**FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
**GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN**

Regular Meeting of the Board of Education
Monday, September 14, 2026
6:30 PM
Forest Hills Administration Building

# Agenda

I. CALL TO ORDER
II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
III. DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHT - Transportation Department
IV. CONSENT GROUPING
- IV.A. Superintendent/Board of Education
  - IV.A.1. Approval of Minutes
- IV.B. Business
  - IV.B.1. Payment of Bills
  - IV.B.2. Snow Removal
  - IV.B.3. Eastern Emergency Responder Amplifier Increase
  - IV.B.4. Property Tax Reimbursement
- IV.C. Instruction
  - IV.C.1. Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) Supplemental Materials
- IV.D. Human Resources
  - IV.D.1. Employment of New Professional Staff
  - IV.D.2. Employment of New Administrative Staff

V. MASB DELEGATE ASSEMBLY
VI. RATIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS - BUS DRIVER ASSOCIATION
VII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS
- VII.A. Resignations

VIII. BOARD COMMUNICATION
IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS
X. ADJOURNMENT

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

September 14, 2026

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR INSTRUCTION

TOPIC: Departmental Highlight – Transportation

The transportation department will share departmental highlights, which include fleet additions, driver recognition, transportation technology, and bus safety programming.

FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

***CONSENT GROUPING***

September 14, 2026

## IV. CONSENT GROUPING

### A. SUPERINTENDENT/BOARD OF EDUCATION

1. Approval of Minutes – Approve the minutes of the August 10, 2026, Regular Meeting.

### B. BUSINESS

1. Payment of Bills – Approve expenditures for the payment of bills for July 2026, as presented.

2. Snow Removal – Approve a three-year contract beginning in 2026-2027 with Katerberg VerHage for snow removal services for an amount not to exceed $974,961.

3. Eastern Emergency Responder Amplifier Increase – Approve the increase in cost for the purchase and installation of a bidirectional amplifier system for Eastern from T&W Electronics Inc. for an amount not to exceed $20,498.

4. Property Tax Reimbursement – Authorize reimbursement of $32,980.76 to Kent County for refunded property taxes.

### C. INSTRUCTION

1. *Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA)* Supplemental Materials – Approve the additional materials request for Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) 3rd Edition, © 2025, from Amplify at a cost not to exceed $268,417.00.

### D. HUMAN RESOURCES

1. Employment of New Professional Staff – Approve the hire and issue contracts to the new professional staff, as presented, for the 2026-2027 school year.

2. Employment of New Administrative Staff – Approve the hire and issue an administrative contract to Timothy Blackmer for the 2026-2027 school year.

**Items included in consent grouping are those that previously have been considered by the Board either in committee or at a prior meeting, or are of such a routine nature that discussion is not required. Board members may request that any item be removed from consent grouping for further discussion if additional information is needed or available.*

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

September 14, 2026

SUPERINTENDENT/BOARD OF EDUCATION

TOPIC: Approval of Minutes

Board of Education approval is requested for the minutes of the August 10, 2026, Regular Meeting.

PROPOSED MOTION:

I move that the Forest Hills Board of Education approve the minutes of the August 10, 2026, Regular Meeting.

FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

Minutes of Regular Meeting of the Board of Education
held on August 10, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

The Forest Hills Board of Education met in regular session on August 10, 2026, at the Administration Building. Vice President Terryn called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Michaud, Terryn, Ninemeier, Kermode, DeBoer

Members Absent: Fauson, Colley

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITION

2026 MHSAA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP RECOGNITION

Student-athletes from Central High School were recognized for their outstanding athletic achievement in winning 2026 MHSAA State Championships in Division 1 Discus, Division 2 100 Yard Freestyle Swimming, and Division 2, Flight 1, Tennis Doubles.

CONSENT GROUPING ITEMS

Motion made by Member Kermode, second by Member Michaud, that the Forest Hills Board of Education approve consent grouping items IV.A.1. – IV.D.1.

Member Terryn, Curriculum Committee Chair, and Member Michaud, Finance Committee Chair, gave their respective committee reports.

AYES: Michaud, DeBoer, Kermode, Ninemeier, Terryn

NAYS: None

Motion carried by a 5-0 roll call vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approved the minutes of the July 9, 2026, Special Meeting.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Approved expenditures for the payment of bills for June 2026, as presented.

| | |
|---|---|
| GENERAL FUND | $19,412,376.95 |
| DEBT FUND | 6,658.96 |
| CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND 2023 | 787,015.87 |
| CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND 2025 | 10,411,401.77 |
| SPECIAL REVENUE FUND | |
| 1. Food Service Fund | 512,744.44 |
| 2. Child Care Fund | 28,337.79 |
| 3. Student/School Activity | 538,703.71 |
| **TOTAL EXPENDITURES** | **$31,697,239.49** |

CENTRAL HIGH STRUCTURED CABLING INCREASE

Approved an increase in the award for Central High structured cabling to Digital Age Technologies Inc. for $30,000.

DIESEL FUEL

Approved utilizing local purchasing options for diesel fuel throughout the 2026-2027 school year at an amount not to exceed $500,000.

TAX REIMBURSEMENT

Authorized reimbursement of $77,834.90 to Kent County for refunded property taxes.

SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Approved the following supplemental instructional resources:

- *Orbiting Jupiter* by Gary D. Schmidt for grade 9 at Central High School

EMPLOYMENT OF NEW PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Approved the hire and issue of contracts to the following new professional staff beginning with the 2026-2027 school year:

- Hannah Anderson, Instructional Coach, Administration Building
- Kendra Austin, Supervisor of Student Support Systems, Orchard View Elementary School
- Adrianna Donahue, Teacher, Orchard View Elementary School
- Laura Gardiner, Teacher, Collins Elementary School
- Rachel Kopka, Teacher, Collins Elementary School
- Celine Linares, Teacher, Ada Vista Elementary School
- Sophia Needham, Teacher, Eastern Middle School
- Bethany Nelson, Teacher, Collins Elementary School
- Lily Newmann, Teacher, Eastern High School
- Nishel Timm, Teacher, Collins Elementary School
- Avery Tuller, Teacher, Northern Trails 5/6 School

RESIGNATIONS

Superintendent Kirby has accepted the following resignations:

- David Albert, Teacher, Central Middle School
- Wesley Beemer, Teacher, Central Woodlands 5/6 School
- Tyler Burns, Teacher, Transitions Center
- Julie Chicoine, Teacher, Collins Elementary School
- Zoe Hebert, Teacher, Eastern Middle School
- Stefani Merchant, Teacher, Ada Elementary School
- Eden VerBeek, Teacher, Knapp Forest Elementary School
- Andrea Young, Occupational Therapist, Student Services

SPECIAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS

Leaves of Absence have been approved per Article X of the Master Agreement for the 2026-2027 school year for the following:

- Lauren Hagan
- Katherine Miller

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Kirby shared the following:

- High school and middle school start and end times have been adjusted for the 2026-2027 school year. The change will be communicated to families.
- Building administrators reported last week. The full leadership team has been meeting for professional learning, to share departmental updates, and review and discuss experience survey data.
- K-5 teachers have been working over the summer on new curriculum.
- New instructional staff were welcomed to FHPS today.
- Early release day programming options have been shared with families.
- A communication from the Transportation Department with back-to-school information will be shared with families this week.
- Fall sports have officially started.
- The opening day event for staff is August 20, 2026, at 8 a.m., at the Fine Arts Center.
- All employment contracts except for the transportation group have been approved by the board. Negotiations are ongoing with the transportation group.
- The district is adding freshman soccer at Northern High School.
- An updated district website will be launched on August 19.
- Barring any unforeseen circumstances, our facilities will be ready to welcome students on August 26, 2026, the first day of school.
- There are still opportunities to host international students if a family is interested.

AASA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Superintendent Kirby requested Board approval to attend the 2027 AASA National Conference in Atlanta, GA, along with related travel/conference expenses.

Motion by Member Kermode, support by Member Ninemeier, to approve Superintendent Kirby's attendance at the 2027 AASA National Conference, along with related travel/conference expenses.

AYES: Michaud, Kermode, DeBoer, Ninemeier, Terryn

NAYS:

Motion passed by a 5-0 roll call vote.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Member Terryn expressed appreciation for the summer theater program for the younger students in the district.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Vice President Terryn shared the format for the public comment portion of the meeting.

The board received comments from one member of the audience regarding Board Policy 5407.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice President Terryn inquired if there was other business of the board. Hearing none, she adjourned the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Malorie Ninemeier, Secretary
Forest Hills Board of Education

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

September 14, 2026

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR FINANCE AND OPERATIONS Julie Davis

TOPIC: Payment of Bills

The financial report is presented for Board approval and includes the following information:

Summary of Bills Payable

PROPOSED MOTION:

I move that the Forest Hills Board of Education approve expenditures for the payment of bills for July 2026, as presented.

| | |
|---|---|
| GENERAL FUND | 21,445,170.79 |
| DEBT FUND | 3,815.02 |
| CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND 2023 | 5,590.00 |
| CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND 2025 | 8,453,209.68 |
| SPECIAL REVENUE FUND | |
| Food Service | 126,620.69 |
| Childcare | 24,372.35 |
| Student/School Activity | 81,000.50 |
| **TOTAL EXPENDITURES** | |
| | **$30,139,779.03** |

# Forest Hills Public Schools
## Disbursements
For Month Ended July 2026

| Fund | General Checking | | | Debt Service | Payroll Checking | | | Flex Checking - Employee Flexible Spending Accounts | | Total Disbursements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Checks (326152-326360) | ACH Checks (V101254-V101377) | ACH & Wire Disbursements | ACH Disbursement October / April | Checks (329674) | Direct Deposit Payments | ACH & Wire Disbursements | Manual Payments | Debit Card Payments | |
| General | $ 3,236,455.09 | $ 481,853.06 | $ 5,815,429.57 | | $ 791.51 | $ 4,954,869.95 | $ 6,725,204.22 | $ 3,147.88 | $ 3,726.52 | $ 21,221,477.80 |
| General, Athletics | 64,056.56 | 60,052.00 | 13,348.57 | | | | | | | 137,457.13 |
| General, Grants | 25,998.72 | 59,262.27 | 974.87 | | | | | | | 86,235.86 |
| **GENERAL SUBTOTAL** | **3,326,510.37** | **601,167.33** | **5,829,753.01** | | **791.51** | **4,954,869.95** | **6,725,204.22** | **3,147.88** | **3,726.52** | **21,445,170.79** |
| Debt Service | 3,815.02 | | | | | | | | | 3,815.02 |
| Capital Projects-2023 | 5,590.00 | | | | | | | | | 5,590.00 |
| Capital Projects-2025 | 12,122.37 | 8,441,087.31 | | | | | | | | 8,453,209.68 |
| Special Revenue Fund | | | | | | | | | | |
| Food Service | 14,967.00 | 111,653.69 | | | | | | | | 126,620.69 |
| Child Care | 11,496.66 | 920.00 | 11,955.69 | | | | | | | 24,372.35 |
| Student/School Activity | 34,948.57 | 14,040.48 | 32,011.44 | | | | | | | 81,000.50 |
| | $ 3,409,449.99 | $ 9,168,868.82 | $ 5,873,720.14 | $ - | $ 791.51 | $ 4,954,869.95 | $ 6,725,204.22 | $ 3,147.88 | $ 3,726.52 | $ 30,139,779.03 |

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

September 14, 2026

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

TOPIC: Snow Removal

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve a three-year contract beginning in 2026-2027 with Katerberg VerHage for snow removal services for an amount not to exceed $974,961. This has been reviewed by the Board Finance Committee and is recommended for Board approval.

PROPOSED MOTION:

I move that the Forest Hills Public Schools Board of Education approve a three-year contract beginning in 2026-2027 with Katerberg VerHage for snow removal services for an amount not to exceed $974,961.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

September 14, 2026

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

TOPIC: Eastern Emergency Responder Amplifier Increase

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the increase in cost for the purchase and installation of a bidirectional amplifier system for Eastern from T & W Electronics Inc. for an amount not to exceed $20,498. This has been reviewed by the Board Finance Committee and is recommended for Board approval.

PROPOSED MOTION:

I move that the Forest Hills Public Schools Board of Education approve the increase in cost for the purchase and installation of a bidirectional amplifier system for Eastern from T & W Electronics Inc. for an amount not to exceed $20,498.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

September 14, 2026

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

TOPIC: Property Tax Reimbursement

It is recommended that the Board of Education authorize reimbursement of $32,980.76 to Kent County for refunded property taxes. This has been reviewed by the Board Finance Committee and is recommended for Board approval.

PROPOSED MOTION:

I move that the Forest Hills Public Schools Board of Education authorize reimbursement of $32,980.76 to Kent County for refunded property taxes.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

September 14, 2026

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR INSTRUCTION

TOPIC: Request for the purchase of Core Knowledge Language Arts supplemental materials

The Instruction Department is recommending that the Board of Education approve the purchase of classroom materials for *Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) 3rd Edition* © 2025 from Amplify for Grades K-5 to support students in English language arts for an amount not to exceed $268,417.00. This has been reviewed by the Board Finance Committee and is recommended for Board of Education approval.

PROPOSED MOTION:

I move that the Forest Hills Board of Education approve the additional materials request for *Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) 3rd Edition* © 2025 from Amplify at a cost not to exceed $268,417.00.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

September 14, 2026

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

TOPIC: Employment of New Professional Staff

The administration is recommending the employment for the following new staff members with the start of the 2026-2027 school year:

| New Hire | Position | Building | Vacancy Due to: |
|---|---|---|---|
| Erica Abel | 5th Grade Teacher | Orchard View Elementary | Transfer |
| Melissa Baker | Special Education Teacher | Transitions Center | Resignation |
| Lillian Boeve | Kindergarten Teacher | Knapp Forest | Resignation |
| Alex Coon | Physical Education Teacher | Central High | Resignation |
| Catherine Dalman | 4th Grade Teacher | Thornapple | Transfer |
| Jessica Hoogstrate | Speech Language Pathologist | Student Services | Retirement |
| Anneka Katje | 6th Grade Teacher | Eastern Middle | Resignation |
| Andrew Laarman | Woodshop Teacher | Central Middle | Resignation |
| Hannah Long | Kindergarten Teacher | Ada Elementary | Leave of Absence |
| Melanie McGinty | 1st Grade Teacher | Meadow Brook Elementary | Transfer |
| Evangelia Niqula | Orchestra Teacher | Northern Trails | Additional Section |
| Katie Rieffenberger | 3rd Grade Teacher | Pine Ridge | Transfer |
| Rachel Spencer | Occupational Therapist | Student Services | Resignation |

PROPOSED MOTION:

I move that the Forest Hills Board of Education approve the hire and issue contracts to Erica Abel, Melissa Baker, Lillian Boeve, Alex Coon, Catherine Dalman, Jessica Hoogstrate, Anneka Katje, Andrew Laarman, Hannah Long, Melanie McGinty, Evangelia Niqula, Katie Rieffenberger, and Rachel Spencer for the 2026-2027 school year.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

September 14, 2026

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

TOPIC: Employment of New Administrative Staff

The administration is recommending the employment of the following new staff members:

| New Hire | Position | Building | Vacancy Due to: |
|---|---|---|---|
| Timothy Blackmer | Director of Technology | Administration | Retirement |

PROPOSED MOTION:

I move that the Forest Hills Board of Education approve the hire and issue an administrative contract to Timothy Blackmer for the 2026-2027 school year.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

September 14, 2026

SUPERINTENDENT/BOARD OF EDUCATION

TOPIC: MASB Delegate Assembly

MASB's 2026 Delegate Assembly takes place on Thursday, October 15, 2026. Delegates selected by the boards of education across the state will decide MASB's positions on a wide variety of issues affecting education. All delegates and alternates must be school board members, and certified by their board of education.

PROPOSED MOTION:

I move that the Forest Hills Board of Education certify ____ as the voting delegate at the MASB Annual Leadership Conference Delegate Assembly on October 15, 2026.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

September 14, 2026

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

TOPIC: Ratification of Employment Contracts – Forest Hills Bus Driver Association

The Forest Hills Board of Education and the Forest Hills Bus Driver Association reached an agreement on wages and benefits from July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027 and is being presented for approval.

- One-year agreement
  - 2026-27:
    - Step and five percent (5%) increase on the salary schedule
    - Five percent (5%) increase on the trip rate and the bus washer rate
    - Lift bus premium $1.50
    - Annual lump sum longevity payment
      - 5-9 years continuous service $200
      - 10-14 years continuous service $400
      - 15+ years continuous service $600
    - Wage increases will be retroactive for regular/scheduled hours worked from July 1, 2026 through contract ratification date and will be paid in a one-time lump sum payment prior to December 1, 2026
- Additional information as attached in the wage and benefit agreement

PROPOSED MOTION:

I move that the Forest Hills Board of Education approve the wage and benefit agreement for the Forest Hills Bus Driver Association.

# Wage and Benefit Agreement
# By
# The Forest Hills Public School District
# For
# The Forest Hills Bus Drivers Association

## Duration of Contract

One-year agreement, July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027

## Compensation Wages

- 2026-2027
  - Step and five percent (5%) increase on the salary schedule
  - Five percent (5%) increase on the trip rate and the bus washer rate
  - Lift bus premium $1.50
  - Annual lump sum longevity payment
    - 5-9 years continuous service $200
    - 10-14 years continuous service $400
    - 15+ years continuous service $600
  - Wage increases will be retroactive for regular/scheduled hours worked from July 1, 2026 through contract ratification date and will be paid in a one-time lump sum payment prior to December 1, 2026
- Electronic Time Keeping
  - Drivers are required to use the district's electronic time keeping system to record their work time, including but not limited to, pre-trip, post-trip, and driving. Work time includes regular routes, shuttles, trips, and bus washing. Hours will be paid on actual time recorded in the electronic time keeping system. Drivers shall communicate any proposed adjustments to recorded time in the electronic time keeping system. Hours of routes during route selection are considered estimates. Route times may be modified for additional stops due to new ridership. Major changes will be communicated with the driver.

## Benefits

- Cash in Lieu of Medical Benefits
  - In lieu of subscribing to the Board provided health insurance, an eligible employee may select the cash in lieu option equal to the amount listed below. Cash in lieu will be disbursed over 24 pay periods and will not be paid on the third pay of the month. If 30 employees district-wide change from medical coverage to cash-in-lieu for January 1, 2027, the cash-in-lieu amount increases to $6,000. If 30 employees district-wide do not change for January 1, 2027, it remains at $3,500.

- Bereavement Leave

- Four (4) days without deduction from sick leave will be granted by the District for immediate family, which is defined as the employee's spouse or domestic partner, child/step child, parent/parent-in-law/step parent, sibling/step sibling, or grandparent/grandparent-in-law for bereavement without deduction from sick leave. One (1) additional day of sick leave may be authorized by the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources.
- Employees may use up to one (1) day of sick leave to attend a funeral for non-immediate family.

- Vacation
  - For Drivers Hired August 1, 2013 or later:
  - Two (2) vacation days will be granted on the first day driving a regular route.
  - Four (4) days of vacation will be granted after one (1) year of service.
  - Six (6) days of vacation will be granted after two (2) years of service.
  - Eight (8) days of vacation will be granted after three (3) years of service.
  - Twelve (12) vacation days will be granted annually after four (4) years of service.

  Any unused vacation days remaining as of June 30 each year will be forfeited

  If an employee's active status changes prior to the end of their contract year, all leave banks will be prorated. Any time used that was unearned will be required to be paid back to the district.

- Sick Leave
  - Drivers shall be granted eight (8) sick days per year

- Attendance Incentive
  - If a regular driver has no absences, with the exception of the district provided bereavement leave, from the first scheduled work day through November 30, a $100 payment will be made on the second pay date in December provided the employee is still active at the time of payment.
  - If a regular driver has no absences, with the exception of the district provided bereavement leave, from December 1 through February 28/29, a $100 payment will be made on the second pay date in March provided the employee is still active at the time of payment.
  - If a regular driver has no absences, with the exception of the district provided bereavement leave, from March 1 through the last scheduled school day, a $100 payment will be made on the second pay date in June provided the employee is still active at the time of payment.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

September 14, 2026

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

TOPIC: Resignations

Superintendent Kirby has accepted the following resignations:

| Name | Position | Building |
|---|---|---|
| Caleigh Gainey | Social Worker | Student Services |
| Colin Gallagher | Teacher | Northern High |
| Lindsey Handley | Teacher | Collins Elementary |