

HARPER CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
EDUCATE • EMPOWER • EQUIP
Students for Life

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

6:00 PM – August 11, 2025, Meeting
Harper Creek Administration Building
7454 B Drive North, Battle Creek, MI 49014

<https://youtube.com/live/i855U3h0uug?feature=share>

- I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance: President Bess led the Pledge, followed by a moment of silence.
- III. Roll Call: Secretary Allwardt called the Roll. Present: Mrs. Allwardt, Mr. Bess, Mr. Halverson, Mrs. Risner, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Wallace, Mrs. Waterson.
- IV. Review and Approval of Agenda: No modifications were made to the agenda.
- V. Communications
 - A. President's Remarks: Mr. Bess thanked all in attendance and those viewing from home. In addition, Mr. Bess discussed the excitement of the new school year and the upcoming start of fall sports. Lastly, Mr. Bess stated that Orientation for 9th grade and 5th grade will be on Friday, August 15, 2025.
 - B. Administration: Mr. Ridgeway discussed the calendar of exciting events to kick off the new school year including the Fall Sport Community Kick Off on Friday at the Harper Creek Stadium, New Staff Signing Day also of August 15, at the administration building starting at 7:30 AM, the All Staff Breakfast, and Meet the Teacher Nights on August 18 for middle School and high school, and August 19 for elementary students. Another event is the all-staff kick-off on August 18. Next, Mr. Ridgeway discussed the Harper Creek Educational Foundation and Beaver Booster Golf Outing Fundraiser on August 23, 2025, at Binder Park Golf Course. The money raised from this outing supports student scholarships. Another item Mr. Ridgeway discussed is the dedication ceremony on August 28, 2025, to honor Mr. Greenman and to name the athletic complex, "Ed Greenman Athletic Complex". Lastly, Mr. Ridgeway reminded the Board of the upcoming Labor Day Holiday and called for a building committee meeting.
 - C. Board Secretary: No communications at this time.
- VI. District Updates
 - A. Curriculum: Mrs. Williams submitted a Board report. Mrs. Williams highlighted summer school, which completed a 6-week session. Students focused on researching and understanding potential career choices and

what the job requires. They produced summer projects to reflect their learning and passions. Summer school also focused on reading and math learning goals. Mrs. Williams also discussed the onboarding of the new Harper Creek-certified staff. The onboarding includes Restorative Practices, Thoughtful Classroom, and Teacher Orientation with Trails training. Lastly, Mrs. Williams discussed the Principal's leadership retreat, which centered around the third school improvement goal, Careers and College Readiness. Administrators visited the Calhoun Career Center and Career Connects – KRESA career center. The team also found time for plenty of team building with a scavenger hunt and an escape room.

- B. Facility: Mr. Robinson submitted a report to the Board. Mr. Robinson highlighted the great work DM Burr has done getting the buildings cleaned and ready for the new school year. In addition, Mr. Robinson stated that the new ovens at the middle school and high school have been delivered and installed. Lastly, Mr. Robinson discussed that the parking lots have been freshly sealed and restriped in the high school areas. The large cracks have been filled as well.
 - C. Finance: Mrs. Obermyer submitted her reports to the Board. Mrs. Obermyer stated that the audit will be from September 2 through September 5. As of August 11, 2025, there have been no state funding commitments for the 2025/2026 school year. Mrs. Obermyer discussed that free breakfast and lunch will continue until September 30, 2025. At that time, either future funding will be available, or Mr. Ridgway and Mrs. Obermyer will have scenarios of how to address this concern. Mr. Ridgway encouraged families to fill out the free and reduced forms prior to this date to have a plan in place.
 - D. Technology: Mr. Maynard submitted a report to the Board. The technology department has been busy completing summer projects for the return of staff and students. The crew continues to install cameras and work on clocks. Lastly, Mr. Maynard discussed the formation of a Harper Creek Radio station. Mr. Maynard is hoping to raise funds through grants to fund the station.
- VII. Comments Related to Agenda Items: There were no comments at this time.
- VIII. Consent Agenda - All items on this consent agenda were previously considered by the Harper Creek Board of Education and are recommended by Central Office, and will be acted upon in a single roll call vote of the Board. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a board member so requests, in which event the matter shall be removed from the consent agenda and considered as a separate item.
- A. Approve the General Fund checks, School Services Fund checks (Food Service), and Student/School Activities Fund Checks, in accordance with the list discussed.
 - 1. Approve June 9, 2025, Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes

2. Approve July 14, 2025, Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes
3. Approve July 14, 2025, Closed Session Meeting Minutes
4. Approve July 22, 2025, Building Committee Meeting Minutes
5. Approve July 23, Policy Committee Meeting Minutes
6. Approve August 7, 2025, Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion by Mrs. Wallace, supported by Mr. Smith,

That the Harper Creek Board of Education approve the consent agenda as follows:

Approve the General Fund checks, School Services Fund checks (School Lunch), and Student/School Activities Fund checks, in accordance with the list discussed.

- A. Approve the General Fund checks, School Services Fund checks (Food Service), and Student/School Activities Fund Checks, in accordance with the list discussed.

Approve the following minutes as reviewed:

- Approves June 9, 2025, Board of Education Meeting Minutes
- Approves July 14, 2025, Board of Education Meeting Minutes
- Approves July 14, 2025, Closed Session Meeting Minutes
- Approves July 22, 2025, Building Committee Meeting Minutes
- Approves July 23, Policy Committee Meeting Minutes
- Approves August 7, 2025, Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Bess Y, Mrs. Risner Y, Mrs. Wallace Y, Mrs. Allwardt Y, Mrs. Waterson Y, Mr. Halverson Y, Mr. Smith Y.

Motion carried 7-0.

IX. Information and Discussion

- A. School Safety: Mr. Ridgeway discussed the safety committee meeting. The committee is moving forward with positive improvements to our Athletic Safety Plan. Evacuation routes will be posted at the athletic complex, and event staff will wear neon yellow lanyards clearly stating they are staff. For the Lakeview Football Game, five resource officers will be on campus. Other athletic events held on the campus will be coordinated to ensure safe outcomes. Another item Mr. Ridgeway discussed is the county road improvements that are currently being done on B Drive in front of the middle school. The team stated that the project will start on Wednesday and be completed on Friday. Mr. Ridgeway requests that Emmett Township Safety Officers direct traffic if the improvements are not completed in time for school to begin on August 20, 2025.
- B. Strategic Plan Update: Mr. Ridgeway discussed that during the administration retreat, the team went over the strategic plan in detail. One goal was to connect the plan to the school improvement goals, and another was to have a forward-facing dashboard for the community to

see the progress being made. An outside consultant led this portion of the retreat.

- C. New Hires: Mr. Ridgeway recommends the following individuals for the next school year:
- Stachia Bagley, Middle School Music Teacher, Bachelor's Degree, Eastern Michigan University, MA20
 - Ryan Kletch, Sonoma 4th Grade, Ball State University, BA1
 - Melissa Rau, Middle School 6th grade Math, Alternative Pathways – Teachers of Tomorrow, \$200 per day until interim certificate, then BA2
 - Kelly Tews, Middle School Functional Classroom Teacher, Master's Degree, Walden University, MA13
 - Leslie Wardell, Middle School Art Teacher, Master's Degree, Western Michigan University, MA13
 - Kevin Faraci, Middle School Vice Principal, Master's Degree, Western Michigan University, \$84,048.00
 - Danielle Hendon, Sonoma Elementary Kindergarten Teacher, Bachelor's Degree, Western Michigan University, Alternative Pathway K-3 endorsement, BA1
 - Kelly Overweg, Sonoma Elementary 2nd grade Teacher, Master's Degree, Eastern Michigan University, MA10
 - Paul Kitchen, High School Special Education Co-Teacher, Master's Degree, Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, Alternative Pathway – secondary English and Special Ed. Endorsement, BA3
- D. Thrun Policy Updates: The policy committee met and reviewed Thrun's proposed policy updates. Mr. Ridgeway summarized the changes. In addition to the June 11, 2025, policy updates, the committee reviewed policy 5709 Lice, Nits, and Bed Bugs with recommended changes from our school nurse. The changes are minor but allow the school the option to exclude the student if the parent does not cooperate. Thrun also sent a shorter policy update regarding a recent US Supreme Court Ruling allowing parents the option to petition to have their student opt out of specific instructional materials. Mr. Ridgeway recommends the policy updates.
- E. Student Handbooks: Mr. Ridgeway discussed the 2025/2026 updated school handbook. It has been updated with the latest legal updates mentioned in the policy update. The Policy Committee reviewed the handbook. The handbook is consistent with the new schedule change in the high school regarding graduation requirements, grading, and credits. Mr. Ridgeway recommends approving the 2025/2026 school handbook.

- F. MASB Delegate Assembly: Annually, the Board approves a delegate to attend the MASB State Conference Delegate Assembly. The assembly will take place on Thursday, October 23, at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme, MI. At the annual meeting, Trustee Chae Waterson was assigned as the delegate and Vice President Barry Smith as the alternate.
- G. Naming of Facilities: Mr. Ridgeway discussed that the Facility Naming Committee met to consider the request to name the high school basketball court in memory of Gary Lincoln. The entire committee agreed that the school district should honor Mr. Lincoln's legacy. The committee has not made a recommendation at this time. Mr. Ridgeway will meet with Ben Lincoln to hear his vision and establish a recommendation.
- H. Transportation Hoist: Mr. Ridgeway stated that the transportation hoist in the bus garage is not functioning, and the rear cylinder needs to be replaced. It is unsafe to lift a bus without a functioning lift. A bid from American Hoist and Lube to repair the lift was received at a cost of \$41,589.40. Mr. Ridgeway recommends approving the repair of the hoist with a 5% contingency.
- X. Comments From the Audience: There were no comments from the audience.
- XI. ACTION
- A. New Hires
- Motion by Mrs. Wallace, supported by Mrs. Risner,
That the Harper Creek Board of Education approve the following new hires:
- Stachia Bagley, Middle School Music Teacher, Bachelor's Degree, Eastern Michigan University, MA20
 - Ryan Kletch, Sonoma 4th Grade, Ball State University, BA1
 - Melissa Rau, Middle School 6th grade Math, Alternative Pathways – Teachers of Tomorrow, \$200 per day until interim certificate, then BA2
 - Kelly Tews, Middle School Functional Classroom Teacher, Master's Degree, Walden University, MA13
 - Leslie Wardell, Middle School Art Teacher, Master's Degree, Western Michigan University, MA13
 - Kevin Faraci, Middle School Vice Principal, Master's Degree, Western Michigan University, \$84,048.00
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 - Kelly Overweg, Sonoma Elementary 2nd grade Teacher, Master's Degree, Eastern Michigan University, MA10

- Paul Kitchen, High School Special Education Co-Teacher, Master's Degree, Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, Alternative Pathway – secondary English and Special Ed. Endorsement, BA3

As discussed and reviewed.

Roll Call Vote: Mrs. Risner Y, Mr. Halverson Y, Mr. Smith Y, Mrs. Waterson Y, Mrs. Wallace Y, Mr. Bess Y, Mrs. Allwardt Y.

Motion carried: 7-0.

B. Thrun Policy Updates

Motion by Mrs. Risner, supported by Mr. Smith,

That the Harper Creek Board of Education approve the Thrun Policy updates - June 11, 2025, July 25, 2025, and the update to policy 5709 Lice, Nits, and Bedbugs reviewed by the Policy Committee.

Roll Call Vote: Mrs. Allwardt Y, Mrs. Waterson Y, Mrs. Wallace Y, Mr. Bess Y, Mr. Smith Y, Mr. Halverson Y, Mrs. Risner Y.

Motion carried: 7-0.

C. Student Handbooks

Motion by Mr. Smith, supported by Mrs. Risner,

The Harper Creek Board of Education approves the 2025/2026 Harper Creek Community Schools Student Handbook as discussed and reviewed.

Roll call vote: Mr. Halverson Y, Mrs. Allwardt Y, Mrs. Risner Y, Mr. Smith Y, Mrs. Waterson Y, Mr. Bess Y, Mrs. Wallace Y.

Motion Carried: 7-0.

D. MASB Delegate Assembly

Motion by Mrs. Wallace, supported by Mrs. Risner,

That the Harper Creek Board of Education assign Chae Waterson as Region 6 Delegate Representative and Barry Smith as Delegate Alternative in the MASB 2025 Delegate Assembly on October 23, 2025, at 7:00 PM.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Halverson Y, Mr. Smith Y, Mrs. Allwardt Y, Mrs. Wallace Y, Mrs. Waterson Y, Mrs. Risner Y, Mr. Bess Y.

Motion Carried: 7-0.

E. Transportation Hoist

Motion by Mrs. Wallace, supported by Mr. Smith,

That the Harper Creek Board of Education authorize the bid from American Hoist and Lube to repair the transportation hoist for \$41,589.40 with a 5% cost contingency.

Roll Call Vote: Mrs. Risner Y, Mrs. Waterson Y, Mr. Smith Y, Mrs. Wallace Y, Mrs. Allwardt Y, Mr. Halverson Y, Mr. Bess Y.

Motion Carried: 7-0

XII. Items for the Next Meeting: Joint Board Meeting topics - State Budget.

XIII. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM.

This meeting is a meeting of the Board of Education in public for the purpose of conducting the School District's business and is not to be considered a public community meeting. There is a time for public participation during the meeting as indicated on the agenda.