

# Board of Education Meeting

Liberty School Board Room

March 11, 2025, at 6:30 PM



## MINUTES

### Mission

*We, the Saline Area Schools, will equip all students with the knowledge, technological proficiency, and personal skills necessary to succeed in an increasingly complex society. We expect that our students, staff, and the Saline Community will share in these responsibilities.*

### OPENING

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Education Meeting of March 11, 2025 was called to order by President Michael McVey at 6:30 pm.

**Board Members Present:** Tim Austin, Darcy Berwick, Brad Gerbe, Lauren Gold, Michael McVey, Jennifer Steben and Jason Tizedes

**Central Administration Present:** Superintendent Laatsch, Assistant Superintendent's Baaki Diglio and Owsley, Executive Directors Clary, Davis, and Voelker

#### 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

#### 3. PUBLIC COMMENT

**STUDENTS - None**

**OTHER PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS - None**

#### **EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENT**

Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) - Daisie Scharmen

Provided the Board an update on the purposes and activities of the SEAC. The primary purpose of SEAC is to support, advise, and recommend processes and standards for delivering special education

and services for Saline Area Schools. Membership consists of parents, staff and administrators. Activities have included playground meetings, socialization activities, professional development, parent/caregiver coffee chats, fundraising, participation in superintendent search.

4. **RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC COMMENT**

<b>AGENDA</b>
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5. **REVISIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION** made by Treasurer Gerbe, support Trustee Tizedes **to amend the agenda as follows:**

**Add:**

Under Action Items - Add F - the approval to purchase HVAC equipment

Under Discussion Items - Add D - Athletics Review.

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

6. **STUDENT SHOWCASE**

**Costa Rica Cultural Immersion Experience**

*Presenters: SHS AP Spanish Students Lizzie White & Ethan Hornberger*

*Advisor: Astrid Leese*

The AP Spanish Class recently took a trip to Alajeula, Costa Rica. 24 students participated. The students lived with host families to truly immerse themselves in the culture and language. The tours were conducted entirely in Spanish. The itinerary included a plantation visit, a school visit in Aquiares, ziplining and hot springs, visit to a coffee plantation and La Paz Waterfalls, a visit to the Manuel Antonio National Park, and on the last day had a pool day in addition to cooking and dancing classes. Appreciation to the Board for giving them this opportunity for travel.

7. **ACTION ITEMS**

A. **MOTION** made by Trustee Austin, support Treasurer Gerbe **to adopt the Proposed 2024-25 General Fund Budget Amendment as submitted by Assistant Superintendent Owsley.**

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

B. **MOTION** made by Vice President Steben, support Trustee Tizedes **to approve the 25/26 School of Choice Guidelines as recommended by Superintendent Laatsch.**

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

- C. **MOTION** made by Vice President Steben, support Trustee Gold **that the Board of Education designate the Superintendent the determining factor of assault as submitted by Carol Baaki Diglio, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources.**

Ayes: McVey

Nayes: Austin, Berwick, Gerbe, Gold, Steben, Tizedes

**MOTION DENIED 1-6**

- D. **MOTION** made by Vice President Steben, support Trustee Austin **to approve the purchase of (1) 2025 Ford Reg Cab F-250 4x4 Grounds vehicle from Gorno Brothers as recommended by Rex Clary, Executive Director of Operations. This purchase is through the MiDeal Purchasing Cooperative. The cost is \$46,418.46.**

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

- E. **MOTION** made by Secretary Berwick, support Treasurer Gerbe **to amend the 2025 approved BOE meeting schedule moving September 23 to September 30 in acknowledgement of Rosh Hashanah as submitted by President McVey.**

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

- F. **MOTION** made by Trustee Gerbe, support Trustee Tizedes **to approve the purchase of HVAC equipment through Trane for \$1,229,784 and controls in the amount of \$412,525 for MS renovations as recommended by Rex Clary, Executive Director of Operations.**

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

**8. SCHEDULED REPORT**

- A. **Safety & Security Report**

*Presenter: Dan Karrick, Director of Safety & Security*

The district has implemented new standard response protocols as of this current school year. These standard response protocols are designed to provide clear common language for safety and security in our schools during emergencies. Recently adopted by the Michigan State Police and Office of School Safety, the district is following the protocols as developed by the "I Love You Guys" foundation, a nonprofit organization from Colorado. This is the recommended terminology for all schools in Michigan. The standard response protocols include: Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate and Shelter. Director Karrick detailed each protocol.

Additional safety measures include ongoing updates and improvements to the Emergency Operations Plan, Gaggle which alerts administrators to potential computer activity issues,

Behavior Threat Assessments which address potential threats, and the Visitor Emergency Notifications which is a method to share security protocols with visitors at school events.

Additional updates include staff training in visitor access protocols, standardization of drill procedures and notifications, and the use of standard response protocol aids for consistency as students transition between schools. Background checks are conducted for access control, visitors, chaperones, coaches with the goal to have a consistent plan for all individuals ensuring thoroughness for everyone.

**9. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**A. Finance Committee Update**

*Chair, Brad Gerbe*

The Finance Committee met previous to the Board meeting to discuss the budget amendment and Bulletin 1014. Bulletin 1014 is a document released annually in February providing a summary of the previous year's school district expenditures categorized by per-pupil instructional salaries, revenue sources, and expenditures for instructional support, business administration, operation and maintenance. The analysis of Bulletin 1014 reveals insights into spending. The official pupil count is still pending.

**B. Policy Committee Update**

*Chair, Lauren Gold*

The Policy Committee met previous to the Board meeting to discuss both Neola Policy updates as well as some recommended district edits to policies.

Policy 5540 Student Interrogation: Administrators are seeking clarity on the confidentiality of filing reports and when/how parents are contacted. Proposed language recommended by legal counsel was discussed. This policy will appear as a discussion item on April 8th.

Policy 5517.02 Transgender and NonBinary Students: District legal counsel recommends removing Title IX references. This policy will appear as a discussion item on April 8th.

Several Neola updates were discussed. (1) Policy 5500 Student Conduct, guidance on the appropriate use of AI vs. academic honesty (2) Policy 5340 Student Accidents, new state law requires districts to have an official cardiac events plan (3) Policy 5330.02 Opioid Antagonists, requirement to reference the term "Narcan" and (4) Policy 3120.08 Employment of Personnel for Co-Curricular/Extra-Curricular which requires that starting in the 25/26 school year a high school athletic coach must hold a valid certification in CPR and the use of an AED. These four policies will be moved to the consent agenda for the April 8th meeting. A packet will be created and shared with the full board for their review prior to the meeting.

The next Policy Committee meeting is Tuesday, March 18th at 5:30 pm.

**C. Superintendent Search**

*Jay Bennett, MASB Assistant Executive Director of Search Services*

Jay Bennett presented the collected data from the Superintendent Survey, which closed on March 9th. He provided an overview of the number of respondents and their demographic makeup before summarizing key findings. The survey responses highlighted the district's strengths and challenges, the preferred prior positions and areas of expertise for the next superintendent, leadership style preferences, and essential skills and experiences. Notably, consistency in leadership and follow-through were highly valued. Other key qualities included affirming and valuing staff, maintaining visibility, responsiveness to students, visibility and accessibility, strong communication skills, and a solid understanding of school finances.

The overall results indicated a desire for change while preserving the district's existing strengths.

Following the presentation, the Board collaborated with Mr. Bennett to finalize the job posting, which will remain open until April 8th.

**D. Athletic Review**

*Facilitator, President McVey*

President McVey summarized the meeting he had with Scott Robertson who will be contracted to do the third-party review of the Athletic Dept. The review will not examine handling of fees, facilities, fundraising or resource allocation. The cost was reduced after reducing the scope, and is not to exceed \$10K.

There was discussion regarding the progress report that was compiled by Wayne Welton who was brought in by Superintendent Laatsch to provide mentorship to the Athletic Director last fall.

The Board is asking for a comprehensive report detailing strengths and weaknesses of the athletic department and programs to be received by no later than June 30, 2025 and/or prior to the retirement of Superintendent Laatsch.

**10. ADMINISTRATION / BOARD UPDATES**

**Student Representatives:** All HS bands received the highest rating at the recent MSBOA music festivals. Hoping all goes well regarding teacher contracts.

**Treasurer Gerbe:** Acknowledged SEA members who attended the meeting tonight. Good luck to students participating in DECA state finals.

**Secretary Berwick:** Acknowledged SEA members who attended the meeting tonight. Feels that the entire district has the best interest of students at heart. Has trust in the Athletic Department that they

are doing a good job. As with all things, there is always room for improvement. Will be attending CARES meeting March 12th.

**President McVey:** Thank you for everyone's support of the Polar Plunge. Saline Trapshooting will be inviting Board members to an upcoming competition.

**Vice President Steben:** Acknowledgement to spring sports, start of trimester 3 and all families of Saline graduates preparing for commencement. Foundation for Saline Area Schools meeting was today. Thank you to the community for their support of the recent fundraiser. Over \$90K was raised. Nice to see so many new families in attendance at the fundraising event.

**Trustee Gold:** Acknowledgement to the MS Orchestra for their high marks received at MSBOA music festivals. Also acknowledgement to International Women's Day and all the strong women in our district.

**Trustee Tizedes:** Attended a Science Olympiad practice recently. Also participated in 2 Shark Tanks events with Mrs. Stucky's class. Very exciting to experience the learning that is taking place in our district and offered to partner with students in real-life opportunities.

**11. CONSENT AGENDA**

**MOTION** made by Secretary Berwick, support Vice President Steben **to authorize the Consent Agenda as printed:**

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

- A. **Approval** of the Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes of February 25, 2025
- B. **Approval of Payment** of the General Fund Accounts Payable of March 11, 2025, in the amount of \$1,941,965.87
- C. **Approval of Payment** of the Bond Fund Series III Accounts Payable of March 11, 2025 in the amount of \$20,885.23
- D. **Approval of Payment** of 2023 Bond Fund Series I Accounts Payable of March 11, 2025, in the amount of \$325,203.15
- E. **Receive and File** Human Resources Report

<b>CLOSING</b>
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**12. ITEMS SCHEDULED ON THE NEXT AGENDA**

Michigan Continuous Improvement Process (MiCIP) Teaching & Learning Update

13. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

STUDENTS - None

**OTHER PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS**

**Ryan Davidson** - Spoke regarding a district employee

**Amy Tesolin** - Spoke in support of our teachers

**Susan Estep** - Spoke expressing concern about Executive Orders attacking DEI

**Sarah Fabian** - Spoke in support of our teachers and DEI efforts in the district

**Eric John Roberts** - Informed the board that he was running for the WISD Board of Education this year.

**Libby Williams** - Spoke in support of teachers and keeping inclusivity in the forefront for all students.

14. **NEXT MEETING**

The next Board of Education Meeting will be held on April 8, 2025, at 6:30 PM.

15. **CLOSED SESSION**

**The Board Entered Closed Session** at 10:15 pm, with the intent to re-enter Open Session at approximately 11 pm, for the purpose to:

1. For a school board to consider security planning to address existing threats or prevent potential threats to the safety of the students and staff under Section 8(k)
2. Superintendent Evaluation under Section 8(a).
3. Discuss matters under Attorney/Client Privilege that are exempt from disclosure pursuant to state and federal law under Section 8(h).

Under Sections 8(a), 8(h), 8(k) a 2/3 roll call vote is required.

Austin - Aye

Berwick - Aye

Gerbe - Aye

Gold - Aye

McVey - Aye

Steben - Aye

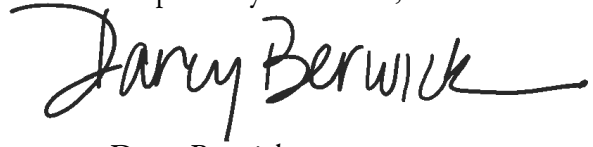
Tizedes - Aye

16. **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** made by Secretary Berwick, support Trustee Austin **to adjourn the Regular Board of Education Meeting of March 11, 2025, at 12:21 AM.**

Ayes - All present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darcy Berwick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Darcy Berwick  
Board Secretary

*Recorded by: Betty Jabnke*