

HARPER CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
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Students for Life

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

Monday, February 10, 2025
6:00 PM –Meeting
Harper Creek Administration Building
7454 B Drive North, Battle Creek, MI 49014

<https://youtube.com/live/MUJX0fAYkM?feature=share>

- I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President Bess at 6:00 PM.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Roll Call: Mrs. Allwardt called the roll. Present members – Mrs. Allwardt, Mr. Bess, Mrs. Risner, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Wallace, Mrs. Waterson. Absent – Mr. Halverson. Student Board Members present – Arabella Stanley and Alex Stiltner. Absent – Sam Cook.
- IV. Review and Approval of Agenda: Motion to add WPMC Update from Mr. Tony Zebell
Motion by Mr. Smith, supported by Mrs. Wallace,
That the Harper Creek Board of Education approves the addition of the WPMC Update by Mr. Tony Zebell to the February 10, 2025, meeting.
Roll Call Vote: Mr. Smith Y, Mrs. Allwardt Y, Mrs. Risner Y, Mrs. Waterson Y, Mr. Bess Y, Mrs. Wallace Y, Mr. Halverson A.
Motion Carried: 6-0.
- V. Communications
 - A. President’s Remarks: Mr. Bess welcomed the audience and those watching on YouTube. Mr. Bess reminded Board members, to please mark your calendars for the upcoming joint meeting on February 17, 2025, at Battle Creek Central High School at 5:15 PM. In addition, Mr. Bess congratulated the competitive cheer team on the first-ever All-City win and the wrestling team for qualifying nine wrestlers for the regional meet including Alex Stiltner, student board representative. Lastly, Mr. Bess reminded families that conferences are taking place.
 - B. Administration: Mr. Ridgeway discussed parent/teacher conferences including the cancellation of the conferences which were to be held on February 6, 2025. In addition, Wattles Park Elementary will hold an Ice Cream Social for grandparents in conjunction with their book fair. Mr. Ridgeway discussed that students will have a half day of school on February 21, 2025, and no school on February 24. Another item Mr. Ridgeway discussed is the next Beyond the Cereal Bowl date which will be on March 6, 2025. This is a community leadership meeting. Also, Mr. Ridgeway discussed the high school musical production of

Once Upon a Mattress on March 21, 22, and 23. Next, Mr. Ridgeway mentioned the many dances throughout all the buildings. In addition, Mr. Ridgeway discussed the Firekeepers Local Revenue Sharing Board Meeting coming up on March 14, 2024. At the last board meeting, a question came to the Board regarding the funding for the Robotics Team. Mr. Ridgeway stated that funding for middle school and high school robotics comes from two sources. A grant makes up nearly \$8,000.00 and the general fund provides \$3,000.00. The funds are used for coaching and competition fees. Next, Mr. Ridgeway discussed the information on the Executive Orders. The Federal Funding freeze will not affect the Title I, Title II, and Title III funds that Harper Creek receives. In addition to the Federal Funding freeze, Mr. Ridgeway stated that he is keeping abreast of immigration enforcement, school vouchers for private and homeschooled students, gender ideology, transgender athletes, and the Department of Education layoffs. Also, Mr. Ridgeway discussed the Title IV policies which are reverting to the 2020 version. Lastly, Mr. Ridgeway called for a Personnel Committee Meeting on March 10, 2025, at 5:00 PM.

C. Board Secretary: Mrs. Allwardt had nothing to report at this time.

D. Student Board Members: Alex Stiltner discussed the student board members meeting with counselors to gain insight on the results from their last survey and learn what opportunities are available for students. Arabella reported the findings from Sam's survey from the previous month. After Mr. Greenman spoke with students they are positive about the changes that may be made to scheduling.

VI. Tony Zebell, Wattles Park Men's Club presented to the board a report. WPMC has been providing sports programming to area youth for over 50 years. WPMC offers P-K-8th-grade core sports programs including baseball, softball, soccer, basketball, and volleyball. Harper Creek students make up approximately 35-40% of student-athletes, as well as most of their hourly employees are Harper Creek current or former students. Regarding the financial state of WPMC, 2024 finished with a slight deficit due to higher operating costs, higher utilities, and higher cleaning costs. WPMC focuses on keeping the participation fee low. They are looking into sponsorships and fundraising to add revenue sources. WPMC does offer scholarships to participants. They do not want any student to have a barrier to participating. WPMC is committed to providing sporting opportunities to students and partnering with Harper Creek Community Schools.

VII. Open Lunch and HS Scheduling Update: Mr. Greenman updated the Board on Open Lunch. Currently, fifty-eight seniors take advantage of the open lunch program. To participate students must be passing classes, have no in-school or out-of-school suspensions, and have a signed parental permission slip on file as well as signing in and out with staff. Students must return to class on time. Very few privileges have been revoked. As an incentive juniors will have the opportunity to participate after spring break. Students will have a standard to meet to participate.

Mr. Greenman also gave an update on the schedule change. Traditional scheduling provides a better way to deliver instruction with less slide for students over block scheduling. With input from counselors, MTSS, administration, teachers, staff, students, and parents Mr. Greenman and his team have provided information on the

implementation of traditional scheduling. The top reasons for the change to traditional scheduling include a reduction of the learning gap, improved standardized test scores, and a better way to fill teaching positions in a teacher shortage. A traditional day schedule would consist of six classes at around 56 minutes with a thirty-minute seminar class. The seminar classes would target areas of need for the students. For example, seniors could use the time to receive guidance on filling out college applications or job applications and 9th-grade students may have a seminar that helps them to assimilate into high school easier.

The Board will not have to approve the change, rather they will pass the graduation requirements and the course books.

VIII. District Updates

A. Curriculum: Mrs. Williams discussed the implementation of the Bridges Math with support from Janis. Janis supported our teachers from February 3 through February 7, in their buildings. Both teachers and paras were trained on the curriculum with an emphasis on using data to drive the next steps. In addition, Mrs. Williams discussed NWEA testing. The testing window has closed and reports will be available at the March meeting. Also, Mrs. Williams stated that summer programming is set and letters to students/families have been mailed. The priority will be learning, social-emotional learning, and career exploration. Lastly, Mrs. Williams discussed the upcoming Kindergarten Countdown. Dates include March 20, April 15, April 28, April 29, and April 30. Lastly, Mrs. Williams discussed the networking session that she and Mrs. Chapman had with the staff members currently in the Grow Your Own grant program.

B. Facility: Mr. Robinson reported that the Crosswalk upgrade is complete. The county will inspect it and assist in its operation and maintenance. Next, Mr. Robinson discussed the planning of upcoming summer projects. A building committee will be called to look at upcoming projects. Another item Mr. Robinson discussed was the Filter First requirements. The team is working with the State of Michigan to ensure Harper Creek meets all regulations.

C. Finance – Revised Budget- Mrs. Obermyer discussed the 2024-2025 Budget update. The changes in revenue include a decrease of 14 FTE, a \$0 foundation increase, and a retirement offset. The expense changes include the 3% repayment to employees and FICA and retirement, increased electricity cost, increased tools, supplies, and equipment, the K15 Communications services, and the addition of the MS Child Care program. The revised budget reflects a deficiency in revenue. Mrs. Obermyer will continue to update the Board.

D. Technology: Mr. Maynard discussed the clocks project. Beadle Lake Elementary clock displays are online and the company will move back to the middle school to finish the installation. In addition, Mr. Maynard discussed the camera project. The new servers have been installed at the elementary schools. Cameras in Wattles Park and Sonoma have been installed. Currently, the crew is installing at Beadle Lake. Servers have been purchased for the middle school and high school cameras. Once the parts arrive installation will begin.

IX. Comments Related to Agenda Item: (Mr. Bess opened it up to any comments at this time.)

A. Peter Eckman the High School Robotics coach discussed the need for more funding for robotics. He stated that costs are high for registration, supplies, and competition fees.

B. Doug Kachman – He stated that Robotics is unique in the fact that they teach competitors to work together through alliances. The robotics world calls this gracious professionalism.

X. Consent Agenda

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

B. Approve the following meeting minutes:

1. January 13, 2025, Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes

2. January 23, 2025, Superintendent Compensation Committee Meeting Minutes

3. January 30, 2025, Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

4. February 6, 2025, Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

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

That the Harper Creek Board of Education approves 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.

Approve the following minutes as reviewed:

- Approves January 13, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes
- Approves January 23, 2025, Superintendent Compensation Committee Meeting Minutes
- Approve January 30, 2025, Policy Committee Meeting Minutes
- Approves February 6, 2025, Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

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

Motion Carried: 6-0.

XI. Information and Discussion

A. School Safety Update: Mr. Ridgeway stated that the Safety Committee reviewed the Emergency Operation Plan. The plan will be brought to the Board in March or April for approval.

B. School of Choice: Mr. Ridgeway discussed the School of Choice program for the Fall of 2025. It is recommended that the Board approve the participation in School of Choice with kindergarten being unlimited and the 1st – 12th grades being targeted. The Board will direct Superintendent Ridgeway to determine the Targeted School of Choice slots available for 1st-12th grades and to set the application time periods for both unlimited and Targeted.

C. Michigan Association of School Boards 2025 Election: Mr. Ridgeway discussed the Michigan Association of School Boards Election. For our region, there are two candidates to choose from for the one-year term. TiAnna Harris from Kalamazoo Public Schools and Elizabeth O'Dell from St. Joseph County ISD.

D. Superintendent Contract Renewal: Mr. Bess addressed the changes made to Superintendent Ridgeway's contract. Contract language changes recommended by Thrun Law Firm, standard life insurance increase, vacation days to reflect tenure, standard 3% increase, time off at Christmas, and the Fourth of July.

E. Policy Update: Mr. Ridgeway stated that the Policy Committee met to discuss and review three policy categories: Naming of District Facilities, Michigan Earned Sick Time Act, and Title IX policy update. Naming of District- Thrun Law Firm drafted a new policy to ensure a procedure was in place and the Policy Committee word-smithed the policy. Michigan Earned Sick Time Act – is a new legal policy in compliance with the Earned Sick Time Act passed by the Michigan Legislature replacing Policy 4205 Michigan Paid Medical Leave Act, which will now be intentionally left blank. Policy 4113 Michigan Earned Sick Time Act (ETSA), Policy 4113-F Michigan Earned Sick Time (ETSA) Form once approved will be included in Harper Creek Board Policy. Title IX Policy Update – On January 9, 2025, a federal court ruled that the 2024 Title IX regulations are no longer in effect. All schools must follow the 2020 Title IX regulations.

F. Strategic Plan: Mr. Bess stated that the Strategic Plan is a living document that will help measure objectives. The next step for the Board is to approve the strategic plan.

XII. Comments from the Audience: None at this time.

XIII. Action

A. School of Choice:

Motion by Mr. Smith, supported by Mrs. Waterson,
That the Harper Creek Board of Education approves participating in the School of Choice Program for the Fall of 2025, with Kindergarten being Unlimited School of Choice and the 1st – 12th grades being Targeted School of Choice. Further, the Board of Education directs Superintendent Ridgeway to determine Targeted School of Choice slots available for 1st-12th grade and set application time periods for both Unlimited and Targeted School of Choice.

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

Motion Carried: 6-0.

B. Michigan Association of School Boards 2025 Election:

Motion by Mrs. Wallace, supported by Mr. Smith,
That the Harper Creek Board of Education takes action for their collective vote for the MASB Region 6 Board of Directors one-year term for: TiAnna Harris, Kalamazoo Public Schools.

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

Motion Carried: 6-0

C. Revised 2024-2025 Budget

Motion by Mr. Smith, supported by Mrs. Wallace,
That the Harper Creek Board of Education approves the revised 2024-2025 budget as presented.

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

Motion Carried: 6-o

D. Superintendent Contract Renewal:

That the Harper Creek Board of Education approves the superintendent contract renewal as discussed and reviewed.

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

Motion Carried: 6-o.

E. Policy Update:

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

That the Harper Creek Board of Education approves the policy updates to the Naming of District Facilities, Michigan Earned Sick Time Act, and Title IX as presented.

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

Motion Carried: 6-o.

F. Strategic Plan:

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

That the Harper Creek Board of Education approves the Strategic Plan update as discussed and reviewed.

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

XIV. Items for the Next Meeting: Mrs. Allwardt would like the number of those who have committed to retirement as of the next meeting.

XV. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Bess at 8:03 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.