

**Board of Education
June 17, 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. Eric Stewart, Ms. Sarah Mansberger, Ms. Paige Daniels, Ms. Stephanie Brown, Ms. Angela Telfer, Ms. Rachel Roberts, Ms. Meredith Lewis, Ms. Sandy Barry-Loken, Ms. Bethany Foote, Mr. Kyle Fall, Ms. Diane Fort, Ms. Lisa Bartell, Mr. Bryan Zocher, and Ms. Jackie Martell

OTHERS PRESENT:

I. CALL TO ORDER- Budget Hearing

Mr. Knowles called the budget hearing to order at 4:55 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments

III. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes – May 20, 2025
- B. Approval of Board of Education Closed Meeting Minutes – May 20, 2025
- C. Approval of Board of Education Biennial Election Minutes – June 2, 2025
- D. Approval of New Hire
- E. Approval of New Position
- F. Approval of May PAC Minutes
- G. Approval of Monthly Financial Report
- H. Approval of Head Start Financial Report

Mr. VanAntwerp moved; Mr. Webster supported approving the consent agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

A. Career Connect Campus Quarterly Update

A quarterly update was provided on the Career Connect Campus.

**B. Career Connect Ignite Continuous Improvement Update – Sarah Mansberger,
Bryan Zocher, Diane Fort and Lisa Bartell**

The continuous improvement update for the Career Connect Ignite was presented.

V. CENTER OF EXCELLENCE UPDATE

A. Early Childhood Update –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 –Angela Telfer

KRESA Special Education Program Outcomes Report

Throughout the school year, all KRESA Special Education Programs have maintained a strong focus on identified program outcomes, ensuring continuous improvement and student success. Attached, you will find a comprehensive overview of each program's progress over time.

This year, significant strides have been made in multiple areas, including:

- A reduction in student suspensions
- Increased success in transitioning students to a less restrictive learning environment
- A higher number of students engaging in work-based learning
- A higher number of students participating in the community

These improvements reflect the ongoing commitment to providing high-quality special education services and fostering positive student outcomes across all programs.

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

Career Connect Campus: We are pleased to welcome Mark Palmer to the team as the new Interim Principal for the campus. Mark brings with him a wealth of experience in secondary school leadership, along with a strong background in a variety of significant educational roles.

- Education Reconnection: This year, our High School Diploma Program supported 12 students from five local high schools. We proudly celebrated three graduates, with the remaining students continuing toward graduation next year.

For summer credit recovery, we received over 130 applications. We will begin the summer session with 52 students and will admit additional students from the waitlist as space becomes available.

Starting this fall, our Education Reconnection teacher, Onika Powell, will spend two days per week at the Career Connect Campus, in addition to her time at the downtown campus. This expanded presence will enhance credit recovery and tutoring support for CTE students, promoting greater access and success in their courses.

D. Educator Supports Update –Stephanie Brown

Each spring, Educator Supports connects with districts to reflect on the past year's services and plan for the upcoming year. By June, every district in the county has collaborated with us to develop a customized plan of service, incorporating literacy coaching through the early literacy grant and additional supports based on individual needs. Next year, we'll continue supporting all in-county districts while expanding our reach to at least five out-of-county districts, with potential for further growth.

While all service plans include literacy coaching and continuous improvement support, they are tailored to fit each district's specific needs. These plans may involve curriculum review and adoption (across multiple subjects), math, social studies, science, multilingual supports, culture and climate, data and assessment, engagement, and behavior supports. Our consultants' caseloads are shaped by these service plans, ensuring ongoing collaboration with districts to refine and implement strategies that meet their evolving needs.

E. Operational Supports Update

1. Business Services Update – Scott Thomas

Michigan law requires that public schools adopt their annual budgets before July 1. A school district must also hold a budget hearing prior to adopting the budget to levy its full millage rates.

Included for action please find the proposed 2025-2026 projected budgets and 2025 tax levy resolution.

Also included please find the 2024-2025 final budgets.

2. Deputy Superintendent Update – Tom Zahrt

Union Negotiations – We received the results of the union decertification vote for the CTE Instructors and the group's majority elected to have MEA representation. We will schedule the next round of negotiations to pick up where we left off.

Career Center Construction – We are in the process of creating punch lists for all the major building systems and categories so we can begin to take care of any open issues related to the construction of the career center. We are finishing up the fire code corrections required to obtain full occupancy and hope to achieve that by July 1. Recent studies show that 85-90% of construction projects end up over budget averaging 39.7% over budget. We project we will end up 1 year behind schedule and 17% over budget.

Retirement Transition – I retire confident that my work has been handed off to capable and competent professionals. I leave KRESA better than I found it and on the right track to get even better.

3. Communications & Community Engagement – Sandy Barry Loken

Career Connect Campus Ribbon Cutting and Community Grand Opening Events

Thank you for your role in the May 22nd Career Connect Campus events. The events were a tremendous success with over 2,000 community members in attendance throughout the day. By all accounts, we heard rave reviews about the campus and the opportunities it will offer our students and the broader community. We also enjoyed significant media coverage before and after the event. See some highlights below.

Career Connect Campus Media Coverage | May 2025

- NowKalamazoo – Sneak Peak: KRESA's new Career Connect Campus
- WOOD TV – New Kalamazoo County career center offers teens hands-on learning
- WKZO | Everything Kalamazoo | 590 AM · 106.9 FM
<https://share.google/JTeduwl8iefBs4nz>
- WWMT – KRESA opens Career Connect Campus, boosting education and workforce in Kalamazoo
- MLive - Kalamazoo's new \$100M school building has full-size car repair shop, mock hospital room
- 102.5|104.9 The Block Career Connect Center Opens in Kalamazoo to Expand Opportunities
- Second Wave Media – Voices of Youth: Inside KRESA's Career Connect Campus – a new era for career education
- Building Indiana Business – KRESA Career Connect Campus Opens in Kalamazoo
- MLive - See video inside new \$100M 'launchpad for learning' in Kalamazoo County

Campus Tours

We are receiving significant requests from the community for additional opportunities to tour the campus. We're planning on bimonthly opportunities for individuals to sign up for a tour in July and August, and additional opportunities throughout the school year. Details will be available on our website soon.

4. Human Resources Update – Meredith Lewis

Employee Contract Renewal Process

The HR Department continues making progress on the Employee Contract Renewal Process for all non-bargaining employees. All non-bargaining employees received their 2025-26 contracts on May 30, 2025 and have been asked to return signed contracts by June 13, 2025.

Culture and Belonging Team

The Director of Culture and Belonging (C&B) is in the process of meeting with each administrator to review HumanEx culture survey results and discuss continuous improvement plans related to C&B for the 2025-26 school year. The information gathered in these meetings will inform Admin meeting content, professional development sessions, and systems work.

5. Technology & Operations Update – Brian Schupbach

Onboarding Allegan Public Schools into our SW MiTech Consortium started this month. By the end of the month, all network, applications and systems will be fully transitioned.

For the Career Connect Campus, work on operationalizing new technology systems and student-oriented applications such as Meal Magic and Go Guardian are actively underway. Audio-visual systems at the Career Connect Campus are currently at about 50% functionality but should be fully functional by the end of July.

Starting in July, the project to improve emergency notification and paging will begin at WoodsEdge Learning Center, Commons, Valley Center, and West Campus locations. This system will match the system at the CCC and will create a unified clock/bell/public address that can provide audible and visual alerts in emergency situations.

VI. Superintendent Report – Dr. Dedrick Martin

Budget Discussions Heating Up

On the evening of June 11th, the House Fiscal Agency provided an analysis of the proposed House FY 26 School Aid Budget. This house budget proposal has come out very late in the game and will make the likelihood of our state passing an education budget before the end of our fiscal year extremely unlikely. The budget that was proposed by the house along party lines is a massive departure from previous budgets in a number of ways. Given the lateness of this budget and the time of this communication, we have not had enough time to do a detailed review. I was able to attend a statewide zoom meeting regarding a number of concerns expressed by several educational organizations shortly before the house proposal was passed. While the proposal does increase the Foundation Allowance by \$417 to a base of \$10,025; the devil is in the details on how they plan to achieve the increased student funding. Some quick high-level items of note during our initial glance:

- Provides an additional \$1,975 per pupil to a total of \$12,000. To reach this level of funding, they are rolling up numerous categorical line items and eliminating those specific projects and initiatives. (See examples below)
- Shifts an additional \$1 billion School Aid Fund resources to Higher Education (eroding the School Aid rainy day funds).
- Eliminates the MPSERS Rate Reduction provisions built into this year's budget and increases the rate back to 20.96%.
- At-Risk funding remains flat and eliminating needed some vital will create fiscal problems for some small and rural districts with some critical categorical eliminations.

Some of the items that we know are rolled up in the funding to create the additional revenue:

- Universal meals
- 31aa (mental health & safety)
- Early childhood block grants
- Early literacy teachers and added instruction time
- Rural transportation funding
- Adult education
- State and benchmark assessments
- Career and tech ed payments
- CTE early college/dual enrollment
- Special ed ISD millage equalization and special ed millage incentive
- State and benchmark assessments and
- Grow Your Own funds, just to name a few.

While eliminating categorical funding can raise the per pupil amount to \$12,000, it sweeps money from programs designed to help specific populations in larger districts with higher needs, as well as small and rural districts. This approach redistributes money to all schools, including charters and private schools, like a reverse Robin Hood approach. Essentially making the charters and private schools the largest potential winners.

I hope to have more clarity on parts of this proposal by the BOE meeting. The good thing is this is not the final budget, it's more of a very late start for the conversation between the House, Senate and the Governor's office on the final budget.

State Budget Discussion

I have been invited by State Representative Matt Longjohn to the upcoming townhall discussion on the impact of the budget proposals on KRESA and schools. This townhall community conversation will be held on Monday, June 16th from 5:30 – 7 p.m. at the Portage Zhang Senior Center. I have also included Scott Thomas and Mindy Miller to attend with me so that we can provide a more complete view from the perspective of fiscal and programmatic impacts on schools.

VII. Thrun Law Notes

A. Correspondence/Informational

VIII. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION

A. Approval of 2024-2025 Final Budget Resolutions

Mr. VanAntwerp moved, Mr. Webster supported the approval of the 2024-2025 Final Budget Resolutions.

Mr. Webster– yes, Dr. Myers – yes, Mr. VanAntwerp– yes, Ms. Cowart– yes, Mr. Knowes– yes

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of 2025-2026 Projected Preliminary Budget Resolutions

Ms. Cowart moved, Dr. Myers supported the approval of the 2025-2026 Projected Preliminary Budget Resolutions.

Mr. Webster– yes, Dr. Myers – yes, Mr. VanAntwerp– yes, Ms. Cowart– yes, Mr. Knowes– yes

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Approval of 2025 Tax Levy Resolution

Mr. Webster moved, Dr. Myers supported the approval of 2025 Tax Levy Resolution.

Mr. Webster— yes, Dr. Myers – yes, Mr. VanAntwerp— yes, Ms. Cowart— yes, Mr. Knowes-
yes

Motion carried unanimously.

IX.ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Cowart
Board Secretary

Jackie Martell
Recording Secretary

Minutes Approved on