

DRAFT

School District of the City of Saginaw
MINUTES OF THE BOARD ACTION MEETING
550 Millard Street • Saginaw, Michigan 48607 • 989-399-6500
November 19, 2025

President Coleman called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

1. ATTENDANCE

Board of Education:	President C. Coleman	Present
	Vice President J. Nash	Present
	Secretary K. Rooker	Present
	Treasurer R. A. Knapp	Present
	Trustee Jasmine Calhoun	Present
	Trustee J. Seals	Present
	Trustee M. Thompson	-----

Student Member of the Board:

Tierra Pringle Present	Present
Diya Ramakrishnan Present	Present

Central Administration Staff:

Superintendent R. Roberts	Present
Deputy Superintendent T. Johnson	Absent

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

President Coleman asked board members if there were any additions or subtractions to the agenda. The agenda was approved as presented.

3. PRESENTATION

Consolidated App

Dr. Roberts called Jennifer Nichols to share details of the 31a 2025-26 Budget items due to their time-sensitive approval. She shared details of the remaining grants that need approval, which were not available at our previous meeting. Mrs. Nichols shared that the items are available for approval to move forward and asked for permission to use those resources. She shared the Consolidated full application budget approval amounts: Title II Part A, \$547,328; and Title IV Part A, \$633,302. (Title I has been approved previously.) This will be on the Consent Agenda.

31AA Presentation

Mrs. Nichols shared the 31AA Mental Health funding option aimed at enhancing student mental health and safety, with an anticipated award of around \$700,000. This will be on the Consent Agenda.

Dr. Roberts shared that the board must act by December 4th to opt into this funding, which comes with new certification requirements. He shared additional information regarding the legal implications of 31AA funding, which were discussed, particularly the requirement for school districts to waive attorney-client privilege in mass casualty situations, which has faced significant opposition due to concerns over constitutional rights. The Michigan Department of Education has extended the funding deadline to December 4th due to ongoing legal challenges. The board decided to postpone their decision until a special meeting on December 3rd, where they hope to gain more clarity on the situation. Legal counsel warned that failure to act could result in lawsuits against the district. The board also explored the potential for districts to opt into funding and later rescind their decision, depending on forthcoming court rulings. Dr. Roberts answered questions from the Board members.

4. NEW BUSINESS

Student Member of the Board

SMOB Ms. Tierra Pringle shared information about the career fair at SUHS in the new gym. She said she took pictures for the yearbook class. Ms. Tierra Pringle, a student member of the Board, and Ms. Little shared their initiative to organize a mental health field day, emphasizing its importance based on student feedback. They are collaborating with Ms. Baldwin to gather input from teachers and students.

SMOB Ms. Diya Ramakrishnan shared that there were not many updates, except that SASA announced a new SAT preparation program starting in the spring, which will accommodate students' schedules to ensure participation.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance

Ms. Knapp shared that all reports have been posted on Board Book and are listed in the Consent Agenda.

Policy & Curriculum

Mrs. Seals shared that there is no meeting this month, but there will be a meeting next month in December.

Buildings and Grounds

There was no report.

Human Resources

Dr. Coleman shared that he has asked Mrs. Nash to assist with the Human Resources role and to plan next steps with Dr. Roberts. Mrs. Nash shared dates with the Board for an Interim Evaluation for Dr. Robert next month, on Wednesday, December 10, 2025 (Open Session-Goals). Dr. Roberts shared that Rod Mr. Green would also be available on Wednesday, April 8, 2026 (Self Evaluation) and Wednesday, May 20, 2026 (Board's Official Evaluation) to facilitate an interim meeting.

City/School/County Liaison

Dr. Coleman shared that no meeting is scheduled.

6. PUBLIC/UNION COMMENTS

President Coleman called for the Public, and none were made.

Union comments:

Andrea Rethman –SEA President

She shared kind words from the entire membership of the Saginaw Education Association, with deepest condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of Mattie Thompson. She elaborated with kind words of sorrow and disbelief. Mrs. Rethman spoke of Mrs. Thompson, a loving and dedicated public servant whose commitment to the education and well-being of students was unwavering in our district for 20 years.

Mrs. Rethman continues to mention Mrs. Thompson's contribution to the Board; her endless advocacy for the betterment of schools has had a lasting impact. She said that they are truly grateful for her service. She stated that Mrs. Thompson lived by the SPSP motto, keeping kids first. During this difficult time, she shared our thoughts are with her family and all who had the privilege of working with Mrs. Thompson, as well as the Board and the wider community. As we navigate this significant loss together, we stand with you in mourning and offer our support as you find your way through this challenging period. She shared that Mrs. Thompson sparkled and her love for "shine to shine" will truly be missed.

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Human Resources/Labor Relations Report

Dr. Roberts gave an overview of the Human Resources/Labor Relations report, which will be on the Consent Agenda next week.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Coleman asked board members if there were any exceptions to the Consent Agenda. Mrs. Nash asked that Item "C" for 31aa Presentation as presented.

The following motion was made.

Motion

Moved by Mrs. Nash and supported by Mr. Rooker, that the Saginaw Board of Education accepts the Consent Agenda format except item C.

A voice vote was taken with the following results.

Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 – Motion Carried

- A. Approve the Minutes for October 8, 2025, Briefing Session and October 15, 2025, Action Meeting.
- B. Approve the October 2025 Financials.
- ~~C. Approve the 31aa Presentation as presented.~~
- D. Approve the Consolidated Application as presented.
- E. Approve the November 2025 Human Resources/Labor Relations Report.

9. TRIBUTE TO TRUSTEE MATTIE THOMPSON

Dr. Coleman - shared that tonight that the Saginaw Public Schools Board of Education pauses to remember the life of a public servant. Dr. Coleman said that there are two kinds of elected officials: politicians who are in office to make sure that they stay in office. He said they vote to maintain their seat, to take care of their friends, and to make themselves look good. Then, there are public officials, although many of them do, whose decisions are made in the best interests of those they represent. Dr. Coleman said that Mrs. Thompson will take time to speak to their constituents and let them know the reason why they voted as they did. He said many times, public servants serve for little or no pay and public servants often spend many hours above an average workweek assisting. How great it would be if there were more public servants like Mrs. Thompson.

He continued to shared that tonight, there is an empty chair here at the Saginaw Board of Education, and that for the past forty years, there has been a Thompson serving at this table. For twenty years, Willie E. Thompson gave of himself for the students of the Saginaw Public School system. Dr. Coleman shared that when Willie passed, his wife, Mrs. Mattie Thompson, was selected by the Board to replace him and during her twenty years of service, her son, Jason, joined her at the table for 8 years. He said compensation for those meetings was so low that many interested citizens refused to run or apply for an opening. Dr. Coleman said that this family served when the Board was considered good and when the Board was considered bad and in their time at the table, they worked to improve the district. He said this family had multiple Michigan Association of School Boards certifications, including Mrs. Thompson receiving this term, the President's award, the highest award of the organization.

Dr. Coleman said, before her career at the Board Table, Mrs. Thompson was known throughout the community for her contributions to others and she was well known for baking, and it was not unusual for her to be seen at many churches and funeral repasts serving others and sharing her gift of baking. He said there are many people who are wearing coats that she donated, students who went on trips with funds that she donated, and students who did not have lunch money, but were able to eat. Dr. Coleman said it would take me longer than I have to list all of the organizations and groups that she was associated with, including the one in Idlewild, MI where she helped fundraise. He shared that when it came to her service at the Board, she was a fierce advocate for students and meeting their needs. Dr. Coleman said it was her desire that more than just the educational needs of the students be met, it was her thought that school should be more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. He shared that there were other things that a school should offer, music, arts, and other social amenities should be available for students and she would often suggest that we have fundraisers to provide students with coats and shoes that their parents could not afford. Dr. Coleman said when extracurricular activities were cut, she advocated for them to be replaced, even if we had to raise the money to provide some of them. He wanted us to remember young ladies had dresses, young men had suits and tuxes, through her contributions and contacts. Dr. Coleman said, she would not tell who she helped, this was just in her nature. He said as a new Board member, there were so many times that she would pull me aside and let me know what was expected of me. Dr. Coleman said when I was elected as an officer, she would take time to let me know what she had seen and learned that made her a good board member, and what made a good officer. He said when I was elected to chair the Board, Mrs. Thompson sat next to me and would often lean over and whisper something in my ear, she would praise me when I did something good and bless me out when I did something wrong and she would do both with a smile. She tempered justice with love when it came to the students, recognizing that sometimes steps had to be taken to help a student with discipline, but always looking for ways to temper it. She loved the students of Saginaw Public Schools and the young people of the city of Saginaw. He said sitting here without her is going to be difficult, but I can hear her saying Coleman, just do it. Mrs. Thompson's death does not stop the contributions of this family to the community; it is just a pause.

There are times and places where you will see the Thompson family continuing to support and contribute to the greater Saginaw Community.

Dr. Coleman took the time to allow each person to have comments on Mrs. Mattie Thompson.

Ms. Henderson – said she knew Mrs. Thompson and her family through church. They were all from Vassar.

Mrs. Seals – shared that she has known Mattie for 50 years, that both of their husbands were on the school Board together, and that they attend the National Conferences. She mentioned how Mattie loved taking care of the children. She should be known as the Mother of the School District; she cared about the students of this district. Mrs. Seals said a famous phrase of Mattie would be “What do you think about this? Do you agree about that?” when she had information to share and needed support. Mrs. Seals, said that Mattie stood in the gaps for students who needed Prom Dresses or Suits, and Band funds; all will greatly miss her.

Ms. Pringle - said she was a very sweet lady, and glad to be seated on the Board with individuals who care about students and the community.

Ms. Rooker – said Mattie always greeted him with a hug at every meeting. She also encourages him to take classes.

Mrs. Nash - said she was 23 years old when she met Mrs. Thompson at the Friendship Games, where she would assist with families that needed assistance with housing. I appreciate working with her and her knowledge of the different subjects and materials. Mrs. Nash stated that Mattie was Love, Light, and Lighting, and she was the sparkliest thing in the room. Nobody ever forgot her. She shared that she remembered the first conference she went to; she came with bags of stuff from the exhibitors' booths to hand out to kids when she went to schools. She wanted the notepads, the balloons, the beach balls, the whistles, and whatever else she could find to pass on to kids. I think we had to pretend her bags were ours once or twice, so she could handle those things on the plane. She was never thinking just of herself. She said she is so grateful to have worked with her, to have grown with her, and to have known her most of my life here in Saginaw.

Ms. Calhoun – said she did not have as many years as others had with Mrs. Mattie, but she left a lifelong impression. She started as a colleague at this table and became a mentor. Ms. Calhoun stated she knew how to guide us and easily became everyone's favorite auntie. She shared how Mrs. Mattie did not play about the kids of this district, families or staff. Ms. Calhoun also mentioned Mrs. Mattie and her being known for at every conference she would always have all gather goodies to bring big bag back for her students. She also stated we will miss her for sure.

Ms. Ramakrishnan - said she did not know Mrs. Thompson that long, but during her time with her, she could tell that she had a really, really big heart, and she was an amazing person. Ms. Ramakrishnan remembered that every day when she came to the Board meetings, she would always ask if we wanted something to eat or drink. Mrs. Thompson would always compliment my outfits, too, which made me feel really special. She said she knew she would be missed by a lot of people because she had a big heart.

Ms. Knapp - stated she will be lonely again in the President's Award Club in Saginaw Public Schools. She shared how it was a lot of taking classes and work for her and Mrs. Thompson. Ms. Knapp shared how she enjoyed seated and watching Willie Thompson at the table on the behalf of students that were in Saginaw Public and at Delta. She shared it was nice to have Mrs. Thompson fill his shoes, so he would be here in spirit in his seat. Ms. Knapp re-shared that, we have 30 days to appoint someone and they do not mess with it because on the 31st day, if we have not appointed somebody, is turned over to the Intermediate School District to appoint. Therefore, we really have no choice. I have faith in the community and that servant leaders will step forward and help fill the issues and the seat. Thank you.

Dr. Roberts – said the “mother” reference keeps coming up in my notes. He said, it's kind of what I had. He said when I reflect on Mrs. Thompson, that's what comes to mind. He said he was raised in a household where the women, my mother and my grandmother, led the household and a single-parent household, obviously, but the women ran the household. He stated you often don't understand the wisdom that a mother nurtures with particularly when there are times where they have to be really firm. He said you don't understand that they're actually firm because they love you and they're really trying to steer you in a certain direction. Dr. Roberts said, early in my career, when I worked in the building and in my interactions with Mrs.

Thompson, she had to be firm because she was fighting either for a student or a family or a particular cause that was going on in the community. He said I didn't understand it, and fast forward, time always clears things up, and I come down here in an assistant superintendent position, but then ultimately as the superintendent, and Mrs. Thompson and I begin to interact more, and I begin to really understand the maternal instincts that Mrs. Thompson had for the students of this school district and ultimately this community, and how much she really loved the students in this community and how fierce she was in fighting for what was right for students and families and what was right for the community. I seen that early on, I obviously saw that at the Board, but when I became the superintendent, I began to see aspects of Mrs. Thompson that I did not get a chance to see when I worked in the buildings. He said, one, outside of her maternal instincts, was just her brilliance in terms of how she navigated issues in the community and at the Board table. Individuals with that maternal instinct understand how to deal with and through people. Dr. Roberts said she was a master at that. She was a master at working with people and working through people to get things done in a way that was based in love. He said so, as Mrs. Seals indicated for me, she will always be the maternal spirit of this district, the maternal spirit of this community. He said there is a void that we have now that I don't think will be filled. I think only Mrs. Thompson can do some of the things that Mrs. Thompson did. He said, I am thankful that I had an opportunity to work with her and learn from her and grow with her and the phenomenal things in the school district and in this community achieved with her. He said, I had that with her like much of you all, after Board meetings or before Board meetings or at conferences or sometimes phone calls, "Mother Thompson" will come out, you know, and Dr. Roberts, we got to do this. "Dr. Roberts, we got to do this. "Did you notice that? Did we do this? That ain't right. It ain't right, is it?" And I will say, no, it's not right, Mrs. Thompson, "And we do have to do something about it." He said he appreciated that. Dr. Roberts said, he come to understand Mrs. Mattie Thompson, the person, the Board member, but more importantly, the mother of Saginaw Public Schools, and she will forever be missed. So, he wants to thank the Thompson family for sharing her with us.

Dr. Coleman - shared her seat will be filled, but she will never be replaced. We have a short tribute, a short video of pictures of her time on the Board and with Board members. Dr. Coleman shared that the State requirement is to fill Mrs. Thompson's seat within 30 days of her death.

We will also take a moment this evening to recognize another huge loss to the Saginaw Public School community, our beloved "Coach T". Not too long ago, this Board decided that the gym at Saginaw Middle would be named in honor of Coach T, Marshall Thomas. We will share more of this tribute in the near future.

10. FINAL BOARD COMMENTS

11. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING(S)

There will be a Special Meeting of the Board - Interviews on Wednesday, December 3, 2025, at 5 pm., and a Policy and Curriculum of the Whole Meeting on Monday, December 8, 2025, at 5:00 p.m., and an Action Meeting on Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. The meetings will be held in the Board Room at the Administration Building, 550 Millard Street, Saginaw, MI, 48607.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no further business, the Action Meeting was adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Recorded by: K. Henderson