

Minutes of Workshop Meeting

The Board of Education Jenison Public Schools

The Board of Education of Jenison Public Schools held a workshop meeting on Monday, January 26, 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 Workshop 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

Shannon Hogan,
Trustee

Donna Mooney
Trustee

Others Present:

Brandon Graham, PhD,
Superintendent

Leslie Philipps,
Assistant Superintendent /
Title IX Coordinator

Christine Marcy,
Director of Finance and
Operations

Thom Danckaert,
GMB Representative

Katie Moy,
Chief of Staff

Public Comment:

Liz Sitte (7057 Williamstown Dr, Hudsonville) - She complimented the junior high theater program on its production this past weekend, especially given the challenges of multiple snow days. Her primary reason for addressing the board was to share a concern regarding junior high parking. Many drivers are not following the designated parking flow, and this issue is expected to worsen when the new 5th/6th grade building starts construction and restricts or eliminates additional drop-off and pick-up areas. Parking signs are often ignored. She also praised the high school students for how they are managing congestion in their parking lot, noting their patience, cooperation, and willingness to yield the right-of-way to others.

Heather Baar (7774 Durain Dr) - She shared that she is the parent of a kindergarten student in the Wilderness Academy. Her husband is a product of JPS. She praised the district's strong fine arts programming among the other programs. JPS has many opportunities for students, and expressed that that's why they like JPS for the Wilderness Academy. She expressed that the Wilderness Academy is a perfect fit for her son and shared that their family left the Hudsonville Christian outdoor program to pursue this opportunity. Her son is their oldest child, with younger siblings who may also benefit from the program. While she hopes to continue this programming for her children, she expressed concern about the elimination of the 3rd and 4th grades and the transportation challenges that could result from students attending different buildings. She noted that this program is what brought her family to the

district and emphasized that its unique and popular programming continues to attract families to Jenison. She stated that the program meets many family needs and encouraged the district to reconsider expanding the program through the 4th grade.

Megan Nollet (7619 Chickadee Dr, Jenison) - She spoke on behalf of the Wilderness Academy Advancement Committee and shared some updates. She noted that the committee will be meeting with central office administrators to discuss family concerns. If the program does not expand to third grade next year, families have identified several key accommodations that would help ease the transition for students, including: (1) centralized busing options, particularly for students attending different buildings; (2) grouping Wilderness Academy students together as much as possible; and, (3) exploring innovative options for support throughout the transition process. She also shared that families of current second grade students are anxious about plans for next year and would like to begin making well-informed decisions. While families understand that expansion has not yet been approved, many remain hopeful. Overall, families are feeling uncertain about the future and want to stay informed. The group expressed hope that Wilderness Academy programming will continue and that decisions will be made in the best interest of students. She emphasized that the district offers many distinctive programs that attract families and highlighted the importance of continuing to draw future families to the Wilderness Academy program. She concluded by requesting that the district consider potential future expansion as part of its strategic planning process.

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

Approval of Agenda:

Dr. Reed motioned to discuss 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 January 12, 2026, Board of Education Meeting and Closed Session. Ms. Hogan seconded the motion. The Board of Education voted to approve the minutes as presented with a vote of 7-0.

Discussion Items:

1. Bond Update:

Dr. Graham briefly discussed the parking lot south of the junior high and the impact construction of the new 5th/6th building will have on traffic flow during construction. The building construction equipment will be placed in that lot, along with a required construction perimeter and fall zone of at least 40 feet. The district will need to be creative with traffic patterns during construction. The project is still currently in the design phase, and will start to go out for bids in February. The district hopes to begin to start on the construction phase as soon as the school year ends.

Dr. Graham then introduced Mr. Thom Danckaert, GMB representative, who provided updates on the district's bond projects and their current status. He first highlighted the completed projects: the Maintenance Storage Barn (located on the west edge of campus), and the Athletic Improvements (this includes the new tennis courts and the new concessions/storage/restroom building).

Maintenance/Transportation Center: The Maintenance/Transportation Center project is currently in progress. The team is waiting on a few supplies before beginning wall construction. The district is hopeful the building will be completed in June and ready for use for the next school year. Dr. Graham expressed the district's gratitude to the Transportation and Maintenance staff for their flexibility and positive attitudes while working without a permanent home base. Staff have gone above and beyond

under challenging conditions. Currently, the district mechanic is working out of a township building, and the township has been very supportive and cooperative.

5th/6th Grade Elementary Building: The District has been actively bidding out projects related to the 5th/6th grade building. Mr. Danckaert shared that GMB has spent countless hours working with district staff and administrators to review designs and refine details to ensure the building meets district needs. He acknowledged that the parking lot south of the junior high will impact traffic flow during construction; however, once the building is operational, it is expected to improve overall traffic flow and provide additional parking. The design includes three designated drop-off and pick-up zones, with a strong emphasis on safety and clear pathways. Mr. Danckaert reviewed several design elements, including 1. Playgrounds and outdoor zones: Equipment and layout designed with safety, activity levels, and noise considerations in mind, with noisier activities located farther from the building; 2. Signage: New signage will be installed across the entire campus for a more unified and consistent look. The signage will be practical and easy to read, without LED lighting, which is costly and less durable. 3. Building aesthetics: A simple exterior design with graphics to add pops of color. 4. Building Layout and Learning Spaces: The building is designed around project-based learning and organized into “neighborhoods,” which are further divided into teaching wings. Each wing consists of six classrooms, grouped into two sections of three classrooms. Each set of three classrooms shares an extended learning area, resource room, breakout rooms, and restrooms. The extended learning areas are visible from classrooms and support small-group instruction. The locker commons are located at the entrance to each wing, transitioning from public to quieter learning spaces. The building footprint is consistent on both levels, with the exception of ASD, CI, and categorical classrooms, many of which are located on the lower level for easier access. 5. Common Areas: Mr. Danckaert also highlighted other areas in the building including: A learning commons near the main office, housing STEM-based classes, art spaces, and meeting areas; an open cafeteria located on the main level; a large grand staircase that supports daily traffic flow and can also be used as a teaching space; a full-size competition gym, comparable to the PALS (auxiliary) gym, with seating for up to 800 people, a large projection screen, and netting to divide the gym into sections; music spaces are designed in close collaboration with the music department, providing ample room, storage, and efficient flow. The band room will be larger than other district spaces, though not large enough to hold the entire marching band. 6. Classroom Design: Classrooms will have flexible furniture, with one or two fixed cabinetry pieces and the remaining furniture fully mobile to allow instructional flexibility. Each classroom will have a single entrance. Windows will include night shade/tab systems to provide privacy and support lockdown procedures. 7. Safety and Security: Mr. Danckaert emphasized that this building will be the most secure on campus. Security features include: controlled entry points and vestibules; teaching wings that can be locked down independently; stairwells that are designed as areas of refuge with a two-hour fire rating; every room located within 75 feet of an exit; a fully sprinklered building; and, numbered doors and windows that are consistent with district standards. The building will be able to secure the learning spaces so that it will allow public access to designated areas for extracurricular activities while maintaining strong security during the school day or in emergencies. Mr. Danckaert stated that security is taken very seriously, noting his professional responsibility and licensure. For tornadoes and other natural disasters, the Ottawa County Emergency Manager will review safety plans with the district as the project nears completion. Lastly, as mentioned before, the district will be going out for bids on various projects in February and will report back on the overall status in the future.

2. Round Table:

- **Cell Phone Legislation Update:** House Bill 4141 has been passed by the Michigan Legislature. The bill would amend the Revised School Code to do the following: 1. Require the board of a school district or the board of directors of a public school academy (PSA) to implement a policy that prohibits students from using a wireless communication device on school grounds during instructional time with specific exceptions, beginning in the 2026-2027 school year; 2. Require the board of a school district or the board of directors of a PSA to post the policy on the school’s website; and, 3. Repeal Section 1303 of the Code, which allows the board of school district or the board of directors of a PSA to develop and implement its own

policies concerning student use of personal communication devices in school. The legislation establishes statewide requirements while preserving limited local control and includes specific exceptions, such as medical necessary devices; district-owned devices; devices designated by the district for instructional purposes; devices used for special education programming or devices provided for student accommodations or individual education plans; lesson-specific academic assignments, at the district discretion of a classroom teacher; and emergency situations as prescribed in emergency operations plans; however, use of devices for this exception could not interfere with school emergency protocols or the actions of first responders and could not endanger students or faculty. From a review of the 2025–2026 JPS Student Handbook, the district is already largely compliant. Current practices limit cell phone use during instructional time, prohibit elementary use during the school day, allow limited secondary use during non-instructional times, and grants staff authority to enforce expectations. At the high school, students are required to use a phone caddy system during instructional time. Privacy and safety expectations are also addressed. Once the legislation is enacted, minor clarifications to district language may be recommended. Thrun will provide the district with more policy guidelines for policy manual. Some things may be defining terms like instructional time and addressing emergency use. The Administration will continue to monitor the legislation and update the Board with any necessary updates.

- **Van Incident:** Mr. Waalkes asked about a school van that was pulled over on the road with an emergency vehicle behind. It was clarified that the situation involved a student incident and was handled by administration and police liaisons, and was not related to a driver concern.
- **Pink Out:** The Pink Out game will be held on Friday, January 30, with games scheduled for 5:30 pm and 7:15 pm. Mrs. Katie Moy has done an exceptional job coordinating this event on behalf of the district. This marks the 18th year of the event, which began as an effort by the girls' basketball team to support a parent fighting cancer. Since then, it has turned into an annual event where the community rallies together to support local families impacted by cancer. Six of the eight invited honorees have confirmed their attendance.
- **Snowcoming:** The dance will be Saturday, January 31, at the Wildcat Fieldhouse. In addition to dancing, there will be many other activities, with thousands of attendees expected. Visiting students must be in high school and approved by administrators from both schools to attend.
- **Jr. High Musical:** Dr. Griffin and fellow board members praised the Junior High Theater program for its production of *Beauty and the Beast Jr.* that was held this past weekend.

Adjournment:

The President of the Board of Education, Dr. Hartman, adjourned the Jenison Public Schools Board of Education meeting at 7:49 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)
February 2026	Mon, Feb 16	

March 2026
April 2026
May 2026
June 2026
July 2026

Mon, Mar 9
Mon, Apr 20
Mon, May 11
Mon, Jun 8
Mon, Jul 13

Mon, Mar 23