

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

GOVERNING BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING

Mingus Union High School Library
Thursday, January 8, 2026 6:00 PM

Governing Board:

Ms. Taylor Bell
Mr. Austin Babcock
Mr. Frank Nevarez
Mr. Will David

Also Present:

Meledy Herne – Superintendent
Kurt Steele – Acting Board Secretary

DRAFT

Meeting Called to Order: 6:00 PM

I. OPENING

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

President Bell - Here

Member Babcock - Here

Member Nevarez - Here

Member David - Here

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Moment of Silence

5. Adoption of Agenda

Motion to adopt the agenda as presented by Member Babcock, and seconded by Member Nevarez

President Bell - Aye

Member Babcock - Yes

Member Nevarez - Yes

Member David - Yes

Motion passes 4-0

II. 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.

1. Executive Session --The Board may call for a hearing pursuant to A.R.S. §15-843 and §38-431.03(A)(2) to meet in a hearing to consider whether a student should be disciplined, including expulsion, and to consider student records confidential by law.

Motion to go into Executive Session by Member David, and seconded by President Bell

President Bell - Aye

Member Babcock - Yes

Member Nevarez - Yes

Member David - Yes

Motion passes 4-0

Entered into Executive Session at: 6:03 PM

Exited Executive Session at: 6:11 PM

III. REPORTS

The Superintendent and Board Member(s) reports will consist of brief summaries of current events. These reports will be without any discussion or feedback.

1. Superintendent's Report

(the Superintendent's full report will be available on the District website)

Recognitions:

Lane Grant funds – for welding supplies and auto tech scanners.

Arizona National Livestock Show – 38 states represented with MUHS students taking Reserve Champion Overall Team and 2nd High Individual Horse Skill-A-Thon

Varsity Boys Basketball – Won the Mike Barr Memorial Tournament (6-0) and are 13-4 on the season.

Upcoming Events:

ATORT Production – Pride & Prejudice – Jan. 10, 11, 16 – 18

Course Fair/Course Selection – Jan 13

Future Freshman Night – Jan 13

Girls Soccer vs Prescott – Jan 13

Junior Advisory Assembly – Jan. 16

Academic Senate – Jan. 16

2. Board Member Report(s)

Board Members will report out on the ASBA/ASA Annual Conference and January 5th Staff Professional Development.

Member David – ASBA Conference are a must do for all Board members. He attended a number of the breakout sessions. The ones that stuck out for him included the “from Data to insight” provided by the Helios Corp in Phoenix. This will easily dovetail with the date we are getting from NWEA. Another one was about maximizing Superintendent tenure and how to boost administrator well-being. AI was also hot on the table. MUHS seems to be slightly ahead of the curve on this. Now how do we take advantage of the tool out there? Another excellent one was how do we defend public school in the current environment? Absenteeism was a hot topic and we will be working to track this more closely in the near future. He also had an opportunity to meet with a number of vendors. It was a well done conference, full of innovation and cooperation.

He also commented on the Professional Development day and said that it was full of data and focused on the NWEA and its enormous potential. He was impressed with the quartiles of student achievement and it allows us to work with each student where they are and move them along.

Member Nevarez said the conferences keep getting better. He sat with many Board Members and Superintendent from around the state and he found that many of the things we are going through, others have been there or are going thought it now. He felt encouraged. He was particularly impressed with how the Payson District reached out and touched the community. He hopes to stay in touch with them and feels we can learn from them.

In respect to the presentation of the data that Superintendent Herne provided and was excited about NWEA and how we can marry it with Edgenuity. He was very encouraged about all the data that was shared and the opportunities it presents.

President Bell attended the Data Presentation with Superintendent Herne and agreed that the NWEA tool is one of the more exciting things that we have taken on and allows us to intervene ahead of time so that we can help push them into the next quartile. She appreciate the presentation on the A-F, as it is a little difficult to understand if you’re not from the education world. Now that we have this tool, what is the action plan and how to best support the staff.

IV. BOARD MEETING MINUTES NOT PREVIOUSLY APPROVED

1. Meetings

December 11, 2025 General Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Minutes of the Dec. 11, 2025 General Meeting as presented by President Bell, seconded by Member Nevarez

President Bell - Aye

Member Babcock - Yes

Member Nevarez - Yes

Member David - Yes

Motion passes 4-0

V. 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)**.

There were no requests to speak

VI. ACTION ITEMS - CONSENT

1. Approval of Routine Vouchers

1. Expense

Voucher 1021

Voucher 1022

Voucher 1023

2. Payroll--

Voucher 17

Voucher 18

3. Bookstore Activity

Account Activity for December 2025

2. Personnel - HR Report

PA-1

PA-2

PA-3

PA-4

PA-5

3. Donation

Gail Milliken--Hope Center Donation

Hope Center December Report (Dec. 1-19, 2025).

4. Agreements

1. Paragon K9 Service Agreement

2. Agreement-- MUHS and Applejack Ranch 2025-2026 (Boys 2 Men changing to Applejack Ranch)

3. Sole Source-- ICEV Multi-Media

Motion to approve the Consent Items as presented by Member Babcock, and seconded by Member Nevarez

President Bell - Aye

Member Babcock - Yes

Member Nevarez - Yes

Member David - Yes

Motion approved 4-0

VII. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Data Review and Accountability Updates-- Data presentation on the FY2025 A-F Model and Data as well as Fall/Winter NWEA Benchmark Data (Superintendent Herne).

Superintendent Herne started out with brief history of the Arizona A-F Letter Grade System. There is Federal Legislation that say every school has to A) Must have a set of standards that they are teaching students, B) They must assess students at certain times, and then C) Display publicly how students are doing. The Arizona State Board of Education (AzSBE) own the A-F Model and task the AZ Department of Education (ADE) to craft and calculate the model. The cut scores for the assessments are done through ADE, but the cut scores for the A-F Model are done through AzSBE.

There are five assessment that go into the A-F model, ACT Aspire (9th graders), AzSCI (11th graders), ACT (11th graders), MSAA (11th graders) and AZELLA (AZ ELL Assessment). These require at least 10 students that fall into these categories and we must test 95% of the students that fall into those cohorts or we will get points deducted.

The traditional model looks as follows. 30% placed on Proficiency. ELL makes up 10% (AZELLA Growth and Proficiency), Graduation is 20% (Straight Graduation rate and then growth towards Graduation), Growth is 20%, College and Career Readiness is 20%

She talked next about the Proficiency pieces of the A-F System which is determined by the ACT and MSAA. She shared the State's formula and explained as long as you have valid English, Reading and Writing scores and if you do, you will get an ELA score. You get a weighted score based on the number of students that are in each proficiency category.

On the EL, we get points for the students that test at the proficient mark on the AZELLA test and then we get point for students that tested less than proficient, but they moved from the lower levels. The State of Arizona tends to do very well on how they move their ELL students. We are doing quite well there, not quite the 10% but we did well at 7%.

On the Graduation, there are also two categories that make up the score 1) Our straight Graduation rate which lags year behind, 2) And a look back at previous year's graduation rates (7 year lookback).

On the Growth area, the state looks at the ACT Aspire and looks for growth from a freshman year to a junior year. We got 15.1 points out of a possible 20 points total.

In the area of College and Career Readiness, this is a self-reporting category with a total of 20 points available. We tend to do well here. There are also bonus points for the ACT Aspire test and Exceptional Student Service students. Where we are not getting bonus points is on the AzSci and this is a result of us not getting to the 95% testing threshold.

Superintendent Herne next focused on the NWEA Benchmark Data. We now have Fall and Winter data in the areas of Language Usage, Science, Reading and Mathematics and she presented graphs that show the trend from Fall to Winter and then discussed the projected proficiency for the ACT testing and how does a teacher take this data and use it in their classroom to help the students meet or exceed their potential. She went on to explain the usage of NWEA's RIT Score and their Projected Growth, Observed Growth and School Conditional Growth Percentile. NWEA can use these scores to project how a student might perform on the ACT test. They say that student who score on their Spring NWEA tests in the 68-73 Percentile in Reading and 75-86 Percentile in Mathematics should hit about a 24 benchmark on the ACT. Looking at our 2027 cohort students, we see that 48% are in the proper percentile to do well and that we need to focus on the 26% that are in the 41st-60th percentile. She then went to the same charts for Reading with the same results.

How do we take all this data and make it useable as an educator?

Dr. Herne took one student's data and broke it out to see where their RIT scores stood and what were the areas they were struggling in and that they needed help in. She then went into Embark and looked at

what were some of the standards they were getting ready to be taught right now and saw how a small extra explanation or example could help this student in their areas of need. Every teacher can help the student with their areas of need without making major changes to the lesson plans.

She then went through several Achievement Status and Growth Summary quadrant charts and explained how to interpret them and use them to help move the students. She also included a chart that used the 75 Achievement Percentile.

Member Babcock questioned what were the overall points we received? Answer 77.95

Member David said that we are not that far from an A. We need to get the numbers up for a full 95% test takers. We also want to also have a monthly dashboard so that we can monitor trends and growth.

2. Administrative Information--Updates on MUHS information for the Spring 2026 semester (Staff: Principal Beery)

Principal Beery met with our couch from the Center for High School success and we are on track to graduate 96.1% and that is beyond our goal for this year. We are starting to see a change and an impact of all these new tools. He then went over what was happening in the next few months including Strategic Planning, Course Selection, NWEA Training, Yavapai County Liberian Visit.

Credit and Concept Recovery with FLEX and MyPath is also taking place. In the area of Vaping and Drugs, the Board approved the contract with Paragon that will bring trained dogs into the school to monitor drugs and electronics. We are continuing to work with MATFORCE.

We are working on our Cognia Accreditation and we are at mid-cycle.

We are continuing out test including the NWEA Benchmark in February, ACT Bootcamp

He share the Exam Schedule through the end of the school year and their effort to create a supportive daily schedule for the ACT Testing day

President Bell wanted to present Kudo for this plan. It address areas of concern for the Board. Appreciate how you are trying to optimize the testing schedule.

Member Babcock wanted to know what the ACT Bootcamp was. (practice tests, teacher help, address areas of need)

Member Nevarez wanted to know a little more MATFORCE. It helps with drug education and provide resources for families.

3. FY2026 Fall Discipline Data-- MUHS Administration will present first semester data (Principal Beery and Dean of Students Forbes).

Katherine Forbes focused on the more highly violated infractions during the first semester including Academic Dishonesty, Attendance, Technology, THC and Tobacco. She showed a graph that included referral data for the last four years (first semester). These are only written referrals, so there may be more as teachers handle many issues in their classroom. The Key Takeaways are 1) There are not being ignored, 2) We are doing what we can and building partnerships, 3) We are a Union school and we have 5 other districts that are feeding into us and handle these issues differently. 4) Building partnerships in the rural areas versus urban areas. 5) Developing a positive working relationship with families. 6) we are working to reduce the recidivism rate.

We use the Handbook and the discipline Matrix and it is key to discipline plan.

Attendance is a major issue and it is a focus. Academic Integrity is a second area of focus and the teachers include this in their syllabi. We also continue to have a strong push against substance abuse and work hard with our partners (SRO's, JPO, MATFORCE and PARAGONE). These are a constant learning experiences.

Principal Beery mentioned the cellphone policy and his experiences in the classroom. There seems to

be a good participation in the lower grades with the upper grades being held to a personal standard of self-responsibility.

President Bell wanted to know why, after putting in a cellphone policy are we seeing a rise in the technology referrals and Principal Berry said that it was because we now have a zero-tolerance policy. Member Babcock questioned the Attendance number. Ms. Forbes clarified that it could be a late to class or possibly missing a lunch which show up as attendance violations.

Member David asked if we have set a norm for referrals so that there is a standard across the board? Ms. Forbes answered that things like THC/Tobacco are hard referrals. Technology is also a clear cut referral. Classroom disruption are an area that teachers have the most leeway. Academic Dishonesty is another area where teachers have some give and take, but ultimately it will end in a referral most of the time. We want to support our teachers and how they run their classrooms. We do want to have referrals so that we have paper trail that could lead to a contract.

Dr. Herne said that the Handbook is the guide.

4. 2026-2027 Course Catalog - Presentation on the 2026-2027 MUHS Course Catalog. (Staff

Resource: Director Wesbrock and Principal Berry)

Director Wesbrock said that the Board should have received a copy of the proposed course catalog. We are required to have one and are bound by state requirements for certain courses. We then have the additional courses that can act as a draw for anyone looking to move to a more rural community. Our school has a lot of elective and CTE offerings along with our honors and AP courses. The additional courses that the Board approved are not in this catalog and VEAC course are included in here. We are planning grade level assemblies where we give all the students their transcript, so they can see where they are at and that their academics belong to them.

Course selection begins next week. The following week we will work with students with their four year plans. Later the students will go in to Naveance and select their courses. How do we move undecided students? All student must have an E-Cap plan and we work with the students. We will have our Future Freshman Night and the buzz is out there.

Then we have Marauder for a day that will be held in February. 8th graders will come to campus and work with our Elite crew (Jr's and Sr's).

After all this, we will go into Master Schedule Planning that drives many areas like hiring and classroom assignments.

Member David asked if there was a course in the catalog, then we will have a teacher available to teach this. The answer was yes. Core get primary focus.

Member David asked why do we start our science curriculum with Physical Science and not Biology? Answer was that this was a decision informed by the Science Department because if they started with biology, that students didn't have enough other science background when they took the ACT. Dr. Herne said she does not support this Physical Science course and start our students out in Biology. The state does not put the ACT Science directly into the model. The AzSCI is in the model based on bonus points, but we don't tend to get them because we don't meet the 95% tested threshold.

Member David suggested Forensics and Astronomy.

5. ASBA Board Self-Evaluation

Step I What Do You See

Step II What Does the Data Suggest

Step III Identify Goal Areas from the Lists Generated

Step IV Build Two or Three Goals using the SMART Goal Framework

Superintendent Herne started the discussion off suggesting that we look at the data is to come up with two or three SMART Goals. What do you see, what does the data suggest and this will help us generate our SMART Goals. We use SMART Goal throughout the District and they are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-Bound. She gave an example of a potential goal. What are some of the things that the Board sees and can identify as potential goals as a Governance team?

President Bell felt that we have not have enough strategic conversations as a board over areas like Open Meeting Law. In addition to going to conferences, we should have the opportunity to have more regular conversations about how we put things into practice, how we communicate with one another, how do we execute some of the things that we want to accomplish.

Member David when the team goes to conferences we sit together and learn as a team because we have professional all around us.

Member Nevarez looked at the data and came with his SMART Goal of continuing development training. A second goal would be a personal one-to-one with peers for accountability. For a third Goal he chose a one-to-one with the Superintendent. He feels that as a Board, these three areas need to be worked on.

Member Babcock said that his view of the data showed that we have an opportunity with the Strategic Plan. So that one of our goals is to get the plan in place and then checking in several times a year on how we are doing with it.

Member Nevarez also added the he planned to attend all future ASBA trainings and felt that it should be mandatory for all Board members

Member David reiterated that he wants to see the monthly dashboard and Dr. Herne said she had that down as one of our objectives.

Superintendent Herne said she agreed with member Babcock on the Dashboard and the Strategic Plan. She also liked Member Nevarez's three ideas. We agree with three goals with one being the Strategic Plan. She reviewed some of the other goals.

Member Babcock liked the idea of a retreat (professional development)

The Superintendent will put these ideas in SMART Goals form and send them out to the Board members for their input and we will determine the final goals at our next meeting.

VIII. ACTION ITEMS - DISTRICT BUSINESS

1. Selection of the 2026 Governing Board President - The Board will consider and appoint a President for the 2026 Calendar Year. (Staff Resource: Superintendent Herne)

Member David brought up his concern about the timeline for a replacement Board Member.

Motion to elect Ms. Taylor Bell as the Board President by Member Nevarez, and seconded by Member Babcock.

President Bell - Yes

Member Babcock - Yes

Member Nevarez - Yes

Member David - No

Motion passes 3-1

2. Selection of the 2026 Governing Board Vice-President - The Board will consider and appoint a Vice-President for the 2026 Calendar Year. (Staff Resource: Superintendent Herne)

Motion to elect Mr. Frank Nevarez as the Board Vice President by Member Babcock, and seconded by President Bell

President Bell - Yes

Member Babcock - Aye

Member Nevarez - Aye

Member David - No

Motion passes 3-1

3. Determination of the 2026 Regular Board Meeting schedule of the Governing Board - The Board will consider and approve a 2026 Meeting Schedule. (Staff Resource: Superintendent Herne)

Superintendent Herne explained the statute and reviewed the specifics of the Board Meeting Schedule.

Motion to accept the 2026 Regular Board meeting schedule by Member Babcock, and seconded by Member Nevarez

President Bell - Aye

Member Babcock - Yes

Member Nevarez - Yes

Member David Yes

Motion passes 4-0

IX. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No requests for future agenda item were put forth

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by President Bell, and seconded by Member Nevarez

President Bell - Aye

Member Babcock - Yes

Member Nevarez - Yes

Member David - Yes

Motion passes 4-0

Meeting Adjourned at: 8:29 PM

Board President

Vice President