning Process

Superintendent Herne presented information for Strategic Planning. The goal of a Strategic Plan is to guide the District for the next three to five years. There are a few different ways to go about developing a strategic plan with either vendors or facilitators. This process will involve stakeholder meetings, objective and goal setting, Board, faculty, student, and community participation. Superintendent Herne presented information and examples of Strategic Plans from ASBA, Dr. Nicolas Clement, Cognia, and Scott Geddis with Inspired Engagement, LLC. An in-depth discussion followed the presentation. Superintendent Herne will email the Board with updates and answers as information is obtained.

Weighted Grades

President Cox asked the three community members if they wanted to address the board regarding Weighted Grades before or after the Weighted Grade presentation. Community members all agree to speak after the presentation.

Principal Beery addresses the board and gives the floor to Director Wesbrock to lead the Weighted Grade presentation.

Director Wesbrock presents background information regarding the weighted grade process. The purpose and goal of weighted grades is to acknowledge and incentivize students to take more challenging courses. In the presentation Director Wesbrock reviews what Advance Placement and Dual Enrollment courses are, how they differ, and the current list of AP and Dual Enrollment courses offered. She also informs the Board the impact of weighted grades has on post-secondary, admission requirements to Arizona Universities, the ever-changing criteria for meeting Arizona Merit Scholarships and admission process for highly selective schools that have an acceptance rate of 20% or less. The biggest thing is to make sure students and parents understand that the platform is every changing. Director Wesbrock ends the presentation by reviewing the current Mingus Weighted Grade System and the recommendation for weighted grades.

CURRENT MINGUS WEIGHTED GRADE SYSTEM

Advanced Placement Curriculum

(AP) Advanced Placement classes are weighted using the following values: A= 5.0, B= 4.0, C= 2.5, D= 1.0

AP students are expected to take the course's summative College Board AP exam in May. Test participation is required to receive the weighted grade.

AP exam preparation is a significant component of the AP course. Students will need to purchase an AP test preparation book of the instructor's choosing.



RECOMMENDATION FOR WEIGHTED GRADES

Mingus Union High School operates on a basic 4.0 scale where A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1 and F = 0

Students may additionally earn weighted grade points by taking accelerated courses and earning a C or better

Weighted grade points are added to the GPA once it has been calculated to identify students for honors, valedictorian and salutatorian

Class ranking and GPA on transcripts display a weighted GPA and unweighted GPA as well as class rankings based on the weighted GPA

Weighted Grade Points

Honors Courses = .03

Advanced Placement Courses = .05

Dual Enrollment Core Classes = .05



An in-depth discussion took place after the presentation.

Public Comments

At the conclusion of the call to the public, Board members may respond to any criticism made by an individual who addressed the Board. Board members may also direct staff to review the concern or request the item be discussed at a future meeting. Board members may not discuss or take legal action on matters raised during this open call to the public. If you have submitted a Request to Speak form, the Board President will call upon you and ask that you please identify yourself by clearly stating for the record your name and address. Citizens are asked to restrict their comments to three (3) minutes. Groups wishing to speak should select a spokesperson to represent the view of the group. (Board President may refrain from reciting this section if no RTS forms have been submitted).

Three request to speak forms were submitted regarding Weighted Grades. All community members chose to speak after the Weighted Grade presentation.

Paula Herald – There has been some mixed information regarding weighted grades. The information given tonight has been very informative. She appreciates the clarification. Her son is a junior and they have always encouraged him to push himself. He will be looking at a highly selective school and external scholarships to universities other than state universities. They are often looking at rank, grade weight, valedictorian and salutatorian when making their selections. More education is needed to understand the different point systems if we choose to move systems. Knowing that any change that would take place would not impact juniors or seniors is appreciated. She questions if the dual enrollment curriculum at Yavapai College is as rigorous as AP courses. Currently we have seniors who are spending their senior year at Yavapai College. For some parents this may not be a factor. Paula Herald also asked that the Board consider grade inflation.

Laurie Altringer – Thanked Director Wesbrock and Principal Beery for their informative and thorough presentation and thoughtful communication. She appreciates it. Laurie Altringer is a parent, the Director of the Science Vortex STEM Center, and teacher at Cottonwood Oak Creek School District. She is speaking as an advocate for her own children and students. She would like Mingus to make changes to its GPA calculations so that class rankings are fair. The current way class ranking is calculated at Mingus is unfair. Class ranking should take into consideration the difficulty of class into account. Under the current system a student taking a regular class and an honors class are ranked the same although the workload for each class is not the same. Core dual enrollment classes should be weighted. She started to look over the way GPA's were calculated when her daughter expressed that she did not want to take Calculus her senior year because it would water down her GPA. This was concerning to hear. Laurie also states she has heard this concern from other parents too. She was a competitive college athlete, and her children are competitive athletes too. At high school athletic events the AIA makes sure the athletes are all on an equal playing field. She is asking that Mingus accepts the recommendation to GPA calculation that Director Wesbrock presented in the presentation tonight. She has over 150 signatures of people who agree that core honors and dual enrollment classes should be weighted. She will share this information via email after the meeting. She also listed other school districts who give weighted grades for honor classes. She is asking Mingus to update the way GPA's are calculated to incentivize students to take more challenging courses. Laurie thanked the Board and Mingus Administration for their time and consideration.

Teddy Armstrong – After the wonderful presentation on Weighted Grades by Director Wesbrock she does not have anything to add. The presentation was informative, and she appreciates the information.

2025-2026 Course Catalog

Director Wesbrock reviewed the 2025-2026 course catalog with the board. The course catalog is brought to the board each year. She states that this is a living document at this point and changes may still take place due to numbers, teaching staff, and other variables. This document is composed through a lot of time, effort, and collaboration from the Counseling Department, Administrative Team, and staff. The goal is for this document to be useful for students and parents if any questions arise about what course details.

A question answer session followed.

President Cox asked that the typos be cleaned up. She also requests for the current board to have access to the curriculum audit report that was done in 2019. Once reviewed by the current Board, time would be devoted during the March or April meeting to see how the course catalog aligns with the auditors recommendations.

First Reading of ASBA Policy Advisory 808

Superintendent Herne reviewed the first reading of ASBA Policy Advisory 808.

Board Member Babcock stated that this is a very in-depth document and wanted to verify that we have someone on campus that is reviewing the document.

Superintendent Herne assured Board Member Babcock that we do and are in compliance with the document.

Executive Session

Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03 (A)(1) - Please remain seated until such time as the Board votes to convene for an executive session. The Board will either move to a different location to hold the session or will ask those in attendance to leave the room and take with them all materials and belongings and ensure that no recording devices are left in the room. No action will be taken in the Executive Session if convened.

Motion was made by President Cox for the board to move into Executive Session. Second was made by Board Member Bell.

Roll Call Vote:

Board President Misty Cox – Aye

Vice President Ashley Koepnick - Aye

Board Member Austin Babcock - Aye

Board Member Taylor Bell - Aye

Board Member Frank Nevarez - Aye

Motion passed 5-0.

Convened to Executive Session: 8:17pm

Reconvened from Executive Session: 8:54pm

Requests for Future Agenda Items

President Cox – HVAC, proposal by Café Director Lomeli for the addition of a smoothie machine to enhance student nutrition and increase revenue, policy change to requiring CPR certification for staff

Board Member Babcock – Weighted Grades recommendation and implementation process, Band program implications to feeder school program if guitar classes are added, Grade Inflation (does this contribute to our proficiency along with attendance), Public Comment protocol (having community members state their name and place of residence)

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Board Member Nevarez to adjourn. Second was made by President Cox.

Roll Call Vote:

Board President Misty Cox – Aye

Vice President Ashley Koepnick - Aye

Board Member Austin Babcock - Aye

Board Member Taylor Bell - Aye

Board Member Frank Nevarez - Aye

Motion passed 5-0.

Adjournment: 9:00 pm

Board President Misty Cox

Vice President Ashley Koepnick

DRAFT