

**NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR SESSION  
Performing Arts Center  
1112 E. Clay Street  
P.O. Box 280  
New Buffalo, MI 49117  
February 23, 2026  
6:00 PM**

New Buffalo Area Schools will be a beacon of academic excellence and individualized learning, where every student thrives in a supportive and inclusive environment. We will lead in preparing students for future success, driven by strong community partnerships and a commitment to growth and sustainability.

1. Call to Order by President Denise Churchill - Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
2. Roll Call: Denise Churchill, Stephen Donnelly, John Haskins, Jennifer Summers, Vanessa Thun, Greg Vosberg, Lisa Werner  
Board Member Lisa Werner participated in the meeting remotely. In accordance with board policy and applicable Michigan requirements, remote participation did not permit the member to vote on board actions.  
Also in Attendance: Mr. Adam Bowen, Superintendent of Schools  
Devinnie Wysocki, Adm. Asst. to Superintendent
3. Expressions from the Public: None
4. Items too Late for Printed Agenda: None
5. Adoption of the Agenda  
Motion: Thun  
Second: Summers  
All ayes, motion carried.
6. Adoption of the Consent Agenda: Items on the Consent Agenda are to be voted on as a single item by the Board. Board Members may remove items from the Consent Agenda prior to vote. Discussion of the items that have been removed can take place at the appropriate time listed on the Agenda.
  - A. Minutes:
  - B. General/Associated Funds - Bills Payable:
    1. General Fund:\$182,867.01
    2. Payroll: \$1,031,147.00
    3. Food Service: \$1,854.67
    4. Scholarship Fund: \$71,309.51
    5. Public Improvement: \$113,355.85
  - C. Financials  
Motion: Donnelly  
Second: Summers  
All ayes, motion carried.

7. Communications

A. Class President: Jacqui Behzadi 10th Grade/Lena Hyatte 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

Reported: Kindness Week and students have different dress up days, upcoming Quiz Bowl Tournament, Band Festival March 2<sup>nd</sup>, Sophomores – Field Trip to AK Smith, Wizard of Oz Musical March 20, 21, 22, 2026.

8. Committee Report(s) - Building & Grounds Meeting 02/17/2026 – Committee met with Sitelogic.

~~9. Darwin Watson: New Buffalo City Manager – Tax Bill Distribution Fees~~

10. Presentation: Diane Hyatte - Special Education

Special Education presentation, Coordinator Diane Hyatte provided an overview of current enrollment, projections, initiatives, and emerging trends for New Buffalo Area Schools. For the 2025–2026 school year, the district is serving 69 special education students across 30 programs, an increase from 61 students the previous year, with notable growth in speech and language-only services. Projections for 2026–2027 anticipate a slight increase to 71 students and 32 programs, while maintaining the same budget and personnel levels. Key initiatives include implementation of DocuSign, a district-wide special education request form, targeted staff training (including FBA/BIP, PWN, and START through BRESA), and the launch of the Best Buddies program at the middle and high school levels. Additionally, the Board was informed that dyslexia will become a new area of special education eligibility beginning in 2027–2028, requiring universal screening and adoption of state-approved instructional programs, which will necessitate future training and resource allocation.

11. Presentation: Sam Stine – 26 Winter NWEA & 25 Fall NMSQT Data Summary

Sam Stine presented the Winter 2026 NWEA (MAP) and Fall 2025 NMSQT data summary to the Board, highlighting strong overall student performance. Winter NWEA results indicate that the average Reading and Math scores exceeded national grade-level norms at every K–8 grade level. In Reading, 89% of students in grades K–8 performed at or above the national average, with an overall median performance at the 78th percentile. In Math, approximately 95% of students performed at or above national norms, with overall performance at the 83rd percentile. Fall 2025 NMSQT results for grade 11 showed total scores above the national average, with the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section exceeding national norms, while Math was slightly below. Strengths identified included Information and Ideas in Reading and Writing, and Problem-Solving and Data Analysis in Math, while areas for growth include Standard English Conventions and Advanced Math.

12. The Superintendent and Food Service Director recommend the Board adopt the National School Breakfast Week Proclamation, March 2 - 6, 2026.

Motion: Thun

Second: Summers

All ayes, motion carried.

13. The Superintendent recommends Board approval to apply for Congressional spending funds associated with the Bison Preserve Planned Unit Development (PUD) project.

Motion: Donnelly

Second: Summers

All ayes, motion carried.

14. The Superintendent and Athletic Director recommend the Board approve the cooperative sports program with River Valley School District for:

High School Boys Soccer, Fall 2026, High School Boys and Girls Cross Country, Fall 2026, High School Boys Basketball, Winter 2026.

Motion: Thun

Second: Donnelly

All ayes, motion carried.

15. Remarks from the Superintendent

- Our scheduled training with Apple representatives on iPad implementation was postponed due to today's 2-hour delay. We expect to reschedule this for later in the week.
- We are continuing to refine the conceptual plan and development agreement details on the Bison Preserve. Leeward Ventures is tentatively scheduled to present their progress to the Board at the April 13th meeting.
- On February 12th, Brent from Studer Education led a session with our leadership team focused on rounding, building/department scorecards, and high-performing employee conversations. We also prepared for the upcoming scorecard presentation to the BOE in March and the rollout of survey results.
- Contract negotiations for support staff are ongoing. Our next scheduled session is March 10th. Denise and Vanessa are part of the negotiation team.
- Artist and Author's night is this Wednesday at 6 PM at the elementary school.
- Basketball districts for Boys is this Wednesday at 7 PM at RV. Girls is March 2 at 7 PM at Cassopolis.
- Donuts with Dudes is at the elementary school this Friday at 7:30 AM.
- Denise and I have our county wide superintendent / board president meeting Wednesday, March 4.
- The second trimester ends on Friday, March 6th.
- Due to preparations for the *Wizard of Oz* musical, upcoming board meetings will be held in the cafeteria.

16. Remarks from the Board President and Members

17. Discussion Item(s)

18. Other Business

19. Adjournment

Motion: Thun

Second: Donnelly

All ayes, motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Vanessa Thun, Secretary  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS