

**GRAND HAVEN AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Meeting Minutes - Regular Board Meeting**  
**March 10, 2025**

The Board of Education met on Monday, March 10, 2025, at 7:30 pm at Lakeshore Middle School.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by President Nichol Stack. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Present: Boyd, Casemier, Eickholt, Herrygers, Holt, Stack, and Treutler

Absent: none

Also present: Kristin Perkowski, Michael MacDonald, Mary Jane Evink, Sara VanderZee, Cecil Hammond, Rachel Poel, Alex Harsay, Jason Lawson, Kevin Blanding, Jeff Marcus, Shelley Hammond, Andrea Hughes and approximately 180 audience members.

**17-717** Trustee Eickholt moved that the Consent Agenda be approved as follows:

- Minutes of the February 10, 2025 special workshop and regular board meetings
- Payment of Bills for February

Accounts Payable- \$1,734,792.16  
Expenditures Previously  
Approved by Board Treasurer  
Payroll \$3,843,994.39  
2020 Building & Site Bond \$ 46.04  
Ref Pay February, 2025 \$ 20,439  
Edustaff, contracted staff and subs \$ 158,439.68  
PNC credit card (credit on account) \$27,445.98

Trustee Treutler seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED 7 - 0**

The following announcements were shared by Superintendent Perkowski:

Tri-Cities Kiwanis Club was recognized as the March Grand Partner of the Month. For the past four years, the club has been raising money in honor of the late Sandy Huber, former White Pines Intermediate Principal, and donating it to local schools through the Sandy Huber Reading Improvement Program. Kiwanis President Bill Swano and Secretary Ellen Eich spoke about the ways the club has supported the community over the past twenty years including with 17 circuses on Harbor Island, 20 Santa Houses, 17 Salmon Tournaments, raising over \$700,000 for pediatric cancer kids, and funding handicap vans for handicap kids. Through the Sandy Huber Reading Program the club donates to 14 schools helping grades first through fourth improve students' reading.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Thirty-nine audience members spoke during public comment, mostly about the Mary A. White proposal to transition the building from an elementary to an early childhood center.

The Board went into a recess at 9:33pm and reconvened at 9:45pm.

**INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES:**

Mary Jane Evink introduced Aaron Dean, Assistant Principal, who presented the Board with an update on Lakeshore Middle School's Positive Behavior Interventions & Support (PBIS). The staff have worked hard this year to improve and use their PBIS system across all classes, trying to get to the root cause of student

behaviors. Interventions take place school-wide and individually with celebrations held when appropriate. Data from the last four years show this year is on track to be the best year, yet, confirming that their systems are working. iReady testing was just completed and staff will be making instructional decisions around that data. ELA teachers had students graph their individual performance from the fall and winter to assist with reflection and setting new goals for the remainder of the school year.

#### BUSINESS SERVICES:

Superintendent Perkowski introduced Mary Jane Evink and Michael MacDonald as the team presented the proposed Mary A. White Transition Plan. Perkowski spoke about her 30-60-90 day plan which was based on feedback from being out in the community before she was hired and continued through September when the plan was completed, and then shared with the Board at the October retreat. She reviewed what has been accomplished as a result of the plan including many meetings with community stakeholders, engagement sessions and meetings with staff. Through the strategic planning process a community survey will be sent out soon for additional district planning input.

The superintendent reviewed what was discussed at the October Retreat including challenges learned through community engagements, declining enrollment, a need for early childhood programming, housing challenges, and a projected high number of teachers who are retirement eligible.

Michael MacDonald, Director of Business Services, provided a brief financial review from the recent Finance & Operations Committee meeting. Enrollment is down due to declining birth rate, housing, and alternative education options leading to a continued inefficient utilization of our facilities and decreased revenue. The governor's proposed budget, received in February, also showed a loss in revenue. Wages, retirement costs and health insurance costs are all expected to increase. Overall, the 2025-26 budget forecast is estimated to be a \$5.5M deficit if nothing changes. 90% of our costs are personnel and the goal is to not lay people off. Instead, the District is looking at diversified cost containment strategies which might include outsourcing select services, transitioning Mary A. White to an early childhood center, reducing benefit eligible positions, and adjusting benefit structures.

A Mary A. White Analysis showed savings of \$1.2M from staffing reductions and additional transportation costs of about \$47,250 after the first year for a consistent savings of over \$1.15M. Further data looking at our elementary schools showed an average of 63% of students live within their elementary boundary. Only 33% of Mary A. White students live within the school's boundary. Transitioning Lake Hills Elementary or Robinson Elementary might cause a potential loss of students to nearby districts. Ferry Elementary has a second story and students second grade and below cannot go to the second floor due to building code. Griffin Elementary is already struggling with capacity and traffic concerns. Rosy Mound Elementary has a safety concern of kids crossing Lakeshore Drive to get to Rosy Mound Park.

Mary Jane Evink spoke about the curriculum benefits of the proposed Mary A. White transition plan. Bringing the youngest learners to one building improves teacher collaboration leading to greater student growth in less time, focused support and more timely feedback from director and itinerant staff. GHAPS has been in a pilot program with Outdoor Discovery Center for two years with our Y5 classes and we are seeing great progress. Nature based learning increases student engagement, school-ready behavior, and experiential learning.

Travis Williams with the Outdoor Discovery Center spoke about their past partnership with GHAPS and their potential partnership with the proposed Mary A. White transition. The ODC Network does outdoor education and conservation work with a staff of over 200 and has over 400 students in their preschool programs. ODC is seeing a significant reduction in behaviors and an increase in math scores and ELA by getting kids outside. Their team has built over 35 play spaces with their certified staff and ODC schools are all full with many on a waiting list. ODC would cover the entire outside portion of transitioning Mary A. White with \$2M of funding they received from a one-time Ottawa County grant in response to the need for more early childhood services in the

county. GHAPS would continue to own the building. ODC would also assist with restoring the outdoor landscape in regards to invasive species, erosion problems, and creating a healthier environment. Their naturalist team would work with teachers and students on how to use the environment in a respectful way.

The superintendent explained that the transition process would need operational feedback from people close to the process. Board members asked the superintendent's team clarifying questions around financial options and findings of early childhood learning.

**17-718** Motion by Trustee Eickholt to approve the repurposing of Mary A. White Elementary School into an early childhood learning center for preschool and Young Fives classes, and by reassigning and absorbing Mary A. White Elementary kindergarten through fourth grades into the District's other elementary buildings.

Trustee Holt seconded the motion.

Discussion held among Board members.

**17-719** Motion by Trustee Herrygers to table the Mary A. White transition plan decision.

Seconded by Trustee Casemier.

Discussion held among Board members about tabling the decision for two weeks.

Trustee Holt requested a roll call vote for this motion: Herrygers - yes, Treutler - no, Casemier - yes, Holt - no, Eickholt - no, Boyd - no, Stack - no. **Motion failed 2 - 5**

**(17-718)** Trustee Holt requested a Roll Call Vote for the original Mary A. White transition plan motion: Herrygers - no, Treutler - yes, Casemier - no, Holt - yes, Eickholt - yes, Boyd - yes, Stack - yes. **Motion passed 5 - 2**

**17-720** Motion by Trustee Treutler to approve the memorandum of understanding between Grand Haven Area Public Schools and ODC Network as presented.

Seconded by Trustee Boyd.

Discussion regarding the MOU. Clarification was given by the ODC that once licensing is determined, the capacity can then be determined. **Motion carried 7 - 0**

## HUMAN SERVICES:

Safety Update was provided by Superintendent Perkowski. The Raptor Visitor Management System has been deployed to all the buildings. Radio system infrastructure install will be completed by the end of March and radios will be deployed to buildings soon after with training. Staff from the IT Department and Director of Safety and Security have met with leadership at each building to look at PA system upgrades and review potential problem areas. The new radio and PA systems will improve communication between buildings especially during an emergency. Schools are now required to have a reunification plan. District leadership will have a reunification exercise later this month and a live drill will be done in June. Board would like a deeper look at the safety & security plan, possibly at the next meeting.

Our Board policy provider is being changed from Neola to Thrun Law to ensure legal and administrative guidelines are aligned. Administrators close to implementing these policies will be at the table to provide feedback.

SUPERINTENDENT:


MHSAA just started recognizing girls wrestling and our GHAPS girls wrestling team won the first ever State Championship. The team will be recognized at next month's Board meeting. Our next Soup with the Superintendent is March 12, 1:30pm at Lakeside Eats. Girls basketball won by 8 points placing them in the regional semi-finals.

PRESIDENT:

Policy updates will be a big undertaking and will need community input.

There being no further agenda items, President Stack adjourned the meeting at 11:59PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristal Boyd". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kristal" and last name "Boyd" clearly distinguishable.

Kristal Boyd, Secretary

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