

Board of Education Meeting

Liberty School Board Room

April 22, 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

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

Central Administration Present: Superintendent Laatsch, Assistant Superintendents Baaki Diglio and Owsley, Executive Directors Clary and Davis

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOGNITION

Washtenaw United Girls Hockey Team

The Washtenaw United Girls Hockey Team was honored for their achievements this season. The regular season was highlighted by reclaiming the coveted Treetop trophy. They also beat rival Pioneer 3 times over the course of the season. This season's team had the most players, most wins, most goals, most shutouts, 1st 20 goal scorer, and 1st 40 point player. The team thanks the school staff, Saline Athletic Department, Superintendent and school board for their continuing support.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

STUDENTS - None

OTHER PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS

Susan Estep, Parent - Spoke regarding proposed changes to Policy 5517.02 and recommends keeping the Title IX reference in the policy.

5. **RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC COMMENT**

AGENDA

6. **REVISIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION made by Secretary Berwick, support Treasurer Gerbe **to approve the agenda as revised.**

Revision to agenda made by President McVey: Under 9. Discussion Item, add:

B. Compensation Committee Update

C. Third Party Review of Athletics Department

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

7. **ACTION ITEMS**

A. **MOTION** made by Trustee Austin, support Secretary Berwick **to follow the recommendation of Nova Environmental, Inc. in awarding the Bid #1 for the Abatement Contractor to Martin & Associates Environmental, LLC for the Summer 2025 project at Saline Middle School in the amount of \$225,679 as submitted by Rex Clary, Executive Director of Operations.**

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

B. **MOTION** made by Vice President Steben, support Trustee Tizedes **to accept the recommendation to purchase two (2) Model year 2026 IC 77 Passenger School Buses at a combined cost of \$310,840 from Midwest Transit as submitted by Rex Clary, Executive Director of Operations. This purchase will be through the MSBO Cooperative bus purchase program.**

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

C. **MOTION** made by Treasurer Gerbe, support Trustee Austin **to approve the Closed Session Minutes of April 8, 2025 for the purpose to discuss confidential attorney-client communication pursuant to Section 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act.**

Ayes: Austin, Berwick, Gerbe, Gold, McVey, Tizedes (Steben abstain, was absent 4/8/25)
MOTION CARRIED 6-0

- D. MOTION** made by Vice President Steben, support Treasurer Gerbe **to approve the Round II distribution of CARES Discretionary Funds in the amount of \$88,500 as recommended by the CARES Advisory Council and submitted by Brian Puffer, Director of Community Education.** The breakdown is as follows:

Best Life Art Fairs & Festival (Dementia Friendly Saline): \$12,000
Liberty Club Transportation (Liberty Club): \$20,000
Liberty Theater Upgrade Project (Saline Community Education): \$20,000
Saline Park Improvements (City of Saline Parks Commission): \$8,000
Saline Rec Center Enhancements (Saline Parks and Recreation): \$8,500
SHS Wrestling Room Mats (SHS Wrestling): \$20,000

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

- E. MOTION** made by Trustee Gold, support Trustee Tizedes **to approve the changes to Policy 5517.02 Transgender and Nonbinary Student Policy as recommended by the Policy Committee.**

Ayes - Gerbe, Gold, Berwick, McVey, Tizedes
Nays - Austin, Steben

MOTION CARRIED 5-2

8. SCHEDULED REPORT

A. Community Education Annual Update

Presenter: Brian Puffer

Community Education aims to serve the community at every stage of life, from preschool programs to retirement programs. It fills gaps by offering programs after school, like summer PE and language classes. Due to the growth of the department there was some staff reorganization that recently occurred to better distribute the work and flow of programming. This year 43 new programs were implemented. The Community Education website also now includes a comprehensive facility use guide that covers several areas including rates, rules and location of AEDs.

This year has also seen the expansion of the “Bridge Program” which is for students transitioning to new buildings. This is taught by teachers to help students get to know their new building better and connect with other new students. This program will expand to include 9th grade. Heritage has re-opened before and after care. This year is also the 40th year of Safety Town.

Also highlights were given on the Aquatics Program, Before and After Care Program, Liberty Club, Recreation and Enrichment Programs, Middle School Sports, Cultural Arts and Music programs, Pooh Corner.

Community Education remains grateful for the support of the board, buildings & grounds staff, building administration and staff, and the community in general.

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Policy Committee Update

Chair, Lauren Gold

Based on the court decisions challenging the 2024 Title IX regulations that have been discussed over the past six months, and the current Department of Education's position on the matter, Districts are advised to rescind Policy 2264 - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex In Education Programs or Activities to avoid confusion or to avoid adverse treatment by the Department of Education.

MOTION made by President McVey, support Trustee Austin **to formally rescind Policy 2264 Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex In Education Programs or Activities**

Ayes - Austin, Berwick, Gold, McVey, Tizedes
Nays - Gerbe, Steben

MOTION CARRIED 5-2

Other policy updates from the April 22nd meeting, which took place prior to the Board meeting, included updates on policy 5330.01 Epinephrine Auto Injectors which has been updated to include the availability of nasal delivery systems. Recommendation also to change the policy name to Epinephrine Delivery Systems. Additional clarification will be sought from the district nurse. This policy will again be discussed at a future policy meeting. There is a new Neola policy 7540.09 addressing Artificial Intelligence. Neola will be contacted to see if this is necessary to adopt and/or if there is redundancy relating to referenced policies 7540.03, 7540.04 and 5500. Policy 5540 Interrogation of Students will be brought to the full board on May 13th for a second reading. This policy covers best practices for interviews of students by Child Protective Services and law enforcement.

B. Compensation Committee Update

Chair, Jennifer Steben

Committee members met prior to the Board meeting to discuss the superintendent's contract. They reviewed the contract to ensure competitiveness and benchmarks against other districts. Also included discussion on contract length, professional development and educational

stipends, contract facets around language with roles and responsibilities, legal compliance regarding evaluation timeline, and insurance information.

C. Third Party Review Athletic Dept

Facilitator, Michael McVey

Scott Robertson of 53 Consulting is conducting a third-party review of the athletic program. He has visited the district twice and will be meeting with randomly selected student athletes and parents. The review primarily focuses on: Climate and culture, training on MHSAA (Michigan High School Athletic Association) compliance, Title IX compliance, leadership development, recruiting and hiring athletic department and coaching staff, practices regarding the verification of student athlete residency.

Data is being gathered through interviews and an online sports climate questionnaire. Response rates to the questionnaires have been excellent. The final report is expected by May 17th.

10. SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH: Interview Prep & Selection Process

Facilitator: Jay Bennett, MASB, Assistant Director, Executive Search Services

Jay Bennett was present to discuss the job of hiring a new Superintendent. He passed out potential interview questions for them to consider. He explained that the primary goal of the interview is to learn more about the candidate and to observe their conduct in a public setting. The initial 1st round interviews will be highly structured and last 55 minutes each. The 2nd round will offer opportunity for deeper exploration with follow up questions and more detailed inquiries. It was decided that the candidates will receive the questions 24 hours in advance of their scheduled interview for the 1st round only. The Board then finalized their selection of questions for consideration.

MOTION made by Trustee Gold, support Trustee Austin to invite Candidates Numbered 61, 54, 30, 57, 72, 62, and 71 to interview for the Superintendent of Saline Area Schools.

Once candidates have been notified and confirmed, a press release will be issued to staff and community. Interviews will be conducted at 6 pm on April 29 and April 30 in the Liberty School Board Room. Community participation is encouraged through attendance or communication with the Board.

11. ADMINISTRATION / BOARD UPDATES

Superintendent Laatsch: Was shared an article on the importance of durable skills in the age of AI. Durable skills are essential for long-term success in the workforce including critical thinking, problem solving, communication and adaptability. These are important skills that need to be evaluated and implemented as part of the SAS compass and graduate profile. Thank you to the MacNeil's for their support of the Superintendent's Circle Dinner and the Foundation for Saline Area Schools. A state of the district presentation was part of the evening's festivities. Acknowledgement of Administrative

Professionals Day and all the work done by this group to support all staff throughout the district.

Trustee Austin: Acknowledgement of Bus Driver Appreciation Day and all the drivers who keep our students safe each day.

Treasurer Gerbe: Acknowledgement of Bus Driver Appreciation Day. Thank you to the staff who are accompanying our students this week on the Washington DC trip. What a wonderful experience for them. Thank you to Adam Winters who coaches the Washtenaw United Girls Hockey Team. Thank you for access to the Solar Cost Differential website. It's great to be able to see the actual usage. Grateful for that technology.

Secretary Berwick: Thank you to our bus drivers.

President McVey: Will be attending the virtual WISD Budget Presentation. This will be discussed at the next Board meeting. Thank you to Dr. Laatsch for attending the panel discussion at EMU.

Vice President Steben: Acknowledgement to Autism Awareness Month. Safe travels to our 8th grade class going to Washington DC. Attended some sporting events: men's volleyball and girl's lacrosse.

Trustee Gold: Thank you to bus drivers. Also thank you to students who use OK2SAY.

Trustee Tizedes: Thank you to Community Education and to the Bridge Program. Acknowledgement of Bus Driver Appreciation Day, Public School Volunteer Week, School Principal Day and School Lunch Hero Day.

12. **CONSENT AGENDA**

MOTION made by Vice President Steben, support Trustee Austin **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 April 8, 2025
- B. **Approval** of the Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of April 8, 2025
- C. **Approval of Payment** of the General Fund Accounts Payable of April 22, 2025, in the amount of \$17,151,447.51
- D. **Approval of Payment** of the Bond Fund Series III Accounts Payable of April 22, 2025 in the amount of \$29,245.37
- E. **Approval of Payment** of 2023 Bond Fund Series I Accounts Payable of April 22, 2025, in the amount of \$1,159,851.37
- F. **Receive and File** Finance and Human Resources Report

CLOSING

13. ITEMS SCHEDULED ON THE NEXT AGENDA

Annual Update from Special Education Department
WISD Budget Resolution

14. PUBLIC COMMENT

STUDENTS - None

OTHER PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS - None

15. NEXT MEETING

The next Board of Education Meeting will be held on April 29, 2025, at 6 PM.

16. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION made by Trustee Tizedes, support Secretary Berwick **to adjourn the Regular Board of Education Meeting of April 22, 2025, at 8:50 pm.**

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

MOTION made by Trustee Tizedes, support Secretary Berwick **to reopen the meeting at 8:52 pm.**

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

Jay Bennett re-entered the meeting after contacting a few of the candidates. There are 2 out of state candidates. His question, before continuing to contact candidates, is: will the board reimburse travel expenses or would you prefer zoom for 1st round?

MOTION made by Vice President Steben, support Trustee Tizedes **to reimburse the purchase of a coach ticket, not to exceed \$1000 for each of the 2 out of state candidates.**

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

MOTION made by Trustee Tizedes, support Secretary Berwick **to adjourn the Regular Board of Education Meeting of April 22, 2025 at 8:57 pm.**

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

*Board of Education Meeting Minutes
April 22, 2025*

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darcy Berwick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Darcy Berwick
Board Secretary

Recorded by: Betty Jahnke