

**Board of Education
December 16, 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. Brian Schupbach, Ms. Paige Daniels, Mr. Eric Stewart, Ms. Stephanie Brown, Ms. Angela Telfer, Ms. Meredith Lewis, Ms. Sandy Barry-Loken, Ms. Jackie Martell

OTHERS PRESENT:

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Knowles called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. Brian Brusach made comments in regard to contract.
- B. Crystal Van Pelt made comments in regard to contract.
- C. Ben Bierlein made comments in regard to contract.
- D. Allison Macias made comments in regard to the union.
- E. Sarah Dickman made comments in regard to the union.
- F. Tom Greig made comments in regard to the union activity.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes – November 18, 2025
- B. Approval of Board of Education Closed Meeting Minutes – November 18, 2025
- C. Approval of New Hire
- D. Approval of Monthly Financial Report
- E. Approval of Head Start Financial Report
- F. Approval of November PAC meeting minutes
- G. Approval of 2026-2027 KRESA Program Calendars

Mr. VanAntwerp moved; Ms. Cowart supported approving the consent agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

IV. CENTER OF EXCELLENCE UPDATE

A. Early Childhood Update –Rachel Roberts

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

November 19, 2025, Angela Telfer, Executive Director for Special Education and Jason Irvin, Behavior Support Specialist from WoodsEdge Learning Center represented **KRESA** as an exemplar leader at the **MAISA & SEILN Emergency Seclusion and Restraint Series: Creating Safe Learning Environments**. This was the first in a four-part series designed to train trainers in proactive strategies for reducing seclusion and restraint in schools and to help districts evaluate their systems for strengths and areas of improvement.

Presentation Highlights

- **Audience:** Approximately **300 participants** from ISDs and local districts across Michigan.
- **Focus:** Proactive approaches to **reduce seclusion and restraint** and create safe, supportive learning environments.
- **KRESA's Contribution:**
 - Shared the **implementation science-based process** used to achieve significant improvements for students.
 - Demonstrated how systematic change can lead to better outcomes and safer environments.
 - Positioned KRESA as a **model for best practices** in transforming school culture and behavior management.
- **Kent ISD and Muskegon ISD** staff also presented as exemplar districts at the first session of this series.

Impact

- **Connections Made:** Several districts engaged with KRESA following the presentation to learn more about the process and strategies.
- **Next Steps:**
 - Angela Telfer will continue to serve on the SEILN planning committee for the next three sessions.

- KRESA staff (including identified trainers) will continue participation in the remaining three sessions of the series.
- Support Kalamazoo County districts in implementing preventative strategies and conducting system evaluations and invite them to consider sending a team and selecting trainers in their districts. Portage Public Schools have already committed to joining KRESA at the next three sessions.

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

Discovery Lab: Mission to Space – IT-Focused Iteration

This year, we launched an exciting new iteration of our Discovery Lab experience: Mission to Space, designed to immerse students in the world of information technology while connecting directly to our Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways.

Students step into an escape-room style challenge aboard our mobile lab, where a smooth space launch takes an unexpected turn. Working in small teams, they tackle real-world problems using skills from computer networking, programming, cybersecurity, and even artificial intelligence. These hands-on activities give students a true taste of careers in IT and related fields.

The experience is further enriched through our partnership with the Air Zoo, whose educators guide students through aerospace career pathways—from engineers and pilots to mission specialists—creating a dynamic link between technology and aerospace industries.

Impact Highlights:

- Over 2,000 students have participated so far this year through visits to local middle schools and community events.
- District Feedback:
 - *“Our kiddos absolutely raved about the experience. We are so grateful for this partnership.”*
 - *“The students have been talking non-stop about their experiences on the lab, and there are so many connections we can make back to sixth grade science.”*
 -

Career Connect Open House

The community and the board are invited to discover the many free educational opportunities available through Kalamazoo RESA’s Career Connect programs at the

annual Open House. This year's event will be held at the Career Connect Campus on February 10, 2026, from 5:00 PM- 7:30 PM.

D. Educator Supports Update –Stephanie Brown

Kalamazoo RESA Educator Supports team has made significant progress in advancing continuous improvement across the county. For the 2024–25 school year, the department was focused on refining its framework to better measure the effectiveness of services and building equity capacity through culturally responsive practices.

Key metrics highlight steady growth: professional learning opportunities have increased from 70 in 2022–23 to 217 in 2024–25, while participation has risen from 1,725 to 3,293 educators. Coaching and consulting days have also expanded from 1,280 to 1,611, alongside 2,247 coaching interactions, support for 408 educators, and the facilitation of 12 professional networks.

Coaching impact data in relation to teacher practice shows clear movement through the stages of exploration, installation, and initial implementation toward full implementation, with pre- and post-assessments reflecting growth in essential knowledge, classroom routines, and active engagement.

Bright spots include strong gains in staff relationships, communication, and supervisor trust, with HumanEx survey scores now consistently above 4.38. Educator feedback reinforces this impact, with 94% of participants reporting that sessions directly improved instructional delivery and 96% finding the learning valuable.

Looking ahead, the team will narrow its focus on teacher practice and systems data, incorporate student-centered data from coaching cycles, and pursue a new culture and climate goal that integrates perspectives from both special education and general education to better serve educators and students across Kalamazoo County.

E. Operational Supports Update

1. Human Resources Update – Meredith Lewis

Union Negotiations-

On October 27, KRESA presented its final proposal to the KCTEA representative, which includes the addition of a neutral forum for dispute resolution, a four-year contract term, wage increases with retroactive pay, and a ratification bonus. On December 1, KCTEA responded with a counterproposal reverting largely to its pre-April 2025 positions with some modifications and requested a bargaining meeting. Additionally, the MEA amended its Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charge against KRESA to include new allegations, and the scheduled MERC hearing has been postponed until January 2025, at which time KRESA will defend against these claims.

2. Technology & Operations Update – Brian Schupbach

Construction of the CCC greenhouse is complete and the final inspection is scheduled for 12/22/25. Miscellaneous equipment and furnishings are currently being installed.

VI. Superintendent Report – Dr. Dedrick Martin

State Superintendent Conference in Kalamazoo:

The upcoming mid-winter State Conference for Michigan Superintendents is scheduled to take place in Kalamazoo from January 21-23. Both Dr. Slade from KPS and I have been invited to give a brief welcome speech. We are collaborating with the MASA organization to offer Superintendents from various parts of the state an opportunity to visit our Career Connect Campus during the conference. We are excited to highlight our beautiful facility and the outstanding work our staff and students engage in every day.

Budget Uncertainty Continues:

Last week, Michigan House Republicans invoked a rarely used committee rule to block nearly \$645 million in previously approved funding for approximately eighty projects across 18 state departments and agencies. This unexpected action is a significant departure from the usual practice of routinely approving budget rollovers. These projects can be reconsidered in 2026 but will be subject to stricter transparency and accountability requirements under new legislation via the Hall Ethics Accountability and Transparency (HEAT).

Further complicating this uncertainty is the recent announcement of the Michigan version of the DOGE Task Force, which aims to improve accountability and efficiency within state government by reducing the number of departments from 18 to about 12. Like the surprise late night budget passage in Lansing a few months ago, this sudden block of funding has created considerable uncertainty around funding priorities and the impact on various projects in the coming months.

According to the House Fiscal Agency, the blocked funding affects a broad range of departments and agencies, including:

- Community Colleges: \$1,400,000
- Corrections: \$2,100,000
- Education: \$882,700
- Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy: \$18,101,800
- Michigan Gaming Control Board: \$2,967,600
- Health and Human Services: \$69,272,800
- Labor and Economic Opportunity: \$137,281,500
- Legislative Service Bureau: \$369,600
- Licensing and Regulatory Affairs: \$58,053,600
- State Lottery: \$3,000,100

- Michigan Strategic Fund: \$104,177,500
- Natural Resources: \$6,150,000
- School Aid: \$22,780,000
- State: \$8,325,000
- Technology, Management, and Budget: \$192,204,800
- Transportation: \$12,713,700
- Treasury: \$4,981,500
- Universities: \$179,500

We will continue to monitor how these shifting fiscal priorities may impact KRESA and education in general.

VII. Thrun Law Notes

A. Correspondence/Informational

VIII. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION

A. Approval of quote for replacement of lift system motors for WELC's overhead lift system.

Ms. Cowart moved, Mr. Webster supported the quote for replacement of lift system motors for WELC's overhead lift system.

Motion carried unanimously.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Cowart
Board Secretary

Jackie Martell
Recording Secretary

Minutes Approved on