

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

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

Monday, November 10, 2025

6:00 PM –Meeting

Harper Creek Administration Building
7454 B Drive North, Battle Creek, MI 49014

<https://youtube.com/live/r1GDUgOorEc?feature=share>

- I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Bess led the Pledge, followed by a moment of silence.
- III. Roll Call: Present members – Mrs. Allwardt, Mr. Bess, Mr. Halverson, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Wallace, Mrs. Waterson. Absent members – Ashley Risner
- IV. Review and Approval of Agenda: No modifications were made to the agenda.
- V. Communications
 - A. President's Remarks: Mr. Bess welcomed all in attendance. Mr. Bess mentioned that the fall play, “Murder on the Orient Express,” was enjoyed by many theater fans. In addition, Mr. Bess discussed the winter sports are being prepared for competition. Mr. Bess discussed the upcoming Community Conversations meeting on Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at Beadle Lake Elementary. Lastly, Mr. Bess wished families a happy and plentiful Thanksgiving.
 - B. Administration: Mr. Ridgeway highlighted the excellent job of the performers and the crew in the play. He stated that attendance showed a lot of support for these talented students. Next, Mr. Ridgeway highlighted sports. He stated that all girls' sports teams won the districts or league titles. Mr. Ridgeway mentioned the Harper Creek Optimist Christmas Parade will be on November 22, 2025, downtown Battle Creek. In addition, Mr. Ridgeway stated that the school break for Thanksgiving will be Wednesday, November 26, through Friday, November 28. Lastly, Mr. Ridgeway informed the Board of the upcoming AP Lit. Class Trip to Chicago to see a play at the Shakespear Theater.
 - C. Board Secretary: There were no additional communications at this time.
- VI. Presentations
 - A. Multilingual Presentation: Mrs. Strombeck discussed the structure of Multilingual Learners from identification to testing to the supports provided. In addition, Mrs. Strombeck discussed the new legislation, which will require

schools to implement program models and minimum instruction times. Her team is working on a four-year plan to ensure meeting these new requirements. Mrs. Strombeck highlighted the students in Harper Creek that her team supports. These students represent ten languages. Another aspect of support is the WiDA test, which Mrs. Strombeck administers twice a year to students to monitor progress. The WiDA test measures English proficiency in reading, speaking, writing, and listening. Mrs. Strombeck and Ms. Whitmore work across all grades in five buildings on a weekly or biweekly basis to check progress. They have also collaborated with other local districts to improve best practices. Lastly, Mrs. Strombeck celebrated her students, stating that eleven students moved up an entire level, and two students have exited the program due to growing proficiency.

B. MASB Conference Recap: This is tabled until December.

VII. District Updates

A. Curriculum: Mrs. Williams discussed Bridges, EL Education, Amplify, and Illustrative Math curriculum support in classrooms. In addition, Mrs. Williams discussed the amazing countywide professional development that was hosted at Harper Creek on Tuesday, November 4, with more than a thousand educators, forty-four sessions, a hundred presenters, and a keynote speaker. The event was a countywide professional learning experience. The event was made possible by a team of organizers. Mrs. Williams thanked the Harper Creek food service team, technology department, and facilities for their work in making this event run smoothly.

B. Facility: Mr. Robinson discussed that the rental house is being used for drills for the Emmett Township safety department. Mr. Robinson highlighted the weight room project by showing pictures from before and after. The project is almost complete, providing our students with a great space to improve and compete at high levels. Lastly, Mr. Robinson stated that the Filter First project is continuing preparations to install hydration stations.

C. Finance: Mrs. Obermyer reviewed monthly budget reports, including the Board Breakdown, cash balance, and check register, highlighting the interest earned and noting that Harper Creek has received the state payment.

D. Technology: Mr. Maynard discussed the technology support at the countywide PD and working with staff from area districts to make the event run smoothly and take care of needs as they arose. His team worked on planning the event to ensure that cables were run to the projectors in all classrooms. In addition, Mr. Maynard discussed the Helpdesk ticket volume. Technicians are working to catch up and support. Lastly, Mr. Maynard discussed the funds in the county's camera project. Mr. Maynard stated that

Harper Creek may receive a few additional cameras from these funds. Areas of need have been identified if the grant funds these cameras.

VIII. Comments Related to Agenda Items: There were no comments.

IX. Consent Agenda - All items on this consent agenda were previously considered by the Harper Creek Board of Education, 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 Services Fund checks (Food Service), and Student/School Activities Fund Checks, in accordance with the list discussed.

1. Approves September 29, 2025, Joint Board Meeting Minutes
2. Approves October 13, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes
3. Approves October 13, 2025, Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes
4. Approves October 20, 2025, Policy Committee Meeting Minutes
5. Approves November 6, 2025, Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion by Mrs. Wallace, supported by Mr. Halverson,
That the Harper Creek Board of Education approve the consent agenda as follows:

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

6. Approves September 29, 2025, Joint Board Meeting Minutes
7. Approves October 13, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes
8. Approves October 13, 2025, Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes
9. Approves October 20, 2025, Policy Committee Meeting Minutes
10. Approves November 6, 2025, Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Bess __Y __, Mrs. Risner __AB __, Mrs. Wallace __Y __, Mrs. Allwardt __Y __, Mrs. Waterson __Y __, Mr. Halverson __Y __, Mr. Smith __Y __.

Motion carried 6-o.

X. Information and Discussion

A. School Safety: Mr. Ridgeway discussed the safety committee meeting as the team was at Sonoma to do a walk-around meeting. Some areas that were

highlighted are the hope to have more staff sign up for the Rave Panic Alert to have best practices in place. Mr. Ridgeway stated that the pick-up and drop-off areas are going well at Sonoma. In addition, Mr. Ridgeway discussed the need for fencing to separate the new tower from the playground, a new key fob entrance location, and another AED in the building. The team discussed evening event protocols and the SRO for the events. Lastly, Mr. Ridgeway discussed universal signage.

B. Strategic Plan Update: Mr. Ridgeway discussed that the focus of the Strategic Plan for November is facilities feedback from staff and the community. He completed feedback with each building and with the senior community members who attended the Community Connections luncheon. Mr. Ridgeway is working on a survey to get more feedback and the possibility of recording a Community Conversations meeting for those unable to attend.

C. 2025 Fall Count: Student count is up even though the school of choice has remained the same. Harper Creek has more students moving into the district.

D. Policy Updates

1. Student Handbook Updates – Appendix I: Mr. Ridgeway stated that the law requires districts to provide parents and students with a guide regarding sexual assault. This will be an addition to the Harper Creek Community Schools Handbook.

2. Thrun Policy Updates: The policy committee met to discuss the Thrun policy updates. The committee reviewed the following policies for updating: 5404 Title I and Parent Engagement, 3118 Title IX Sexual Harassment, 4113 Michigan Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA), 4113-F-1 Michigan Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA) Leave Request Form, and 4113-F-2 Michigan Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA) Leave Request Checklist (new). In addition, the Policy Committee discussed an AI policy that is in the draft stages. It will include Harper Creek's beliefs and principles, AI guidelines, and an easy-to-understand AI infographic for students and staff. Lastly, the committee reviewed discipline policies and progressive discipline. The committee will continue to review this to decide if it will be added to the discipline policy.

E. Food Service Spend Down Plan: Mrs. Obermyer discussed the food service spend down plan. Some items purchased using this money include the Middle school and high school ovens. Items for consideration include elementary ovens, HIR server, small wares replacement, new seating, uniforms for employees, maintaining the quality and variety of food offered to students, tastings, and an outdoor eating area at the high school. Mrs. Obermyer discussed the increase in use of the food truck. Mrs. Obermyer and

Mr. Ruemenapp are meeting with principals to review needs. The cost of breakfast is up twenty-four percent and lunch twenty percent.

New Hire: Mr. Ridgeway recommends Jaym Abraham for the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction. Jaym is currently the MS principal at Caledonia Community Schools. He has led this building to become a model PLC school – there are only two in Michigan currently. He has also led a similar transformation at an elementary school in Allegan. I strongly recommend hiring Jaym Abraham as the next Assistant Superintendent of Instruction.

Superintendent Mid-Year Review: As part of the evaluation process, the Board of Education must act on the Superintendent's mid-year review. President Bess, Vice President Smith, and I worked through the draft mid-year review. We will discuss this draft, make any necessary changes, and pass this as required by law

XI. Comments From the Audience: There were no comments from the audience.

XII. Closed Session – 31aa Funding

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

That the Harper Creek Board of Education meets in closed session under section 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.268(b), for attorney-client privilege.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Smith __Y__, Mr. Bess __Y __, Mrs. Risner __AB__, Mrs. Waterson __Y __, Mr. Halverson __Y __, Mrs. Allwardt __Y __, Mrs. Wallace __Y__.

Motion carried 6-o.

Motion to resume in open session.

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

That the Harper Creek Board of Education resume in open session.

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

Motion Carried: 6-o.

XIII. ACTION

A. Policy Updates

1. Student Handbook Update – Appendix I

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

That the Harper Creek Board of Education approve the Student Handbook update, adding Appendix I: Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Information Guide as required by law, reviewed by the Policy Committee.

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

Motion carried:6-o.

2. Thrun Policy Updates

Motion by Mrs. Wallace, supported by Mrs. Waterson,
That the Harper Creek Board of Education approve the Thrun Policy updates:
5404 Title I and Parent Engagement, 3118 Title IX Sexual Harassment, 4113
Michigan Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA), 4113-F-1 Michigan Earned Sick Time
Act (ESTA) Form, and 4113-F-2 Michigan Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA) Leave
Request Checklist (new) – 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 __AB__.

Motion carried: 6-o.

B. 31 aa Funding: No motion taken at this meeting.

C. New Hire

Motion by Mrs. Wallace, supported by Mr. Halverson,
That the Harper Creek Board of Education approves the following New Hires:
Jaym Abraham, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, \$81,308.00 (prorated),
Master of Education in Ed. Leadership, Grand Valley State University, Bachelor of
Science, Grand Valley State University. As discussed and reviewed.

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

D. Superintendent Mid-Year Review

Motion by Mr. Halverson, supported by Mrs. Wallace,
That the Harper Creek Board of Education approves the Superintendent Mid-
Year Review for Mr. Ridgeway for the 2025-2026 school year, as discussed and
reviewed.

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

Motion carried: 6-o.

XIV. Items for the Next Meeting

XV. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 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.