

**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 9, 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  
Absent: Haskins, Vosberg.  
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:  
Meeting Minutes: 12/08/2025  
Meeting Minutes: 01/12/2026  
Meeting Minutes: 01/28/2026 Board Retreat
  - B. General/Associated Funds - Bills Payable:
    1. General Fund: \$716,714.83
    2. Payroll: \$922,096.15
    3. Food Service: \$33,223.28
    4. Scholarship Fund: \$62,406.16
    5. Public Improvement: \$372,641.34
  - C. Financials  
Motion: Donnelly

Second: Thun  
All ayes, motion carried

7. Communications

A. Class President: Charlie Hart - 9th Grade

Student Senate planned the Winterfest dance which had record attendance. SADD is currently selling candy grams to raise money for Prom. Some students are using the pilot iPads, some are finding it less user friendly compared to their current mac device. Ski Club going to Bittersweet. Robotics are hard at work and getting prepared for competition. Wizard of Oz is our spring musical, March 20, 21, and 22. World Travel Club Give Back Nights scheduled that will help offset cost of the trip to Japan. HS Band Competition in February. Students would like to see a wider variety of food for school lunch. Advisory time, students would like to utilize more of this to do homework and take make-up tests.

8. Committee Report(s)

Finance Committee Meeting - 02/03/2026

9. Review of 2025-2026 Budget Amendments

Director of Finance Pano Arvanitis reported that in 2025 the district levied 18 mills on applicable non-principal residence and non-qualified properties to fund the majority of general operations, generating an estimated \$17.6 million, or approximately 86% of district revenues. Taxable values have generally continued to increase, aside from a slight decline in 2018. The General Fund shows \$18.9 million in local revenue, \$2.2 million in state revenue, and \$96,493 in federal revenue, totaling \$21.4 million. Expenditures total \$21.9 million, with payroll and benefits accounting for roughly 69%. The district maintains a fund balance of 25.73%, equivalent to about 3.1 months of operating expenditures, which aligns with recommended reserve levels.

10. The Superintendent and Business Manager recommend the Board amend the 2025-2026 Budget, as presented per resolution (General Fund)

Motion: Thun  
Second: Summers  
All ayes, motion carried

11. Presentation: Rich Eberly - STEAM Building

During the presentation on STEAM Building usage, an overview was provided highlighting how the space supports engaging, academically oriented learning environments that are peer-supported, interest-driven, and focused on real-world product creation. Examples included cross-curricular projects, instructional activities, special events, recycling initiatives, and hands-on engineering and construction projects that demonstrate how the facility encourages collaboration, creativity, and applied learning opportunities for students.

12. Remarks from the Superintendent

- Studer Education coach Brent Brummet will be on site this Thursday to engage with our cabinet members on leadership development.
- Studer student and parent surveys will be conducted this month, and the employee engagement survey will take place in March.
- Teachers and students have Friday 2/13 and Monday 2/16 off.
- Staff can have coffee w/ the superintendent at the MS/HS tomorrow morning during collaboration time and the elementary on Thursday. This is an opportunity for staff to hear more about district initiatives or gain more knowledge on anything they need so that they feel well informed.

- Tomorrow the MS will be hosting the Native American Heritage of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi. Each year the MS does an experience field trip that focuses on either science, math, history or literature and this year they are not going somewhere for their experience but bringing the experience to NBMS by collaborating with the Pokagon Band. This will be a great opportunity for our students.

13. Remarks from the Board President and Members

President Churchill thanked the chaperones and parents for their efforts in making the Winterfest dance such a success, noting the significant work that went into the event and the outstanding attendance. She also expressed appreciation for the students' contributions at recent board meetings and shared interest in scheduling time to meet with them to discuss their perspectives, ideas, and priorities moving forward.

Superintendent Bowen: We would like to hear directly from students and will begin immediately with grades 9–12, focusing initially on topics such as screen time and whether it is excessive or appropriate. Meetings with middle school and elementary students will follow in the fall, with conversations tailored to specific, age-appropriate topics for each group.

14. Discussion Item(s)

A. 2026 Day Camp Director – Emily Keller returning

B. MASB School Boards 2026 Election:

Charlie Fulbright: Battle Creek Public Schools, Calhoun County

Tiana Harrison: Kalamazoo Public Schools, Kalamazoo County

Elizabeth O'Dell: St. Joseph County ISD, St. Joseph County

C. Superintendent Goals:

A3. Governance & Board Relations: Information - Professional Standards for Education Leaders: 2, 7, 9

C4. Staff Relations: Delegation of Duties - Professional Standards for Education Leaders: 9, 10

E7. Instructional Leadership: Student Voice - Professional Standards for Educational Leaders: 3,5

D. Samantha Niemeyer Resignation Effective 02/20/2026

E. The Superintendent approved the following hire:

Barb Reed – Assistant Girls Tennis Coach

15. Other Business

Motion by President Churchill to elect TiAnna Harrison, MASB Schools Boards Election 2026, seconded by Donnelly. All ayes, motion carried.

16. Adjournment

Motion: Thun

Second: Donnelly

All ayes, motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vanessa Thun, Secretary  
BOARD OF EDUCATION

