

# 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, February 16, 2026, 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.

### Members Present:

Eric Hartman, DC,  
President

William Waalkes,  
Vice President

Chris Reed, PhD,  
Treasurer

Jen Postema,  
Secretary

Jennifer Griffin, DPM  
Trustee

Donna Mooney  
Trustee

Shannon Hogan,  
Trustee

### Others Present:

Brandon Graham, PhD,  
Superintendent

Leslie Philipps,  
Assistant Superintendent /  
Title IX Coordinator

Christine Marcy,  
Director of Finance and  
Operations

Brett Cataldo,  
Junior High Principal

Katie Moy,  
Chief of Staff

### Recognitions: JR State Band/Orchestra/Choir

Dr. Graham praised the District's fine arts programming, noting that while student achievements are often recognized at the high school level, success begins in earlier grades, including the Junior High.

Mr. Brett Cataldo, Junior High Principal, introduced students selected to the All-State Middle School Honor Bands, Orchestras, and Choirs, noting the rigorous selection process and the significant commitment required from students and families. The students performed at the DeVos Performance Hall during the Michigan Music Conference in January. He shared that many of these students balance multiple extracurricular activities. Some of these students also participated in the Junior High Theater production of *Beauty and the Beast*. He also acknowledged the especially demanding schedule that week, which included travel in challenging winter weather conditions that also included snow days for the district. Students recognized were:

- All-State Middle School Band: D. Mills (clarinet), J. Rutledge (percussion), L. Gembis (french horn)
- Boys State Honors Choir: G. Arebelo, D. Healy-Courtright (also received Honorable Mention for Bassoon).

It was also noted that Junior High Choir Teacher, Kyle Cain, was selected to direct the State Honors Choir at the DeVos Performance Hall during the Michigan Music Conference.

Dr. Graham additionally recognized and celebrated the entire music department team, including Mrs. Anne Gembis, who was in the audience during the recognition. He commended the District's exceptional leadership in developing student musicians to a highly competitive level.

#### **Recess:**

Dr. Hartman called a recess at 6:34 pm to congratulate the individuals recognized.

#### **Reconvene:**

The meeting reconvened at 6:37 pm.

#### **Public Comment**

Becky Steele (Parkside Dr, Jenison), parent of Pinewood and Junior High students, and Junior High Math Teacher and Co-President of JEA, shared highlights from staff with the Board of Education. With the prompt, "Tell us something good that's been happening in your world."

- **TK Team Commitment:** The TK team continues to demonstrate strong dedication to maintaining the integrity of the program and ensuring a high-quality curriculum for all students.
- **Kindergarten Screening:** The Kindergarten screening has been going well. Parents have had opportunities to ask questions without feeling rushed, and staff have been consistent and professional. Lessons learned from last year's reformat at JCA led to adjustments that improved efficiency and strengthened the experience as a welcoming gateway to JPS for families.
- **Bursley Team:** The Bursley staff have responded to news of reduced sections for next year with camaraderie, care, and strong support for displaced colleagues.
- **Student Behavior Improvements:** Student behavior continues to improve, with clear expectations communicated and reinforced schoolwide.
- **Coaching Support in Math:** Math coaching and professional development have been exceptional. Special appreciation was expressed for Holly McGoran's outstanding support.
- **Library Staff Appreciation:** The District Librarian and library staff were recognized for their exceptional work and dedication.
- **PLC Collaboration:** Built-in time for PLC collaboration and team alignment is proving valuable. One elementary teacher shared that mid-year NWEA data indicate that co-teaching implementation and data-informed instruction are significantly benefiting students.
- **Data-Driven Instruction:** Teams are engaging more deeply and consistently with student data to inform instructional decisions and grouping practices, resulting in positive outcomes.
- **Kids Hope Mentoring:** The Kids Hope mentoring program continues to be a priceless support for students.
- **All-State Achievements:** Several junior high students earned placement in All-State Band, Orchestra, and Choir.
- **Junior High Recognition Efforts:** The Prize Patrol Cart at the Junior High has been a major success in promoting positive school culture.
- **Unified Sports:** The Unified Basketball teams are actively participating and enjoying a successful season.
- **Academic Growth & Climate:** A teacher noted that classroom environments feel closer to pre-COVID norms than in recent years, with students setting higher goals and achieving stronger academic results.
- **High School Student Council:** Senior Survivor was a smooth and successful event. The participants and Student Council members were commended for their leadership and organization.
- **High School Staff Engagement:** Amanda Alverson was recognized for her efforts to boost staff morale through initiatives such as potlucks and mailbox treats.
- **Athletics Success:** Swim and Dive teams are both experiencing successful seasons.

- **District Closures & Learning Continuity:** Snow days have not significantly disrupted student learning.
- **Cell Phone Legislation:** Staff expressed encouragement regarding the Governor’s recently signed legislation on student cell phone access in schools, and look forward to the Board’s development of related policy for Jenison Public Schools.
- **Secondary Math Growth:** Secondary math staff analyzed PSAT and SAT data from last spring. When looking at the current senior class cohort, comparing their 8th grade PSAT Math score to their 11th grade SAT Math score, JHS has shown more growth than any other high school in the state.
- **JEA Leadership Appreciation:** The JEA Leadership (especially Sarah Magro Johnson, her co-President, and herself) expressed their sincere appreciation to district leadership, particularly Mrs. Philipps and Dr. Graham, for the collaborative, communicative, and proactive partnership they have demonstrated throughout this semester, especially in recent months. With the retirement of the longtime JEA President, this year brought a significant transition as new leadership structures, relationships, and workflows were established. Both she and Mrs. Magro Johnson deeply appreciate the district leaders' willingness to answer countless questions, to listen thoughtfully as member feedback was relayed (even when it was not all positive), and to maintain clear, consistent communication, particularly regarding new contract language.

Karina White (no address given) - She shared that she is a high school teacher and has been teaching for over 22 years. She shared that when she was younger, school provided stability and a safe place during a difficult home life, which led her to her career in education. She expressed pride in her district and her commitment to making her classroom a safe, welcoming space for all students. She added about the challenges educators face amid increasing national division and concerns about the behavior and harsh language of some public leaders, noting the difficulty of modeling respect for authority when actions conflict with school values. She expressed how she cares deeply for her students and wants to ensure every student feels included and valued. She shared a key principle that we can learn from ecosystems, which is that diversity equals health. She added that, regardless of national leadership, she wants public schools to be a safe and inclusive place. She encouraged the Board to speak up and do what is right for all students.

Stephanie Potoka (1175 Beechwood Dr) - She shared an overview of the outdoor and experiential learning opportunities that have taken place at Bauerwood Elementary over the past several years. During the 2022–2023 school year, efforts included trail clearing, development of a GPS trail map, plant identification work with support from Mr. Craig Elston (cdenature.com), and the creation of a “Plants and Possibilities” list. In 2023–2024, initiatives expanded to include poison ivy maintenance, a Spring Wildflower Scavenger Hunt (photos shared), an ABCD Tree Scavenger Hunt, and garlic mustard removal conducted by 3rd and 4th grade students (photos shared). During the 2024–2025 school year, Story Structures were installed (photos shared) with funding from the Bauerwood Family Network. Looking ahead to 2025–2026, garlic mustard removal is planned for April 23 as part of Bauerwood’s Day of Service. Overall, these efforts have provided meaningful and engaging outdoor learning experiences for students. She asked for the district to consider incorporating outdoor learning opportunities into the district’s strategic plan.

Ashley Rottman (11078 56th Ave, Allendale) - She provided the Board of Education with an update on Wilderness Academy. Program highlights included successfully hosting the school’s first STEM Night, with more than 50 students in attendance, along with siblings and alumni, creating an engaging evening of learning and connection. The school also held a schoolwide Valentine’s celebration featuring games, a group read-aloud, a photo booth, and snacks. The event was planned and hosted by parents and contributed positively to school culture and community building. Upcoming events include a March Read-a-thon, a bird-themed STEM Night on March 18 featuring a special feathered guest from the ODC, and a Culver’s Night fundraiser on April 28. ECC Transition (next year): There is strong enthusiasm surrounding the move, along with appreciation for the thoughtful planning and consideration supporting the change. Optimism was expressed regarding the additional building-based supports and more streamlined transition times that the ECC may offer. They are hopeful there may be

an opportunity to explore future conversations about potential expansion into 3rd and 4th grade for the 2027-2028 school year. They do request that the District consider including Wilderness Academy growth priorities (including outdoor education and potential group expansion) in the District Strategic Plan. Third-grade transition planning, family visits to elementary schools have been scheduled and intentionally grouped to minimize disruption and manage building-level logistics. They asked for consideration for additional family supports related to BASC and transportation, particularly for families with siblings in the program and out-of-district families. Even suggesting a possibility to include establishing a bus stop at the ECC for schools with higher concentrations of transfer students to improve access and continuity.

Laurie Burks (1042 Brentwood St) - She shared her appreciation for diversity, noting that her son attends a college with a wide range of backgrounds and values the experience. She expressed gratitude for the opportunities her children have received through the Spanish Immersion program and for the programming offered by the district. In addition, she shared a concern about what she perceives as misinformation being shared and emphasized that she does not want inaccurate information promoted. She believes that giving differing perspectives should be considered and expressed that teachers should remain neutral in sharing their viewpoints. She raised concern that, in some instances, only one perspective may be presented and requested that the District and Board consider having a neutrality policy that will make it clear what can be taught in the classroom. She encouraged the inclusion of multiple news sources and supported providing students opportunities to discuss current events, potentially including guest speakers who work in specific professions. She shared that she knows an individual who works in Homeland Security and would like the opportunity to share what they do. She believes it is important for students to understand accurate information. She concluded by expressing concern about teachers sharing personal political views and emphasized the importance of maintaining focus on the core subjects.

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:**

Mrs. Mooney motioned to approve the minutes from the January 26, 2026, Board of Education Workshop Meeting. Dr. Reed 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:**

Mr. Waalkes motioned to approve the January Financial Report as presented. Ms. Hogan seconded the motion. The January report reflects that the district is on track with the budget amendment. The District is starting to work on the final amendment for 2025-26 and the budget projection for 2027. Ms. Marcy stated that more information will be provided within the next few months. The Board of Education voted to approve the financial report as presented with a vote of 7-0.

#### **3. Approval of Salary Scales:**

Dr. Reed motioned to approve the Salary Scales for Administration, Non-Cat I, II, IV, V, VI, VII, JIA Teachers, JIA Program Leaders, JIA Hourly Clerical, JIA Coordinators, and Managers as presented. Mrs. Mooney seconded the motion. The Board of Education was provided documentation outlining the salary scales for each employee group. Mrs. Philipps reminded the Board of the mandate from the Office of Retirement Services requiring the development of formal salary schedules. As a reminder, the

Board previously approved salary scales for the highly compensated, non-unionized positions, including the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent, in July. As noted at that time, salary scales for the remaining non-unionized roles were going to be worked on over the course of this school year. This is the scales for Administration, Non-Cat I, II, IV, V, VI, and VII positions, JIA Teachers, JIA Program Leaders, JIA Hourly Clerical, JIA Coordinators, and Managers. Establishing formal salary schedules will promote consistency and transparency when administrators or staff retire and are replaced. It was noted that this initiative is important, as some districts without established salary scales have faced legal challenges. The Board of Education voted to approve the Salary Scales as presented with a vote of 7-0.

**4. Approval of Bid Package #1 Upper Elementary Utility Relocation:**

Dr. Griffin motioned to approve the Bid Package #1 Upper Elementary Utility Relocation as presented. Dr. Reed seconded the motion. Ms. Marcy shared that the District started the bidding process for the new Upper Elementary Building. Bids went out and were received on Tuesday, Feb 3, 2026, for the first bid package. The original package included both electrical and sitework components; however, due to a necessary last-minute revision to the sitework plans by GMB, only the electrical bids were opened at that time. The sitework bids were extended and opened on February 12, 2026. Due to the late bid opening this week, the current estimated cost for this phase is \$1,815,700. Ms. Marcy will have a final cost breakdown at a later date. It was noted that the bids for the electrical and sitework came in under budget, which is expected to positively impact the overall project and provide flexibility as construction progresses. Ms. Marcy expressed appreciation to GMB and Triangle for their expertise and guidance, noting that they continue to be strong partners throughout the process. The Board of Education voted to approve the Bid Package #1 Upper Elementary Utility Relocation as presented with a vote of 7-0.

**5. Consumer's Energy Easement for 20th Ave Approval:**

Mrs. Mooney motioned to approve the Consumer's Energy Easement for 20th Ave as presented. Mr. Waalkes seconded the motion. Ms. Marcy provided the Board of Education with documentation to review related to an easement request from Consumers Energy for electrical service installation at the new Upper Elementary Building. To complete the installation, which includes relocation of utility poles, Consumers Energy must obtain permission to cross a portion of JPS property. As outlined in the easement documents (Exhibit B), the project requires four 30-foot utility easements (15 feet on each side of the facilities) across designated areas of district property. An easement grants Consumers Energy the legal right to use a specific portion of the property for utility purposes, while ownership of the property remains with JPS, subject to the terms of the agreement. The easement is necessary to allow Consumers Energy to safely install, access, and maintain electrical lines and related equipment. Following completion of the service design and verification of property ownership, formal easement agreements will be provided for signature and notarization. Once all prerequisites, including required inspections, site preparation, payment, and executed easement documents, are completed, the Project Coordinator will work with the district to schedule installation. The Board of Education voted to approve the Consumer's Energy Easement for 20th Ave as presented with a vote of 7-0.

**6. Approval of Wi-Fi and Cabling:**

Dr. Reed motioned to approve the Wi-Fi and Cabling as presented. Mrs. Mooney seconded the motion. Phil Rowley, Director of Technology, provided documentation for the Board of Education regarding Wi-Fi infrastructure upgrades and structured cabling under the E-Rate program. The district currently operates approximately 300 wireless access points across indoor facilities and select outdoor areas. The oldest units, installed in 2015–2016, are nearing the end of vendor support, which will result in discontinued software updates and increased risk of failure. In December 2025, the district engaged its E-Rate consultant and current Wi-Fi vendor to develop bid specifications for replacing aging and unsupported equipment. During this process, it was also determined that portions of the existing network cabling require replacement to ensure compatibility with current performance standards. The project includes both network electronics and structured cabling components. Following the formal E-Rate bid process, which provides a 50% federal reimbursement through Universal Service funding, multiple proposals were evaluated using a scoring rubric. The district identified Vector Tech Group as

the most responsive and responsible bidder, citing over 20 years of satisfactory service to the district, a strong proposed Ruckus Wi-Fi solution, and the lowest cost for the structured cabling portion of the project. The total project cost is \$259,561.78, with an anticipated 50% E-Rate reimbursement of \$129,780.89, resulting in a net district cost of \$129,780.89. The project includes the replacement of 245 of approximately 300 access points, with some adjustments to improve coverage in select areas such as JCA and the High School. More than 50 newer units, including those installed during recent construction projects, will remain in service. The equipment will be ordered immediately after approval, with installation beginning after the close of the current school year and completion anticipated before the start of the 2026–2027 school year. All decommissioned equipment will be disposed of through qualified recycling vendors in an environmentally responsible manner. This purchase will be paid from the General Capital Projects funds. The Board of Education voted to approve the Wi-Fi and Cabling 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.

- **Board Recognition:** Dr. Griffin has earned her level-one Certified Boardmember Award. She has taken all 100-Level CBA Classes (101–109) through MASB, and will be recognized this spring at the General OASBA meeting.
- **Strategic Planning, *Vision 2031*:** In preparation for the next strategic plan, Dr. Graham and his team are visiting different buildings to gather additional feedback, with a few more buildings that they need to go to. District teams will meet across buildings to collect input as part of the planning process. The District will send out surveys to staff, students, and the greater community to get additional feedback. While the strategic plan will not address every topic raised, the primary goal is to identify ways to elevate student learning and ensure students are well prepared for the future.
- **Unified Sports:** The Unified Sports did the Polar Plunge and had more than 50 students and staff participate in the fundraiser. The Georgetown Township Fire Department helped assist with the event.
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences:** The hope is to have all parents attend the conferences. The goal is to encourage active participation, fostering stronger collaboration and meaningful connections between families and teachers.
- **100 Days of School:** Many schools celebrated the 100th day of school, and some students even dressed up like they were 100 years old to celebrate the day.
- **Secondary Schedules:** Students at the secondary level have begun signing up for classes for the upcoming school year. Jenison is a small school district with big opportunities; small enough for students to be known personally, yet large enough to offer a wide range of experiences and programs.
- **Wildcat Gala:** The gala will be held on Tuesday, March 24, 6:00-8:30 pm (Red carpet beforehand, 5:00-6:00 pm) at the JCA and will focus on recognizing the elementary students. It will be a great time to celebrate students. Board members will get a formal invite soon.
- **Athletic News:** The Boys Bowling Team has ranked number one in the state. The team competes at a high level. Fox 17 recently shared a story on the success of the bowling program.
- **Snow Days:** This year, the district has used only four snow days, compared to five to eight in other districts. The state allows up to six “Acts of God” days. Bursley missed an additional three days at the start of the year due to mold. If the district exceeds the allotted days, it will apply for a state waiver, with the hope that it will be approved under reasonable qualifications.
- **New Homes:** There are two areas where houses are being planned to be built. One near Cedar Lake West and the other north of Fillmore. Over 200 homes are expected to be built. Once completed, it will be important to determine which school district each home will be in.

Dr. Hartman paused the Board of Education meeting to announce that the Board would be entering a closed session. He informed the public that the Board of Education would meet in closed session and would not reconvene in open session afterward, and would adjourn after the closed session.

**Purpose Closed Session: Attorney-Client Privilege**

Mr. Waalkes motioned to go into a closed session for Attorney-Client Privilege. Ms. Hogan seconded the motion. President Hartman called a closed session for the Board of Education at 7:25 pm.

A roll call vote was taken:

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

NAYS: none

Abstentions: none

The Board of Education voted to go into closed session with the Administration to discuss matters protected by attorney-client privilege by a roll call vote of 7-0 at 7:25 pm.

The public was dismissed.

**Recess:**

Dr. Hartman called a recess at 7:25 pm to allow the public to leave the meeting and allow for a quick break.

**Reconvene:**

The meeting reconvened at 7:32 pm.

**Closed Session: Attorney-Client Privilege**

The Board and Administration met in a closed session to discuss matters protected by Attorney-Client Privilege.

**Motion to come out of Closed Session:**

Mr. Waalkes motioned to go out of the closed session. Dr. Griffin seconded the motion. A roll call vote was not necessary to end the closed session. The closed session ended at 8:20 pm with a vote of 7-0.

Dr. Hartman declared the Board of Education Closed Session, and no further action or discussion was needed.

**Adjournment:**

The President of the Board of Education, Dr. Hartman, adjourned the Jenison Public Schools Board of Education meeting at 8:20 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)
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	