

The Kent ISD School Board held a regular meeting at the Kent Conference Center on Monday, November 17, 2025. President Haidle called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Members Present: Hamming, Featherston, Schottke Haidle.

Member Absent: Drake

Kent ISD Staff Present: Superintendent Gorman, Assistant Superintendents Fee, Finkel, Philipps, Rodgers, Gardner Myers; Directors Arnold, Baine, Bray, Behm, Campbell, Graham, Hofstee, Houtman, Karsten, Larkin, Lienesch, Lillis, Maynard, McClintic, Murphy, Sneider, Store, Nelson, Verwey; Recording Secretary Lovell; Staff Members: Cinnamon Mellema, Anna Schutter, Mary Fedewa, Mark Higgins, Adonia Conrad, Matt Reda, Deborah VanDyke.

Director Danielle Hendry recognized Adonia Conrad with the Leading Learning Award, and her supervisor, Mark Higgins, shared words of appreciation. Director Bryndan Arnold presented the Leading Learning Award to Matt Reda, and Director Gerry Verwey along with Interim Principal Dr. Karl Nelson offered remarks in his honor.

Matthew Kaley, CPA with Maner Costerisan, presented the results of the Kent ISD financial audit. He reported that Kent ISD received an unmodified opinion with no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Mr. Kaley highlighted several key items, including significant changes in pension and OPEB, a GASB 101 restatement of Net Position, a \$32.6 million change in net position, and \$12.4 million in capital assets placed into service. He also reviewed the governmental funds and budget comparisons for the General, Special Education, and CTE funds, noting no major changes. In addition, Maner Costerisan completed a single audit of federal awards, which also resulted in an unmodified opinion and a low-risk audit designation.

Upon motion of Member Hamming, supported by Member Schottke, it was resolved to combine and approve action items D.1-D.9.

Ayes: Featherston, Schottke, Hamming, Haidle

Nays: None

Motion declared to have carried.

Upon motion of Member Featherston, supported by Member Schottke, it was resolved to approve the payment to reimburse Dean Transportation for the Section 74(b) State Aid from the 2024 MI Clean School Bus Program.

Ayes: Schottke, Hamming, Featherston, Haidle

Nays: None

Motion declared to have carried.

Upon motion of Member Schottke, supported by Member Hamming, it was resolved to approve Seyferth PR's contracted services to support the Kent ISD and Local districts' Enhancement Millage Restore and Renew proposal.

Ayes: Hamming, Featherston, Schottke, Haidle

Nays: None

Motion declared to have carried.

Upon motion of Member Featherston, supported by Member Hamming, it was resolved to approve the purchase of furniture for phase II of the ESC Renovation from Custer Office Environment.

Ayes: Featherston, Schottke, Hamming, Haidle

Nays: None

Motion declared to have carried.

Upon motion of Member Schottke, supported by Member Hamming, it was resolved to approve the change order for the Empower U North Resolution.

Ayes: Hamming, Featherston, Schottke, Haidle

Nays: None

Motion declared to have carried.

Pertaining to the FOIA appeal, upon motion of Member Hamming, supported by Member Featherston, it was resolved to reverse the prior FOIA denial in part and issue a written notice upholding the denial, in part. The Board upheld the cited FOIA exemptions; however, the administration shall produce the investigation records specifically related to Mr. Vincent Truskowski's own personal statement, interview and incident report and notes from Mr. Truskowski's interview. The Board upheld the denial of the investigation records related to other employee witness statements, witness interview summaries and witness interview notes based on the frank communication exception, MCL 15.243. The Board upheld the denial as it relates to the FERPA exemption, MCL 15.243; however, solely for the purpose of redaction of student names in the documents to be produced to keep confidential the identify of any student identified in the investigation in the production of public records.

Ayes: Hamming, Featherston, Schottke, Haidle

Nays: None

Motion declared to have carried.

Upon motion of Member Featherston, supported by Member Hamming, it was resolved to approve the resolution to join a lawsuit regarding Section 31aa legislation.

WHEREAS, Kent Intermediate School District ("Kent ISD") is committed to ensuring the safety, well-being, and mental health of all students, and relies on state funding to provide essential services, personnel, and supports; and

WHEREAS, Section 31aa of the State School Aid Act (2025 PA 15) allocates substantial funding for school safety and mental-health initiatives for the 2025–2026 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, Section 31aa(9) conditions the receipt of these critical funds on school districts' agreement to a broad and undefined prospective waiver of "any privilege" in the event of a "mass casualty event," including legal, statutory, and constitutional privileges; and

WHEREAS, this Privilege Waiver is vague, overbroad, and coercive, exposing Kent ISD and its officials to significant legal uncertainty and potential criminal penalties under MCL 388.1761 for unknowingly failing to comply with unclear statutory requirements; and

WHEREAS, this statutory condition risks forcing Kent ISD to choose between protecting its constitutional rights and accessing funding essential for student mental health and school safety; and

WHEREAS, the Verified Complaint filed on November 13, 2025 in the Michigan Court of Claims outlines multiple independent constitutional concerns with Section 31aa (9), including:

- Violations of substantive due process under Article 1, §17 of the Michigan Constitution;
- Unconstitutional conditions placed upon essential public funding;
- Violations of Article 4, §24 (Title-Object, Single-Object, and Change-of-Purpose Clauses); and
- Impermissible encroachment on the judiciary's authority in violation of Article 3, §2 and Article 6, §5 of the Michigan Constitution; Verified Complaint for Declarat...

WHEREAS, Kent ISD, along with other intermediate school districts and public-school districts across Michigan, has been named as a plaintiff in litigation seeking declaratory and injunctive relief to prevent enforcement of this unconstitutional funding condition; and

WHEREAS, participation in this litigation is necessary to safeguard the rights of Kent ISD, its board members, administrators, and the students and communities it serves;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Kent ISD School Board hereby authorizes Kent ISD to participate as a plaintiff in litigation challenging Section 31aa (9) of the State School Aid Act;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board authorizes the Superintendent, or designee, to execute all documents necessary to support Kent ISD's participation, including but not limited to retention agreements, affidavits, declarations, and related legal filings;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board authorizes legal counsel, including Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone, PLC, to represent Kent ISD in this matter;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board affirms its commitment to securing constitutionally sound access to school safety and mental-health funding necessary for the protection and support of students throughout Kent County.

Ayes: Featherston, Schottke, Hamming, Haidle

Nays: None

Motion declared to have carried.

President Haidle offered the opportunity for public comment. No comments were given.

Member Schottke thanked voters for passing the Kent ISD regional enhancement millage on November 4, 2025. Member Schottke also shared her takeaways from the fourth annual Listen. Learn Lead State of the Student event hosted by the Student Leadership Community on Monday, November 17 at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. President Haidle also commended the Student Leadership Community for sharing their experiences as a high school student and for everyone that helped plan the event.

President Haidle offered remarks on the current legislative environment, including the potential for another government shutdown after the new year. Dan Behm, Director of Education Advocates of West Michigan, also provided his perspective on the future direction of the Department of Education.

Superintendent Gorman expressed his gratitude to everyone involved in organizing the outstanding Listen. Learn. Lead – State of the Student event. He also acknowledged the successful passage of the regional enhancement millage, which will provide approximately \$357 per student annually for the next ten years. In addition, he thanked Dennis and his team for delivering another clean financial audit.

President Haidle adjourned the meeting at 4:49 p.m.

Minutes approved on December 15, 2025

Andrea Haidle, President

Anne Hamming, Secretary

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