

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

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
6:00 PM - June 9, 2025, Meeting
Harper Creek Administration Building
7454 B Drive North, Battle Creek, MI 49014

<https://youtube.com/live/dDH75UwsQzg?feature=share>

- I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Bess invited the Board to stand for the Pledge, followed by a moment of silence.
- III. Roll Call: Present- Erin Allwardt, Beau Bess, Brad Halverson, Ashley Risner, Barry Smith, Sara Wallace, Chae Waterson.
- IV. Review and Approval of Agenda
- V. Communications
 - A. President's Remarks: Mr. Bess welcomed everyone to the meeting, both in attendance and on YouTube. In addition, Mr. Bess congratulated the Boys Track Team on their second state championship in two years. Harper Creek also had many individuals receive All-State honors in track. Mr. Bess congratulated Izzie Miller, who placed 2nd in the Shot Put and 4th in the Discus, Dominic Lowrie placed 4th in the 1600M, Zach Kitchen placed 7th in Shot Put, Tre'Quon Cotton placed 7th in High Jump, and Cassidy Prately placed 7th in the High Jump. Mr. Bess also recognized DJ Wood, who is the State Champion in two events, the 110-meter hurdles, and the 300-meter hurdles.
 - B. Administration: Mr. Ridgeway discussed the Summer Care for students at Beadle Lake Elementary. Currently, seventy-two students are enrolled in this program. In addition, Mr. Ridgeway stated that Summer School has begun, and students in DK-1st grade attend Beadle Lake Elementary five days a week in partnership with Community Unlimited. Students in 2nd grade through 8th grade attend four days a week at the high school. Another item Mr. Ridgeway discussed is the Summer Food

Program for students eighteen and younger to receive free breakfast and lunch. Harper Creek Food Service offers many locations for meal service. Lastly, Mr. Ridgeway mentioned the retirement of Mr. Greenman. Mr. Greenman meant the world to the District and will be truly missed.

- C. Board Secretary: Mrs. Allwardt gave an update on recent donations received. The Junior League of Battle Creek Fund donated \$3,000.00 to support the clothing closets and basic needs of students at Sonoma, Wattles Park, Beadle Lake, and Harper Creek Middle School. Sackrider Farms donated \$10,000.00 to support the Champion Weight Room Project.

VI. District Updates

- A. Curriculum: Mrs. Williams submitted a report to the Board. Also, Mrs. Williams highlighted summer school. The program has two hundred eighty-eight students. In addition, Mrs. Williams discussed the NWEA Benchmark Assessment Reporting data that the Board members could review. This report monitors student achievement.
- B. Facility: Mr. Robinson submitted a report to the Board. In addition, Mr. Robinson highlighted graduation and thanked Leah Peet, Ed Greenman, Carly Dingman, his team, and all who helped to make it a huge success even in the rain. Lastly, Mr. Robinson discussed the building assessment tours, which are taking place with a team from Clark Construction and Kingscott to make detailed assessments of the facilities. Mr. Robinson updated the Board on the Filter First project. Harper Creek has received a grant for part of the implementation of filters on all drinking water locations. Mr. Robinson is hopeful that more grants will be received to complete this project. Lastly, Mr. Robinson stated that the rental property has been used by the Emmett Township Fire Department in a training activity. Currently, the house will have to be abated of asbestos, water turned off, and the well must be capped before demolition. Mr. Robinson is in the process of moving forward with getting cost estimates for this work.

C. Finance: Mrs. Obermyer is on vacation, so Mr. Ridgeway reviewed the financial reports with the Board and discussed the Budget Meeting. Two items that Mr. Ridgeway highlighted include the earned interest, which is \$295,798.00 for the 24-25 school year, and the current bond that has been refinanced, allowing it to be paid off in 2034 rather than the 2037 scheduled date, saving the District residents \$15 million.

D. Technology: Mr. Maynard submitted a report to the Board. Mr. Maynard highlighted the Windows 11 migration preparation that he and his team are currently preparing. Lastly, Mr. Maynard discussed that the summer projects are beginning, including HDMI cords from the projectors to the computers.

VII. Comments Related to Agenda Items: None

VIII. Consent Agenda – All items on this consent agenda were previously considered by the Harper Creek Board of Education and are recommended by the 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 Service Fund Checks (Food Service), and Student/School Activities Fund Checks, by the list discussed.

1. May 12, 2025, Naming of Facilities Meeting Minutes
2. May 12, 2025, Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes
3. May 12, 2025, Closed Session Minutes
4. May 19, 2025, Building Committee Meeting Minutes
5. June 5, 2025, Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion by Mr. Smith, supported by Mr. Halverson.

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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.

B. Approve the General Fund Checks, School Service Fund Checks (Food Service), and Student/School Activities Fund Checks, by the list discussed.

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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 Carries: 7-0

IX. Information and Discussion

- A. School Safety: Mr. Ridgeway stated that a school safety full-day training day is being considered for all district staff with an outside group. This would be for training to implement the District Operations Plan and to provide continuity of information to all staff. The training is in the planning for next fall.
- B. Tax Levy Request: Mr. Ridgeway stated that the Board of Education annually sets the tax levy for debt associated with bonds and our non-homestead properties. Our financial advisor recommended keeping the bond rate at 7.12 mills and the millage rate for non-homestead properties at 18.00 mills. The current project for paying off the school bond debt is 2034, three years early.
- C. Set Budget Hearing Date: The Board of Education must hold a public hearing before approving the 2024-2025 final budget revision and the 2025-2026 initial budget. The suggested date and time would be June 23, 2025, at 5:30 pm. The hearing is held and

directly after that, a special meeting is held to approve both budgets formally.

D. MHSAA Membership Resolution: Every year, the Board of Education must approve the Michigan High School Athletic Association resolution, which states that we must follow the MHSAA's rules and be allowed to play in the state tournaments.

E. New Hires: Mr. Ridgeway recommends hiring the following individuals.

Amber Van Dis, 3rd grade, Beadle Lake Elementary, BA9

Bobbi VanWormer, 4th grade, Sonoma Elementary, MA20

Alana Cleary, 2nd grade, Wattles Park Elementary, BA1

Holly Morris, 6th grade English, Harper Creek Middle School, BA1

Stefanie Howard, HS Principal, Harper Creek High School,

\$120,000.00.

F. High School Mural: Mr. Ridgeway stated that the High School Drama Department requested to paint a mural on the back wall of the stage to create a legacy where all performances will be memorialized. This back wall is usually covered with a curtain, so it is not public-facing.

X. Comments from the Audience: There were no comments from the audience.

XI. Action

A. Tax Levy Request

Reason for Board Consideration

The Harper Creek Board of Education must approve the tax levy for the district.

Analysis and Conclusion

That the Harper Creek Board of Education set the school district's tax levy at 18 mills for operating purposes on non-homestead properties for the 2025 tax collection year.

Recommendation

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

That the Harper Creek Board of Education set the school district's tax levy at 18 mills for operating purposes on the non-homestead, 7.12 mills for debt retirement purposes on both homestead and non-homestead properties for the 2025 tax collection year in the taxing units of the City of Battle Creek and the Townships of Emmett, Fredonia, Leroy, Marshall, Newton & Pennfield.
Roll Call Vote: Mrs. Waterson Y, Mrs. Wallace Y, Mrs. Allwardt Y, Mr. Halverson Y, Mr. Smith Y, Mrs. Risner Y, Mr. Bess Y.
Motion Carried: 7-0.

B. Set Budget Hearing Date

Motion by Mr. Smith, supported by Mrs. Risner,
That the Harper Creek Board of Education approves the recommended Budget Hearing date of June 23, 2025, at 5:30 pm as discussed and reviewed.
Roll Call Vote: Mr. Halverson Y, Mrs. Risner Y, Mrs. Allwardt Y, Mrs. Waterson Y, Mrs. Wallace Y, Mr. Bess Y, Mr. Smith Y.
Motion Carried: 7-0.

C. MHSAA Membership Resolution

Motion by Mrs. Wallace, supported by Mrs. Risner,
That the Harper Creek Board of Education approve the 2025-2026 MHSAA Resolution as discussed and reviewed.
Roll Call Vote: Mrs. Wallace Y, Mrs. Allwardt Y, Mr. Smith Y, Mr. Halverson Y, Mrs. Waterson Y, Mrs. Risner Y, Mr. Bess Y.
Motion Carried: 7-0.

D. New Hires

Motion by Mr. Smith, supported by Mr. Wallace,
That the Harper Creek Board of Education approves the following new hires:
Amber Van Dis, 3rd grade, Beadle Lake Elementary, BA9
Bobbi VanWormer, 4th grade, Sonoma Elementary, MA20
Alana Cleary, 2nd grade, Wattles Park Elementary, BA1
Holly Morris, 6th grade English, Harper Creek Middle School, BA1

Stefanie Howard, HS Principal, Harper Creek High School,
\$120,000.00.

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-o.

E. High School Mural

Motion by Mrs. Wallace, supported by Mrs. Waterson,
That the Harper Creek Board of Education approve the proposed
High School Drama Mural as presented and discussed.

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

Motion Carried: 7-o.

- XII. Items for the Next Meeting: No new items for the next meeting.
- XIII. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 pm.