

**NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR SESSION
Performing Arts Center
1112 E. Clay Street
P.O. Box 280
New Buffalo, MI 49117
September 22, 2025
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 Lisa Werner - Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

2. Roll Call: Denise Churchill, Stephen Donnelly, John Haskins, Jennifer Summers, Vanessa Thun, Greg Vosberg, Lisa Werner

Absent: Haskins

Also in Attendance: Mr. Adam Bowen, Superintendent of Schools
Devinnie Wysocki, Adm. Asst. to Superintendent

3. Expressions from the Public:

Parent MaryClare Bergerson-Lehker expressed concern about two prominently displayed Confederate flags, stating that the flag symbolizes ongoing racism and white supremacy, creates division and hostility at an elementary school, and undermines a safe and inclusive learning environment. She emphasized that while freedom of speech is protected, schools have an obligation to ban such symbols if possible to ensure the rights and safety of students and families.

4. Items too Late for Printed Agenda #17E Elementary PreK Paraprofessional Hire

5. Adoption of the Agenda

Motion: Thun

Second: Churchill

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:

Meeting Minutes 8-25-25

B. General/Associated Funds - Bills Payable:

1. General Fund: \$599,014.28

2. Payroll: \$809,101.20

3. Food Service: \$543.00

4. Scholarship Fund: \$141,914.40

5. Public Improvement: \$373,306.58

C. Financials

Motion: Thun

Second: Churchill

All ayes, motion carried.

7. Communications

A. 9th Grade Class Co-President's: Lena Hyatte / Charlie Hart

8. Committee Report(s)

Foundation Meeting 9/10/25

Finance Committee Meeting 9/16/25

9. 2024-2025 Audit Presentation: Kruggel, Lawton & Company, L.L.C.

Revenues in the General Fund totaled approximately \$21.1 million, with 84.97% coming from local sources.

Expenditures were about \$17.5 million, with roughly half allocated to instruction. The fund balance, budgeted at \$5 million, closed at \$5.3 million. (Full Report Attached)

10. The Superintendent and Director of Finance recommend the Board accept the 2024-2025 audit as presented by Kruggel, Lawton & Company, L.L.C.

Motion: Churchill

Second: Sommers

All ayes, motion carried.

11. Presentation: New Buffalo Community Education Foundation Phase 2 Fundraising.

NBCEF Secretary Brian Williams and Vice President Tom Rowland reported that the next phase of the baseball/softball project will focus on developing the area around the complex. Fundraising plans include recognition for individual donors and local businesses through permanent displays and sponsorship opportunities. They also noted that hosting a summer college baseball team remains a possibility, with plans to structure it as a nonprofit to reinvest profits into the school district and community.

12. Presentation: Mark German - Operations Director

Director of Operations Mark German reported on recent projects including new flooring in offices and classrooms, a bus parking pad, updated bathroom partitions, and landscaping at the middle/high school. Current projects include the baseball/softball fields, door access controls and a new camera system with the technology department, and a new pole barn with Building Trades. He also noted that a facilities assessment is underway to develop a five-, 10-, and 15-year maintenance and replacement plan. (Full Report Attached)

13. The Superintendent and Director of Finance recommend the Board relinquish the 2025-2026 Title III and Section 41 funds.

Motion: Churchill

Second: Thun

All ayes, motion carried.

14. The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the New Buffalo Area Schools Emergency Operation Plan 2025-2026.

Motion: Churchill

Second: Sommers

All ayes, motion carried.

15. Remarks from the Superintendent

- Last week, I attended the Michigan Superintendents' Fall Conference, which offered a wide range of sessions. Some of the highlights included a general session on positive leadership—delivered through a unique presentation that even incorporated magic—remarks from the new incoming State Superintendent, Glen Maleko, and a breakout session on “Change with a Purpose.” I also attended our Region 7 meeting, a general session focused on legislative updates surrounding the still-unfinished state budget, a breakout session on how administrators can use AI effectively, and a session on building trust. Overall, it was a valuable opportunity to learn, connect, and bring back ideas that can benefit our district.

- Tomorrow, I will be attending an event at Corewell Health focused on suicide risk assessments and improving communication between schools and the healthcare system. For the past year, I have been part of a superintendent mental health team that has worked to bridge the communication gap between schools and healthcare providers when students seek medical help related to suicide. To give you some context, Corewell Health alone conducts about thirty suicide risk assessments each month for school aged students. Unfortunately, many of those are not reported back to schools, which limits our ability to support students once they leave the healthcare facility. Tomorrow, we will be unveiling a new form that has been in development for the past six months through collaboration between school leaders and healthcare professionals. This form will allow schools and healthcare providers to communicate both legally and effectively, ensuring that students receive the support they need when they return to school. Following that presentation, both healthcare and school mental health professionals will participate in a countywide suicide risk assessment training led by Dr. Melissa Reeves, using the Columbia Protocol.
- Baseball/Softball Field Update: The grading work on both fields has been completed, and the subbase installation is currently underway. Artificial turf is scheduled for delivery this week, with installation beginning shortly thereafter. For the baseball outfield, irrigation is scheduled to be installed on October 1, followed by sod installation in mid-October. The sod is guaranteed to be ready for play in the spring. Fencing is also set to begin on October 1, and the final step will be installing the backstops for both the softball and baseball fields. This has been a great project so far, and Geosurfaces has been an excellent partner throughout the process.
- Walk to school day for elementary is this Friday at 7:45 AM.
- All elementary, middle, and high school teachers will participate in monthly data digs - MS and HS start this week and go into next week. These sessions bring together teachers, administrators, and support staff to collaboratively review both formative and summative assessment data. The goal is to identify students who are not yet demonstrating mastery of standards and to plan targeted interventions to support their success. This year, we have implemented more rigorous formative assessments designed to closely mirror the style and rigor of MSTEP, PSAT, and SAT questions. This approach will not only provide better insight into student progress but also help prepare students for the demands of state and national assessments.
- Our first bullying task force meeting is next Thursday. Greg and Vanessa serve on that committee.
- Parent teacher conferences are on October 9th from 12 - 4 and 6 - 8 PM.

16. Remarks from the Board President and Members

Vice President Churchill read aloud recent communication that went out through the elementary weekly Principal newsletter. (Letter Attached)

President Werner, thanked the parent for advocating on behalf of her children and if she would like to speak to the board further, please contact the superintendent's administrative assistant or board directors, directly.

Secretary Thun affirmed that the school board and community are united in their commitment to supporting students and families, emphasizing that every child should feel they belong. What courage it takes to speak your mind and thank you for trusting "us" with that. I acknowledge your concern, "I hear you and you are valued here."

Trustee Summers added that she hopes the community will continue engaging in open, respectful dialogue that honors the dignity and rights of all.

17. Discussion Item(s)

- Flowers Early Learning: Food Service Appreciation
- Grace Spence - Paraprofessional Resignation
- Breakfast / Lunches
- MSTEP/PSAT/SAT Data Results
- Superintendent approved the following hire:
Eliza McGinn - Elementary PreK Paraprofessional

18. Other Business

Churchill recommends the Board approve funding for New Buffalo Area Schools' Free Breakfast and Lunch program, contingent upon the outcome of State and Federal budget allocations.

Second: Donnelly

All ayes, motion carried.

19. Adjournment

Motion: Thun

Second: Churchill

All ayes, motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vanessa Thun, Secretary
BOARD OF EDUCATION
NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS