

# Minutes of Regular Meeting

## The Board of Education Jenison Public Schools

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A regular meeting of the Board of Education of Jenison Public Schools was held on Monday, December 8, 2025, beginning at 6:30 pm in the Jenison Center for the Arts Boardroom.

**Call to Order:**

President of the Board of Education, Dr. Hartman, called the Jenison Public Schools Board of Education meeting to order at 6:30 pm, following a brief break after the SEAB Hearing.

**Members Present:**

Eric Hartman, DC,  
President

William Waalkes,  
Vice President

Chris Reed, PhD,  
Treasurer

Jen Postema,  
Secretary

Jennifer Griffin, DPM  
Trustee

Shannon Hogan,  
Trustee

Donna Mooney  
Trustee

**Others Present:**

Brandon Graham, PhD,  
Superintendent

Leslie Philipps,  
Assistant Superintendent /  
Title IX Coordinator

Christine Marcy,  
Director of Finance and  
Operations

Michael Leiter, PhD,  
High School Principal

Katie Moy,  
Chief of Staff

**Recognition:** Esports Program

Dr. Graham shared that providing extracurricular opportunities for students has been a district goal, and the Esports group is one such opportunity developed in recent years. Esports involves organized, competitive video gaming, similar to traditional sports, where individuals or teams compete online or in person at events.

Dr. Leiter expressed excitement for the program and introduced the Esports coaches, Alex Beach and Taylor Herber. Although it is a young program, it has grown to four teams. One team earned second place at an MSU tournament, and the JV team won the state title today. The newest team, Mario Kart, is in its first season and placed 16th. The Smash Bros team recently had an in-person match at the high school media center and beat Grandville. The team won 3-0 and earned a spot in the quarterfinals at MSU. Esports offers significant scholarship opportunities, totaling billions of dollars, with nearly \$6 million awarded in the past year alone. Students recognized were: C. Barkell, L. Brechting, L. Dewinter, C. Fennema, J. Hekman, X. Jarchow, A. Louzon, J. Marion, G. McQueen, Z. Moore, E. Palma, J. Penwell, W. Schelhaas, and K. Skipp

Dr. Graham added that the district is very proud of the Esports teams and grateful for the opportunities it provides students to participate and succeed.

**Recess:**

Dr. Hartman called a recess at 6:35 pm to congratulate the individuals recognized.

**Reconvene:**

The meeting reconvened at 6:40 pm.

**Public Comment:**

Ashley Rottman (11078 56th Ave, Allendale) - She provided the Board with an update from the Wilderness Academy, noting it has been an exciting month. With one Wilderness Academy's teachers on maternity leave, parents have been trying to help the long-term sub. The group held another cleanup day and accomplished a significant amount of work, and also hosted a Soup and Swap night where participants shared soup and exchanged clothing and outdoor gear. The greenhouse is now in use, and the group expressed special thanks to Jason Lerg and Principal O'Connell for their support in preparing the space. More than 1,200 plants have been planted in the pollinator garden, with sincere appreciation to Megan Nollett for her leadership in bringing that project together. On December 15, the Wilderness Academy will host a Culver's Night fundraiser. Additionally, the Wilderness Academy's Advancement Committee will be meeting with the Administration to discuss requested student supports, including transportation, student transitions, and additional opportunities such as JIA programming. The group also shared its hope to continue advocating for expansion of the program into later grades and expressed gratitude for the District's ongoing collaboration and support.

Erin Vanoss (7748 Park Ridge Dr SW, Jenison) - She shared that she is a parent of a second-grade Wilderness Academy student and asked the District to consider the proposals being discussed for second graders, particularly for the 2026–2027 school year. She emphasized the importance of an outdoor program to families, noting that the group specifically chose JPS for this opportunity. She inquired about placement options, including the possibility of keeping many Wilderness Academy students together, and asked for the District to help with the requested transition supports. These include transportation, before and after-school care, and solutions for families with multiple children, including younger siblings in the program. She also encouraged the District to continue exploring the expansion of the program beyond the second grade.

Emily Burton (no address given) - She shared that she is a parent of a Wilderness Academy student and, while she generally discourages excessive screen time, she wanted to congratulate the students participating in the Esports program and acknowledge the opportunities it provides. She shared and read a letter to the Board. She reiterated the desire to expand the Wilderness Academy program through fourth grade, noting that she currently has a second grader and a preschooler. Her family has been thrilled with the program and frequently praises it to others, and she emphasized that many participating families also have children in younger grades and hope to see the program continue to grow. She noted that, nationwide, parents are seeking well-rounded educational experiences that provide practical, hands-on learning and help build resiliency. While today's children are growing up in an increasingly digital world, she cited well-documented concerns about excessive screen time, including reduced motivation and limited creative thinking among grade school students. Engaged parents, she said, are looking to be part of the solution, and interest in nature-based education is rising. She pointed out that many districts in the area offer outdoor education options, with some families turning to private programs to meet this need. She described outdoor education as one of the most exciting and desirable programs a district can offer and expressed confidence that, by staying at the forefront of this movement, JPS can continue to be a leader in this type of education. She concluded by stating that this is a committed group of parents who want the long-term success of the program beyond the early years and through fourth grade, and they are ready to assist the District in that effort.

Dr. Hartman thanked the public for their time and comments provided to the Board of Education.

## Approval of Agenda:

Dr. Reed motioned to approve the agenda as prepared. Dr. Griffin seconded the motion. The Board of Education voted to approve the agenda as presented with a vote of 7-0.

## Action Items:

### 1. Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Waalkes motioned to approve the minutes from the November 17, 2025, SEAB Hearing and the Board of Education Meeting. Mrs. Mooney seconded the motion. The Board of Education voted to approve the minutes as presented with a vote of 7-0.

### 2. Approval of Financial Report:

Mrs. Postema motioned to approve the November Financial Report as presented. Ms. Hogan seconded the motion. The Board of Education voted to approve the financial report as presented with a vote of 7-0.

### 3. Approval of High School Cross-Categorical Reproductive Health Curriculum:

Mrs. Postema motioned to approve the High School Cross-Categorical Reproductive Health Curriculum as presented. Dr. Reed seconded the motion. The High School Cross-Categorical Reproductive Health curriculum was presented in two public hearings. The curriculum will provide non-diploma-bound students with autism spectrum disorders or cognitive impairments a curriculum that helps students understand their bodies, respect themselves and others, and identify trusted adults if they feel unsafe. The Board of Education voted to approve the High School Cross-Categorical Reproductive Health Curriculum as presented with a vote of 7-0.

### 4. Approval of 2025-2026 General Fund Budget Amendment:

Dr. Reed motioned to approve the Mid-Year 2025-2026 General Fund Budget Amendment as presented to the Board of Education. Mrs. Postema seconded the motion. In June, Ms. Marcy presented a preliminary budget for the 2025–2026 school year based on the best estimates available at the time, without knowing the finalized State budget. Now that the State budget has been passed, a more accurate mid-year update on the district's finances can be provided. This budget amendment reflects funding and expenses as of November 2025. However, grants continue to fluctuate, and updates will be provided as more information becomes available. While state approval is not required for a mid-year budget amendment, the district has followed this practice annually for many years. Ms. Marcy is confident in the budget numbers and does not anticipate significant decreases, noting that the district remains in a strong financial position. It was noted that transportation costs have remained consistent over the years, including ongoing fleet replacements. While bond money has occasionally been used for bus replacements in the past, these expenses have been included in the regular budget. The Transportation team continually does a great job. The mid-year amendment updates:

Revenues have been adjusted for:

- Increase in ECC revenue (\$140k)
- Foundation Allowance - Original budget included \$392/student increase; the Actual is \$442/student (\$242k increase)
- At-risk funding carry over (\$1 mil increase)
- Adjustment to MPSERS funding (\$2.3 million decrease; some expense was reduced)
- Other Grant adjustments (\$500k increase)

Expenses have been adjusted:

- Staffing adjustments that occurred over the summer
- Costs associated with various grants
- Most additions to expenses are offset by the additions in revenue (net 0 to fund balance)

***RESOLVED***, that this resolution shall be the general appropriations act of Jenison Public Schools for the fiscal year 2025-2026: A resolution to make appropriations; to provide for the expenditure of the appropriations; and to provide for the disposition of all income received by Jenison Public Schools

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the total revenues and unappropriated fund balance estimated to be available for appropriations in the GENERAL FUND of the JENISON PUBLIC SCHOOLS for fiscal year 2025-2026 is as follows:

**REVENUE -**

Local \$7,699,000  
State \$66,376,340  
Federal \$1,443,000  
Interdistrict Sources: \$ 8,565,000  
Other Financing Sources \$220,000  
Total Revenue \$84,303,340

FUND BALANCE, July 1, 2025 \$ 21,451,997

FUND BALANCE Available to Appropriate \$ 21,451,997

TOTAL AVAILABLE TO APPROPRIATE - GENERAL FUND \$ 105,755,337

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that \$87,382,598 of the total available to be appropriated in the GENERAL FUND is hereby appropriated in the amounts and for the purposes set forth below:

**EXPENDITURES -**

*Instruction:*

Basic Programs \$41,967,276  
Added Needs \$9,866,019

*Support Services:*

Pupil \$5,902,386  
Instructional Staff \$4,208,219  
General Administration \$845,330  
School Administration \$5,721,367  
Business \$921,517  
Operation & Maintenance \$6,419,597  
Transportation \$2,355,633  
Central Office \$2,287,096

Supporting Services \$2,656,017  
Community Services \$3,549,765  
Debt Service/Cap Outlay/Transfers \$682,376

TOTAL APPROPRIATED - GENERAL FUND \$87,382,598

A roll call vote was taken:

YEAS: Griffin, Hartman, Hogan, Mooney, Postema, Reed, and Waalkes

NAYS: none

Abstentions: none

The Board of Education has voted to approve the Mid-Year 2025-2026 General Fund Budget Amendment by a roll call vote of 7-0.

**5. 2026 Refunding Bond Resolution:**

Mrs. Mooney motioned to approve the 2026 Refunding Bond Resolution as presented. Mrs. Postema seconded the motion. As discussed at the October Board workshop with PFM Financial Advisors, the District is considering refinancing a portion of its 2016 School Building and Site and Refunding Bonds, which become eligible for early payoff in May 2026. Similar to refinancing a mortgage, this could result in significant savings based on current interest rates. Michigan law permits the refinancing of existing

bonds. The District has received a proposal from Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Inc. to refinance a portion of its 2016 School Building and Site and Refunding Bonds, originally issued for \$26,855,000, which is scheduled for repayment between 2027 and 2041. Before any new bonds can be issued, the District must either meet the requirements for qualified status or obtain prior approval from the Michigan Department of Treasury as required by law. Approval is also needed to authorize Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Inc. to evaluate market conditions and, if favorable, sell up to \$16.75 million in new refunding bonds. The final bond amount, interest rates, and repayment schedule would be determined at the time of sale. Based on current rates, the refinancing could reduce the District's overall costs by approximately \$1.8 million (approximately 9%). If interest rates increase, the District retains the option to delay the refinancing until market conditions are more favorable.

A roll call vote was taken:

YEAS: Griffin, Hartman, Hogan, Mooney, Postema, Reed, and Waalkes

NAYS: none

Abstentions: none

The Board of Education has voted to approve the 2026 Refunding Bond Resolution by a roll call vote of 7-0.

#### **6. 2026 Building and Site Bond Sale, Series II Resolution:**

Mrs. Postema motioned to approve the 2026 Building and Site Bond Sale, Series II Resolution as presented. Mr. Waalkes seconded the motion. This is the second phase of the 2026 Building and Site Bond Sale of the \$117 million bonds approved by voters in May 2024 and discussed at the October Board workshop. This resolution authorizes the issuance of a second series of general obligation, unlimited tax bonds in an amount not to exceed \$52 million to fund approved capital projects and related issuance costs. The resolution designates Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Inc. as the senior managing underwriter, appoints Thrun Law Firm, P.C. as bond counsel, and PFM Financial Advisors LLC as financial consultant, and authorizes District administration to seek required approval from the Michigan Department of Treasury. It also establishes parameters for the bond sale, including maximum interest rates, term length, and underwriting costs, and authorizes the execution of all necessary documents related to the sale, disclosure, and repayment of the bonds. This is the first step in initiating the bond sale process, and the District remains on track with its bond projects.

A roll call vote was taken:

YEAS: Griffin, Hartman, Hogan, Mooney, Postema, Reed, and Waalkes

NAYS: none

Abstentions: none

The Board of Education has voted to approve the 2026 Building and Site Bond Sale, Series II Resolution by a roll call vote of 7-0.

#### **7. Approval of GSRP Playground Equipment:**

Dr. Reed motioned to approve the GSRP Playground Equipment as presented. Dr. Griffin seconded the motion. The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) has experienced steady growth in recent years, largely driven by the Governor's initiative to expand early childhood learning opportunities and reduce costs so more families can qualify. As a result, more students are enrolled in the GSRP program. At this point, the current playground serving 3–4-year-old students is no longer adequate for the 186 children enrolled in the program. Additionally, the program is limited to using equipment that is developmentally appropriate for the size and age of its students. The Kids First building includes three playgrounds serving Early Preschool (EP), Transitional Kindergarten (TK), and Preschool (including both tuition-based and GSRP students). Ms. Marcy provided a map of the building and playground locations and a preliminary plan and cost estimate, with a total projected cost of approximately \$200,000. The District has requested \$146,641 from the OAISD to be funded through the GSRP grant and is currently awaiting approval. If the OAISD approves the request, the District would proceed with the purchase, with the remaining costs covered through General Capital Projects. Some existing

equipment from the TK/Preschool playground would be relocated to other elementary buildings. Additionally, GSRP has helped pay for some of the current playground equipment on the Kids First Campus. It was also noted, there are no rules for School-of-Choice students to participate in GRPS at Jenison. Placement is often based on availability, but tries to place students within their home district. The Board of Education voted to approve the GSRP Playground Equipment as presented with a vote of 7-0.

## Discussion Items:

### 1. Superintendent Update:

Dr. Graham briefly shared a few district events, happenings, and updates with the Board of Education.

- **Your Change Can Change Hunger Campaign:** The JPS community raised \$24,697.26 during its annual Your Change Can Change Hunger for Hand2Hand, the local nonprofit organization that provides food to West Michigan children.
- **Pool Renovations:** The pool renovation remains on schedule, with filling expected to begin by the end of the week. Approximately 880,000 gallons of water will be required to fill the pools. The new filtration system is performing exceptionally well and should result in little to no chlorine odor. Maintenance staff also completed regrouting work in the pool. The pool is anticipated to reopen for use at the beginning of the new year. The swim teams have been outstanding to work with and have had an excellent season despite not having access to their home pool. Notably, the girls' team finished as state runners-up.
- **Gifts for Construction Workers:** Several community members participating in a prayer walk expressed a desire to give back to those working on construction projects in the District. They coordinated food for the workers, and students contributed handwritten thank-you notes to show their appreciation.
- **Student Activities:** Dr. Graham reiterated the District's commitment to providing meaningful opportunities for students outside the classroom. One good example was shared tonight with the Esports program being recognized, which has seen notable success and continues to grow in student engagement.
- **Orchestra Trip:** The Jenison Orchestras program had a successful and memorable trip to Walt Disney World, where students had the opportunity to perform at Disney. It was an unforgettable experience for the group, and they represented JPS with excellence throughout the week.
- **Shop with a Hero:** The annual Shop with a Hero event was held last week at the Jenison Meijer. This meaningful partnership between JPS, the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office, the Georgetown Township Fire Department, local first responders, and Meijer helps ensure students have a memorable holiday season. Meijer generously provided \$100 for each of 100 students to shop. Much appreciation to Meijer, our local emergency responders, and the staff members who volunteered their time to make this event such a success.
- **High School Fall Play:** The High School Theater program presented *You Can't Take It With You* before Thanksgiving and delivered such successful performances. Another great opportunity that allows students to showcase their talents.
- **Jenison Junior High Theater:** More than 160 students auditioned or applied for the Junior High theater program, with over 100 students selected to participate. We are looking forward to a fantastic production and to seeing so many students involved. This year's Junior High performance will be *Beauty and the Beast*. Performance are in January.
- **Ionia Public Schools:** The Ionia Public Schools district was closed for several days following the unexpected passing of a staff member, who was discovered on campus after hours. The District asks that you keep our community in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.
- **Maintenance and Transportation Hub:** The new building is on schedule and expected to open in August. A tour of the facility is anticipated in May. A future board meeting will

include a request for furniture. Special thanks to all the teams who have operated without a permanent home during the construction projects.

- **Student Thank Yous:** The Administration and Board received letters from students expressing thanks for the new library books. Dr. Graham shared these handwritten notes with the Board.
- **Flower/Benevolence Fund:** Dr. Hartman reminded the Board about the flower and benevolence fund, which Board members contribute to from their pay, ensuring the fund is available to provide gifts when needed.

### **Adjournment:**

The President of the Board of Education, Dr. Hartman, adjourned the Jenison Public Schools Board of Education meeting at 7:28 pm with acclamation.

Respectfully submitted,

Jen Postema, Secretary  
Jenison Public Schools Board of Education

### **Future Meetings:**

Month:	Regular Meeting (held at 6:30 pm):	Workshop (held at 6:00 pm)
January 2026	Mon, Jan 12	Mon, Jan 26
February 2026	Mon, Feb 16	
March 2026	Mon, Mar 9	Mon, Mar 23
April 2026	Mon, Apr 20	
May 2026	Mon, May 11	
June 2026	Mon, Jun 8	
July 2026	Mon, Jul 13	