

**Board of Education
April 15, 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, Dr. Delores Myers, Ms. Lynne Cowart, Mr. Randy VanAntwerp

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ADMINISTRATION/STAFF: Dr. Dedrick Martin, Mr. Tom Zahrt, Ms. Mindy Miller, Mr. Scott Thomas, Mr. Brian Schupbach, Mr. Eric Stewart, Ms. Sarah Mansberger, Ms. Paige Daniels, Mr. Bryan Zocher, Ms. Angela Telfer, Ms. Stephanie Brown, Ms. Rachel Roberts, Ms. Meredith Lewis, Ms. Sandy Barry-Loken, Ms. Shelley Hawthorne, Mr. Chad Howard, Ms. Jordan Stripling, Ms. Meghan Haas, Mr. Shelby Bishop, Ms. Kate Yancho, Mr. Kyle Shack Ms. Michelle Triemstra and Ms. Jackie Martell

OTHERS PRESENT:

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments

III. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes – March 18, 2025
- B. Approval of New Hire
- C. Approval of PAC Meeting Minutes – March 13, 2025
- D. Approval of Monthly Financial Report
- E. Approval of Head Start Financial Report
- F. Approval of 2025 -2026 Updated Calendars.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

A. Program Improvement & Accountability Continuous Improvement Update – Shelly Hawthorne

The continuous improvement update for the Program Improvement & Accountability program was presented.

B. Young Adult Program Continuous Improvement Update – Chad Howard & Jordan Stripling

The continuous improvement update for the Young Adult Program was presented.

C. Valley Center Continuous Improvement Update – Meghan Haas & Shelby Bishop

The continuous improvement update for Valley Center was presented.

V. CENTER OF EXCELLENCE UPDATE

A. Early Childhood Update – Mindy Miller & Rachel Roberts

KRESA'S Kalamazoo County Great Start Collaborative's Highlights were attached to the board agenda.

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 – Mindy Miller & Angela Telfer

KRESA programs are making significant progress in implementing Ukeru as the primary response technique for managing student dysregulation, with impressive outcomes in reducing seclusion and restraint. WoodsEdge Learning Center, Young Adult Program, and Valley Center School have fully embraced Ukeru, while one KRESA Specialized Instructional Services (KSIS) classroom began its implementation in February. Plans are in place for all KSIS classrooms to adopt Ukeru fully by the fall of 2025. The attached graphs illustrate data trends for each program, including this school year's data to date. Behavior Incident Forms provide detailed documentation of instances involving significant disruptive behavior, such as hitting, kicking, property destruction, leaving the building without permission, or spitting. This year, out of 3,505 behavior incidents reported across the district, only 3% required brief seclusion and 1% required brief restraint, highlighting the effectiveness of Ukeru.

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

- Career Connect Campus: The journey of building the Career Connect Campus has transformed from a marathon into a sprint. As the final touches are being applied to the building, the extensive equipment we've purchased is now being installed throughout the facility. Our staff is eagerly preparing to move in, with full occupancy expected to be granted in early May. The excitement is building as we near this milestone!
- New EFA Administrator: We are excited to welcome Kate Yancho as KRESA's new EFA Administrator, succeeding Bryan Zocher upon his retirement in June. Kate brings a deep passion for the arts, extensive expertise, and proven leadership developed over years of experience both within our community and beyond. Most recently, she served as the Executive Director of Wellspring Dance Academy, and she is also an active member of the Michigan Arts and Culture Council and the Michigan Dance Council. We are thrilled to welcome Kate to the team and look forward to the incredible impact she will make!
- Xello Update: The Career Awareness and Exploration team continues to strengthen its collaboration with local districts to support and increase Xello usage. By the end of March, there were over 80,000 Xello logins during the 2024-2025 school year, nearly matching the total of 81,024 logins for the entire 2023-2024 school year. This year Career Development Consultants have introduced PowerHours, one-hour virtual professional learning sessions, to further support Xello usage across the county. These sessions are designed to provide educators with resources to integrate Xello as a tool for connecting academics, skills, and careers. The 2025-2026 PowerHour series will focus on the alignment between Xello and the recently updated Michigan Career Development Model.
- New Assistant Principal for Instruction: We are excited to welcome Kyle Shack as the Career Connect Campus Assistant Principal of Instruction. Kyle brings a wealth of experience and passion for education to our team. Currently serving as an Assistant Principal at Kalamazoo Central High School, he also teaches as an adjunct faculty member in Michigan State University's Educational Technology Program. He has served previously as a Social Studies teacher at Loy Norrix High School, Allegan Alternative High School, and Urban Prep Academy in Chicago. We look forward to welcoming Kyle to the team and to the incredible learning his expertise will inspire!

D. Educator Supports Update – Mindy Miller & Stephanie Brown

The Behavior Support Specialists (previously known as the Intensive Support Team) are new to the Educator Supports Department at KRESA this year. The Behavior Support Specialists provide both direct and indirect support to students, teachers, and support staff. This is accomplished by partnering with staff to implement evidence-based interventions, behavioral strategies, and support plans to promote positive behavior and academic success. In collaboration with educators, support staff, and administrators, Behavior Support Specialists help create and maintain a structured, supportive learning environment where students can thrive. Their primary goal is to assist local district teams

in implementing effective strategies that enable students to succeed in their least restrictive environment. This school year, there have been exciting changes to the structure of the team. When the Behavior Specialist team was first established in April 2018, their support was limited to students with IEPs. As of September 2024, the team has extended its support to both students with and without IEPs with the idea of providing more proactive support for students. Here's a structured list of the supports Behavior Support Specialists provide: (not comprehensive)

- Consultation & Coaching: Work with building teams to address behavior concerns for individual students, with and without IEPs.
- Behavioral Observations: Conduct observations to assess student behavior and environmental factors.
- Data Collection & Analysis: Develop tracking systems, analyze behavioral data, and adjust interventions accordingly.
- Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) & Positive Behavior Support Plans (PBSPs): Train staff and assist in developing and implementing these plans.
- Behavior Intervention Strategies: Implement and model evidence-based behavior strategies to promote positive student outcomes.
- Action Planning: Collaborate with local teams to develop and execute behavior support plans.
- Fidelity Checks: Monitor the consistency and effectiveness of behavior intervention plans.

- Professional Development: Train local staff on the basics of behavior and effective intervention strategies. Some of the training we provide in local buildings are Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA's) and Positive Behavior Support Plans (PBSP's), Basics of Behavior, and Fundamentals of Behavior. Districts also request training in specific areas to meet the needs of their staff.

- Collaboration & Support: Work with educators, administrators, and support staff to create a structured and supportive learning environment.

- Student Data (as of March 2025) for the 2024-2025 school year:
 - Number of referrals received for students with IEP's: 21
 - Number of referrals received for students without IEP's: 16
 - Total number of individual student cases (students with IEP's and without IEP's): 37
 - Total number of students remaining in the current local placement: 35
 - Total number of classrooms supported: 11
 - Total number of cases (classroom and individual students): 48

E. Operational Supports Update

1. Technology & Operations Report – Brian Schupbach

Technology

We are pleased to announce that we will be adding Allegan Public Schools to our SW MiTech consortium following a unanimous decision by the APS Board on April 10.

Purchasing of technology items approved for the Career Connect Campus is about 70% complete. We expect to have temporary occupancy by April 1 and will begin to install larger equipment at that time. Smaller items will be installed at full occupancy in early May.

Facilities

Earlier this month, we held our final facilities master planning meeting with Eckert-Wordell. Later this fiscal year, we look forward to the results of this work to support our vision of KRESA Centers of Excellence.

Installation and programming for the HVAC controls project with Miller-Davis and the vendor ICS is 90% complete and is on schedule.

2. Deputy Superintendent Update – Tom Zahrt, Sandy Barry-Loken & Meredith Lewis

Human Resources

- Employee Contract Renewal Process – The HR Department is currently managing the Employee Contract Renewal Process for all nonbargaining employees. This includes updating the 2025–26 work calendars and pay schedules in the PowerSchool system to ensure accurate contract details. HR also collaborates with Administrators together employee performance data and any exceptions that may impact contract decisions. The department is actively preparing for the distribution of new contracts, which is scheduled for May 30.
- Special Education Paraprofessional Pathway Rollout - The HR Department is leading the rollout of the new Special Education Paraprofessional Pathway to ensure a smooth transition for all affected employees. HR is developing a comprehensive presentation to explain the new process and will conduct in-person sessions with all impacted paraprofessionals to provide clarity and answer questions. Additionally, HR is working closely with administrators to evaluate individual performance and accurately place each paraprofessional on the appropriate step of the new Grade 12 pay schedule.

Communications & Community Engagement

- **Grant Award to the Print Center**
We were thrilled that our recent grant request was fully funded by the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation for \$160,000 to support the purchase of two new pieces of equipment for the KRESA Print Center. These dollars will assist us in purchasing a new black and white copier, and a wide-format printer that will allow us to print large banners and signage in-house. We are in the process of securing bids through vendors and expect to submit a request for purchase approval in the months ahead.
- **Brand Refresh**
Updates In partnership with Human Resources, we completed 13 internal presentations to introduce all staff to the updated KRESA brand and the newly approved Culture & Belonging Roadmap. We continue to update brand elements – print pieces, letterhead, signage and more. Be sure to order your new KRESA apparel featuring our updated brand per the recent email shared. The deadline for ordering is 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, April 20th .
- **Outstanding Achievement Awards** We look forward to seeing you at the annual Outstanding Achievement Awards. Over 70 learners will be honored at our 2025 event. Outstanding Achievement Awards – April 30, 2025 | 7:15 - 10 a.m. at the Radisson Plaza Hotel
- **Website Redevelopment**
Redevelopment of the KRESA and KRESA Foundation websites is underway. We aim to launch the new website by the Back-to-School Breakfast.

Deputy Superintendent

- **Facilities Master Planning** – The next step in the planning process we tasked our architects with when last we met is to provide an order of magnitude cost estimate to Renovate West Campus, Renovate Service Center, and build out a space downtown in alignment with a proposed plan for the Superintendent along with KRESA leadership team to consider. We will continue to use our CFO to review the draft plan for feasibility.
- **Union Negotiations** – We continue to meet with the CTE Instructors' Union negotiating in good faith. We have countered their second proposal to add a grievance procedure and to include a wage proposal for the same as our board approved for 2025-26. We will meet April 17th to hear their next proposal.
- **Career Center Construction** – We have begun moving furniture into the building and Eric Stewart's team has begun moving some equipment in as well. Most building overhead inspections have been conducted and approved. We are completing countertops, floor covering, and railings throughout the building preparing for construction cleaning, touchups, and punch lists.

- KRESA Foundation – I have been supporting the fund development work for the foundation securing donations in support of our Centers of Excellence. Recently, we secured a \$100K donation for the auto program from a major car dealer in our area.

VI. Superintendent Report – Dr. Dedrick Martin

- Career Connect Campus Plaque: Attached you will find a draft of the Career Connect Campus plaque. This plaque should be ready by the open house date and placed near the entrance of the building. Additionally, there will be an enormous dedication wall honoring the Anonymous Donor as well as other major financial donors. The plaque is in the process of being priced and the Donor wall will begin taking shape this summer and will be ready for the opening of school. I will send an email of the donor wall PowerPoint that may provide an understanding of how the wall will look, recognize donors and grow over the years. If you have any questions or input that you would like to share, please feel free to contact myself or Sandy.
- Certification under Title VI in Exchange for Federal Funding: On April 3rd, the Michigan Department of Education received a certification request from the U.S. Department of Education. This certification request is framed as a reminder to all State and Local Educational Agencies (SEAs/LEAs) of their binding legal obligations with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 when receiving federal financial assistance. Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin, is a mandatory condition for funding. According to the U.S. Department of Education, all agencies are now required to certify that they have read and understood these obligations and are fully compliant as a precondition for funding. Additionally, in light of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, the U.S. Department of Education has positioned that the use of race-conscious practices in educational programs, including certain Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, may violate Title VI. The Court clarified that race-based actions are only permissible under extremely narrow exceptions, and even then, must meet strict scrutiny standards. Continued use of impermissible DEI practices can result in severe consequences, such as loss of federal funding, civil litigation for breach of contract, and liability under the False Claims Act. Under the original email sent to the department of Education, MDE should sign this agreement on behalf of all schools in the state of Michigan. A follow-up email has given the department an additional 10 days to sign this letter and devise a system to have each SEA/LEA certify their compliance or face potential loss of funding. To date, MDE has not signed off on the certification request and has instead submitted a letter to the U.S. DOE indicating that Michigan is already in compliance with all applicable non-discrimination laws. This has set up a potential showdown between states that have already refused to sign the certification agreement and potential loss of federal funding. We are awaiting to see if there are

further developments that would require each district to sign something from MDE and will consult with our attorney as needed.

- Resolution E: The Michigan Department of Education recently opposed the House Joint Resolution E, which seeks to transfer the board's authority to hire the state superintendent to the governor. A few existing board members have argued that this transfer would negatively affect Michigan's public-school students and give too much power to governors. The board resolution states that frequent changes in education policy due to governors' four-year terms would lead to confusion and frustration among school officials. The resolution also mentions that newly elected governors might focus on short-term, flashy education policies harmful to longterm educational success. House Joint Resolution E requires approval by two-thirds of both the House and Senate to be put before voters in the next even-numbered November election, which would be in 2026. If approved, the State Board of Education would maintain authority over hiring or replacing the state superintendent until January 1, 2027, when Gretchen Whitmer's term as governor ends. However, at this time, it is viewed as unlikely to pass.

VII. Thrun Law Notes

A. Correspondence/Informational

VIII. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION

A. Approve of 2025-2026 Board of Education Calendar.

Mr. Webster moved, Mr. VanAntwerp supported the approval of the 2025-2026 Board of Education Calendar.

Motion carried unanimously.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Cowart
Board Secretary

Jackie Martell
Recording Secretary

Minutes Approved on