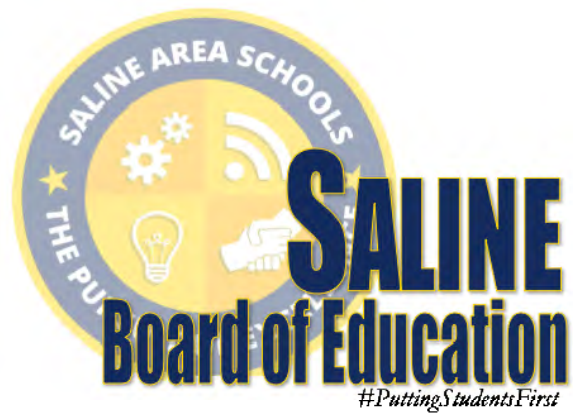


# Board of Education Meeting

Liberty School Board Room

May 13, 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 May 13, 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 Owsley, Executive Directors Clary, Davis, Martin and Voelker

#### 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

#### 3. SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOGNITION

***DAR Good Citizen Presentation: Grace Oberski***

This award created in 1934 aims to encourage and reward the qualities of good citizenship. It recognizes high school seniors who possess the qualities of dependability, service, leadership, and patriotism in their schools and communities. Students are selected by their teachers and peers.

***Recognition of 24/25 Varsity Men's Swim & Dive Team***

The 2025 Saline High School boys swim and dive team won the MHSAA Division 1 swimming and diving state championship on March 13th, earning the program's fifth state championship.

***Steve Vasiloff, eSports Coach of the Year***

Steve Vasiloff was formally honored and recognized as the Michigan HS ESports League Coach of the Year.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**STUDENTS - None**

**OTHER PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS - None**

**5. RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC COMMENT**

Thank you to the members of the community who supported the Superintendent hiring process by providing feedback during the interview process.

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

**MOTION** made by Vice President Steben, support Trustee Austin **to approve the agenda as revised.**

**Adding Action Item F.**

**Recommended Motion to approve the final draft of the Superintendent contract for Dr. Rachel Kowalski**

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

**7. STUDENT SHOWCASE**

Saline HS CAD Program

*Presenters: Madi Rogan, Abbey Alexander, Izzy Siedlik, Nate Yonak, Jonah Bentley, Natalie Coughlin, Micah Gray, Morgan Widman (Teacher: Steve Vasiloff)*

The SWWC CAD class highlighted their various competitions this year, especially SkillsUSA. A new competition for the class was the Automotive Society of Body Engineers (ASBE) Competition. Students designed either a hood scoop or a truck bed accessory. Mr. Vasiloff was awarded the ASBE Teacher of the Year. In SkillsUSA, Liebherr became a sponsor. Students created drawings for Liebherr's Taiwan division, allowing them to manufacture parts locally. They sponsored 10 students to participate this year. Another competition this year was Michigan Industrial and Technology Education Society (MITES). This annual competition focuses on industrial arts & technology.

Many students have received achievement awards at these competitions both at the state and national levels which has led to many students receiving scholarships. CAD has given many students a path to follow in obtaining their future goals.

Mr. Vasiloff also highlighted the ESports Team Accomplishments. The team achieved significant milestones in just its second year of competition. There are now 203 HS competing, 848 teams, and

over 3700 students. The teams are student-centered and student-led. The coach's role is to create an environment for students to thrive and learn. Numerous all-state honors were received, as well as a first state championship by the Mario Kart team at Michigan State this past fall. Several team members have also received college scholarships.

**8. ACTION ITEMS**

- A. MOTION** made by Secretary Berwick, support Vice President Steben **to approve the resolution designating MICHAEL MCVEY as the representative of this Board for the biennial election of the Board of Washtenaw Intermediate School District on Monday June 2, 2025 and LAUREN GOLD as an alternate in the event the designated representative is unable to attend.**

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

- B. MOTION** made by Trustee Tizedes, support Trustee Austin **to approve the Thrun Bond Sale Resolution dated May 6, 2025, for the sale of Bonds at a total purchase price of \$59,998,520.68**

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

- C. MOTION** made by Trustee Gold, support Secretary Berwick **to approve the updates made to Policy 5540 Interrogation of Students as requested by District Administration and submitted by the Policy Committee**

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

- D. MOTION** made by Trustee Austin, support Trustee Tizedes **to approve the purchase of 500 Chromebooks through Trafera in the amount of \$164,500 as submitted by Jay Grossman, Director of Technology. Trafera is an approved vendor on the REMC consortium bid contract.**

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

**MOTION CARRIED 6-1**

- E. MOTION** made by Trustee Tizedes, support Vice President Steben **to approve the purchase of 150 Mac Mini Computers with wired keyboards and monitors to replace the current devices used in the student iMac labs at Saline High School, Middle School and Liberty in the amount of \$140,092.50 as submitted by Jay Grossman, Director of Technology.**

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

(Added item)

- F. **MOTION** made by Vice President Steben, support Trustee Tizedes **to (enter into discussion) regarding the approval of the final draft of the Superintendent contract for Dr. Rachel Kowalski**

After lengthy discussion at the Board table, suggested revisions will be made and reviewed by all parties, including legal, before being brought back for approval at a special meeting of the Board of Education

Revised **MOTION** by Vice President Steben, support Trustee Tizedes **to move this under the “Discussion” portion of the agenda as Discussion item C, as it was not an “Action” item.**

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

9. **SCHEDULED REPORT**

- A. **Special Education Annual Update**  
*Presenters: Julie Voelker & Monica Ellis*

The primary goal is to ensure that our students are as independent as possible, supporting each student’s unique journey. The special education department provides various services including teacher consultants, resource room programming, life skills programming, early childhood special education programs, and young adult programming. This is done using an integrated team (speech/language, occupational therapists, social workers, psychologists, etc) approach especially in behaviour and social-emotional wellness to address the whole child.

Our district has a very strong peer to peer program. The Connecting program at the HS provides social opportunities for students with and without disabilities. Similarly the STAR program is located at Heritage, and the PALS program is located at the middle school as well as the Unified Sports Program.

The Special Education department has approximately 230 staff members and serves approximately 900 students. We have a very engaged Special Education Advisory Committee that keeps families informed and provides suggestions for engagement.

Future plans and goals include the addition of staff to meet the needs of growing caseloads and developing a 40 hour training program (in house) for current employees to become Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) who support students with complex behavioral needs. This could be offered to other districts as well.

10. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**A. WISD Budget Presentation**

*Facilitator, Michael McVey, Board President*

The Board of Education must annually review and vote to support (or disapprove) the general fund budget of the Washtenaw Intermediate School District. President McVey presented and overview of the budget and highlighted initiatives being supported by the WISD.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Austin, support Trustee Gold **to support the WISD 2025/26 Budget Resolution as submitted.**

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

**B. Finance Committee Update**

*Committee Chair, Brad Gerbe*

The Finance Committee met prior to the Board meeting. The official spring count was discussed which represented 10% of the blended total. There was only a .02 difference in the Fall and Spring FTE. Maintaining or leveling student count is crucial for revenue generation. Kindergarten enrollment is trending positively, requiring an extra section at Woodland Meadows. We hope to get some clarity on the State Budget by June 30th. We're hoping for an increase in per-pupil funding and specifics regarding food allowance and transportation are still uncertain. The House has passed a temporary budget with the possibility of future changes. Also discussed were: 2025/26 Budget, possible additions to FTE, RBT Certification Program, MI-LAF which is a comprehensive cash management and investment program, and the recent successful bond sale.

The budget hearing, required by state law, is scheduled for June 10th at 6 pm.

**C. Superintendent Contract - Dr. Rachel Kowalski**

*Facilitator, Vice President Steben, Chair of the Compensation Committee*

**(See notes under Action Item F.)**

**11. ADMINISTRATION / BOARD UPDATES**

**Superintendent Laatsch:** Excited to be working with the CORE team with the transition process of a new superintendent. There are already dates selected that she'll be in the district before her actual "start date".

**Trustee Austin:** Thank you to the team for your work the last several weeks.

**Treasurer Gerbe:** Thank you to the team and to the community for their engagement in the superintendent search process. Recognition to the teachers who support students through the AP process. These courses require specialized training and adherence to the College Board process.

**Secretary Berwick:** Reflecting on the services that this district provides to our students. Proud that our district funding allocation balances physical resources with investment in staff. The emphasis on staffing should be a point of pride as it prioritizes people who support student success.

**President McVey:** Attended both the recent STEAM awards and district art show both highlighting student achievement and incredible talent. Shoutout to our art teachers for organizing such a great event.

**Vice President Steben:** The Foundation for Saline Area Schools has provided \$87K in grants this year. About \$12K still available. Brainstorming sessions have focused on community engagement and new families. Interest in showcasing the new spaces at Saline High School to the community and especially younger students. The Young 5 and Kindergarten open houses are upcoming. Been teaching Junior Achievement.

**Trustee Gold:** Acknowledgement to nurses, teachers and mothers particularly for their contributions in May which is Nurse Appreciation Week, Teacher Appreciation Week and Mother's Day. May is Food Allergy Month. Reminder how important it is to focus on safety and support for students with food allergies. Often children with food allergies report being bullied because of their allergies. Important to model the right behavior by always taking food allergies seriously and never diminishing those with food allergies.

**Trustee Tizedes:** Acknowledgement to our Speech Pathologists. Also to our CAD students for their phenomenal success in recent competitions. The success of the female CAD competitors disproves the notion that women are not interested in STEAM.

## 12. **CONSENT AGENDA**

**MOTION** made by Vice President Steben, support Secretary Berwick **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 22, 2025
- B. **Approval** of the Policy Committee Meeting Minutes of April 22, 2025
- C. **Approval** of the Compensation Committee Minutes of April 22, 2025
- D. **Approval** of the Special Board Meeting Minutes of April 29, 2025
- E. **Approval** of the Special Board Meeting Minutes of April 30, 2025
- F. **Approval** of the Special Board Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2025
- G. **Approval of Payment** of the General Fund Accounts Payable of May 13, 2025, in the amount of \$2,150,872.75

- H. **Approval of Payment** of the Bond Fund Series III Accounts Payable of May 13, 2025 in the amount of \$45,104.10
- I. **Approval of Payment** of 2023 Bond Fund Series I Accounts Payable of May 13, 2025, in the amount of \$410,568.18
- J. **Receive and File** Finance and Human Resources Reports

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

SWWC Annual Update  
CTE Millage Resolution  
District Retirees  
Student Rep Recognition

14. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

STUDENTS

OTHER PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS

15. **NEXT MEETING**

The next Board of Education Meeting will be held on May 27, 2025, at 6:30 PM.

16. **CLOSED SESSION**

**MOTION** made by Trustee Austin, support Trustee Tizedes **to enter Closed Session of the Board of Education at 9:15 PM, with the intent to re-enter Open Session at 9:30 PM, for the purpose of Collective Bargaining 8(c) of the Open Meetings Act. Under Section 8(c) a simple majority vote is sufficient to enter into a closed session.**

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

17. **RE-ENTER OPEN SESSION**

President Michael McVey called to reopen the meeting without objection at 10:17 pm

18. **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** made by Trustee Tizedes, support Vice President Steben **to adjourn the Regular Board of Education Meeting of May 13, 2025, at 10:17 PM.**

*Board of Education Meeting Minutes  
May 13, 2025*

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darcy Berwick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Darcy Berwick  
Board Secretary

*Recorded by: Betty Jahnke*