



**Minutes of the Barker Central School District
Board of Education Meeting
Monday, September 8, 2025 7:00 p.m.
Moved to High School Cafeteria**

Present	R. Atwater, D. Carnes, C. Gancasz, E. Gow, S. Mason, K. Stoll, J. Sweeney, Jr., V. Voss
Excused	None
Also Present	J. Reimer, M. Carter, C. Cornwell, M. Eadie, D. Lingle, M. Love Public – 68
Call to Order	Mr. Atwater called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The pledge to the flag was done.
Agenda	Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Carnes, to approve the agenda as presented. Yes: 7, No: 0 Motion carried.
Minutes	Motion by Mrs. Carnes, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., to approve the minutes from the August 11, 2025 regular meeting as presented. Yes: 7, No: 0 Motion carried.
Public Forum	<p>Mr. Atwater read a statement pertaining to public forums. He noted that the purpose of the public forum is to provide an opportunity for District residents to address the Board. Comments should be limited to less than three (3) minutes and be confined to subjects normally addressed at the Board level. The Board does not intend for the public meeting to be a dialogue. He noted that this is a meeting held in public; it is not a public meeting.</p> <p>The first speaker was Jennifer Mason, community member, she expressed her opinion that there is a lot of interest in the development of a boys soccer team by the students, parents, and community members of the District, and Lyndonville residents. She stated she hoped the Board of Education would consider more seriously having a boys soccer program.</p>



Paul DerSarkissian, parent, resident, alumni, and teacher discussed the changes in girls and boys sports team history since he has been here, including back to 2001, when soccer was first added, the impact on the number of students participating in cross-country, and the growth and dissolution of soccer programs. He noted it took a few years to grow the cross-country program. He also noted the addition of girls soccer and the impact on the field hockey teams. He discussed the boys cross-country program with 7 runners originally, the average team size of approximately 26, and decrease to 16 this year with half being seniors which is the lowest in years. He noted that you can see what has happened to the teams through the years with changes in opportunities of various sports and the District needs to determine what is good for the entire student body and to be successful sports program overall.

Heidi Dergel, mother of Barker students in grades 5, 7, 10, and alumni of the Class of 1995, commented that moms do not give up. She noted when she was a student, she played three sports and there were a lot of changes, and there are always changes with life and time. She commented that at the June Board of Education meeting the boys' soccer program was discussed and was wondering what was holding the District back from doing the program. She noted about the opportunity to merge with another school, that it would not hinder other falls sports, and why there is no interest to merge with a school if there was no impact on the budget. She then noted that as an engineer she understands data and matrices, and to look at outlying pieces to consider. She stated that students' interest change, and was looking for more transparency with regard to what was being done regarding this subject. She noted she was willing to look at data and asked if there is data missing or other considerations to look at. She noted that if the programs and opportunities are better, people will move into that district. She asked the Board to demonstrate change and soccer could be the change.

Oliver Dergel spoke next, who is a 7th grader in the District. He noted he has participated in Lighthouse Soccer since PreK and soccer is his favorite sport. He explained why cross-country and football are not the right sport for him. He questioned why there are not as many sports for boys as girls. He noted that sports interests have shifted over the past years and his view that if there is not an opportunity available students can lose focus. He noted that things change as do perspectives. School pride is not lost he felt if teams merge, that teams are needed and make the pride even if mixed with other districts. He noted his concern that the boys only have three fall sports but the girls more, and noted the addition of sideline cheer. He commented that his personal opinion was that soccer for the boys should be allowed and it would be more fulfilling and make the boys year more complete.

Parker Lefever, Barker 8th grade student, commented that soccer is his favorite sport and he only has the opportunity to participate in summer



soccer, and with it not being offered does not have a sport he can participate in during the fall season. He noted he participated in basketball during the winter but nothing for the fall. He said he was proud of his sister for playing soccer and being able to put her jersey on but he felt sad he did not have the same opportunity. He said he is unable to do soccer somewhere else, and he can't and does not have the chance to represent Barker like his sister can. He would like to see the soccer program for the boys and his classmates.

Oscar Dergel donated his time to Heidi Dergel. Mrs. Dergel noted that Lyndonville Central School District is interested in discussions regarding the development of a combined soccer program per discussions by parents. She noted that they could also join together the cross-country team, have both soccer and cross-country, not a loss. She reiterated that the budget was available and to take advantage of the feeder program with Lighthouse Soccer. For the boys, after ten years playing soccer, there was no program, if in the budget, why not do it. She suggested running a pilot program for a period and look at data and have the information to share the outcome of the data. She said to let the kids' voices mean something and say that.

Danielle Lefever, Barker resident, parent-representative, received Grace Lefever's speaking time, and distributed a document for the Board's consideration. She commented as a follow-up on last month's soccer discussion and summarized numbers of boys and girls playing sports. Of the boys, she noted that 24 boys first choice is to play soccer and not other fall sports. She felt there was an equity gap. She stated that District should partner with Lyndonville and uphold its values. She noted the mental and physical benefits and impact on graduation numbers of students participating in sports. She noted that her research shows student athletes have a 10% higher GPA and denying soccer ignores the benefits for these kids. She noted the benefits of sports with regard to discipline issues being reduced. She stated that sports build healthy habits, and healthy overall development. She felt there is true interest in boys soccer and that integrity, transparency, and equity is called for for the boys. She asked the Board to implement the boys soccer program or give clear information why not given there is real interest as the data she has supports the need. She asked the Board to uphold the District values.

Holly Rounds, District resident, alumni with her husband, children, and has grandchildren in the District spoke. She discussed how the girls' soccer program started its share in Lyndonville as that District had the majority of the girls and that has changed to that there are more girls that now play from Barker. She felt it was a crime not to let the boys have a team. She commended the Board for continuing to listen and hear what the community has to say. She stated she would love to see her grandsons play soccer. She understands the other sports too as her husband did cross-country. She noted that the benefits she was going to mention were



already stated. She felt that if the District has the opportunity, why not try. She did not think cross-country would lose as many participants as expected. She commended the Board again to utilize people coming in and their views, and for bringing people into the building, and to keep the community and students here.

Mrs. Phillips, BTU President, said she is speaking today in reference to some questions and concerns about adding a potential relocation of the North Tonawanda Learning Center to Barker. While adding this new center would provide Barker school with added revenue, as well as opportunities for parents with students of special needs to keep their children close to home, there are some questions that should be considered before a decision is made. She apologizes if some of the questions she asks will be answered by Dr. Farrar and her team during the presentation but she commented that it was her only opportunity to speak to the Board this evening before the presentation. She commented that there are two learning centers in Newfane and Roy-Hart. She said she has several friends that work at Roy-Hart and they were told there was to be no impact on the Roy-Hart teachers or students when the center moved in and that that was false as the cafeteria and gym spaces and schedules were impacted. She said with the current Barker schedules and PE requirements for the state the District would have to add another separate gym location. She said having additional busses added to the pickup and drop-off time could impact sports and after school bus schedules. She noted her concern with regard to shared spaces and that the learning center has students with emotional, behavioral issues, and being in the building would bother or upset our students by exposure to those students. She commented that this is a list of questions the teachers have. The Board must consider the positive and negative side effects when making a decision with moving in to the District and that money isn't everything.

Presentations

Principal's Update - Dr. Love

Dr. Love commented that it was wonderful to see the students here at the meeting and getting their graduation requirements done early. She noted that it was a super opening month. She noted a huge thank you to the staff for all their efforts to get the rooms ready to go. She noted that the students in elementary got a tour of the new areas and layout to become familiar with the spaces such as the media center, nurses, school counseling, and Main Office. She commented that it has been great to see the "one building" focus and the development of relationships between students and staff. She noted that safety procedures for the new year and fire drills this week scheduled with an all call set for this evening to inform parents/guardians and discussions with students about these drill events. She brought forward a fund raiser idea of the 11th graders to pay to paint a parking lot spot and if the Board was okay with this idea. She responded to questions noting who could purchase spots to paint, the spots could be painted over next year, who would be able to participate and purchase a spot, and that supplies were provided by the person painting



rather than the District. After discussion, as there were no concerns relative to the facilities and no objections, the Board agreed to let the class move forward with the project. Mr. Atwater noted the more the merrier.

Dr. Love noted that September 16th, the Niagara County Suicide Coalition asked to do a flag raising ceremony and have a teenage suicide prevention flag flown under the USA flag. September is the month dedicated to discussing this topic and it will be coordinated by the National Honor Society to bring awareness to everyone.

Dr. Love stated that the High School Summer musical was wonderful and a lot of hard work went into it, which was great to see. She noted that the High School Spring musical this year was selected and will be the Wizard of Oz.

She commented that Homecoming is coming up and there are sporting events all week. The theme is "Through the Decades" with events throughout the week and the elementary is also involved. There will be football, soccer and field hockey games, a new kickball tournament has been added, the parade and BBQ on Friday, and the dance on Saturday.

Dr. Love continued with an update on student enrollment covering years 2020-2025. From the prior year Pratt Elementary is down ten students and the Jr./Sr. High is down four students. Out of District placement have increased by two to 51, and homeschool for elementary increased by four while the Jr./Sr. High decreased by five. Overall, the combined totals from last year have decreased by thirteen students.

Assistant Principle – Mrs. Lingle

Mrs. Lingle reported that her start at Barker has been really fun, warm and welcoming by all. She discussed the newly implemented Internet-enabled Device Policy is going well. There were twelve instances of phones being out that required disciplinary action. She noted that it is about what was anticipated and typical based on outreach she has had to other districts with regard to this change. She noted the students have been respectful regarding this and there are reminder announcements every morning so they are aware. With regard to the new dress code, she commented that the teachers are doing a great job and discussions with students have not been an issue. September 26th is scheduled as the cupcake date for honors students. She noted that RTI will pick up once Fastbridge testing picks up.

Coor. of Curriculum & Prof. Learning/AP's Update - Mr. Cornwell

Mr. Cornwell presented information on data from exams covering, in most cases, the timeframes from 2017-2018 school year to 2024-2025. With regard to these data points, he noted that the Regents' exams are merely one set of data points, and thus not indicative of the total educational experience that students receive at Barker. He provided an example and



how results can change. He noted too that regardless, Regent's data, attendance data, and graduation data all appear on the District's report card that is issued publicly by NYS.

He noted another key consideration to keep in mind when looking at this exam data is that the conversion charts that determine the passing and mastery cut points change with every exam. Sometimes the changes are very noticeable. All of the District's Regents exam data is very good. The goal, he noted, is to continue to increase the mastery rates (85+) on these exams. He then provided a quick summary on the individual scores. Algebra I results show continued strength of proficiency (93%). It is the second year of the revised exam and the mastery rate returned close to normal status (27%). Geometry represents the first administration of a new exam with a new conversion chart. There was a slight decrease in proficiency rate (76%). The District saw a similar result in no student mastering the exam in Algebra I last year. Algebra II's proficiency rate remains very high. Mastery rate, while down, is still very strong considering the difficulty of this exam. There will be a new exam in June of 2026 with new conversion chart for Algebra II. Living Environment experienced a great rebound in proficiency rate, with the second highest mastery rate in the past seven years (48%). Mr. Cornwell noted that that is incredible. Barker students will be given the new exam, which is a very different from the past, in this content area in June 2026. Earth Science continued its strong proficiency rate for what is often the hardest exam each June. It had an increase in the mastery rate again. Barker will give the old version of this exam one last time in June 2026. After that it will administer the new (very different) exam. Chemistry had a great proficiency rate (87%) on another challenging exam. A new exam in Chemistry will be given in June 2026. This too will be very different from previous versions. Physics was the last administration of old version of exam and had the strongest proficiency rate (88%) since before the pandemic. Next time Barker offers Physics, there will be a new (very different) exam tied to it. ELA had the second highest proficiency rate since the pandemic (90%). Mastery rate returned to levels that have been consistent in the past. A slightly new exam will be given in June 2026 with a new conversion chart. Barker will sit all Juniors for the old version in January 2026. Global History experienced another year of a very high proficiency rate (93%) on a typically very challenging exam. Student written responses scored well when compared to other schools in our BOCES and region. US History has had solid proficiency rates over the 3 years of the new exam. There is a continuous goal to improve the mastery rate for US History. Student written responses scored well and have increased over the past couple of years. Mr. Cornwell noted that it shows the curriculum and other work the teachers have been working on, and continue to do, is having an impact.

With regard to attendance, Barker's student attendance rates are close to the levels they were at before the pandemic. As a District, attendance



rates are part of the current Strategic Plan. The elementary school chronically absent has been trending in the right direction over the past couple of years. During the 2023-2024 school year, a District level attendance team was formed, and data was collected and reviewed. Various interventions were also started to help Barker students and families return to school. Mr. Cornwell noted that this included but was not limited to parent meetings, home visits, information sharing, student support plans, etc. The District's grade level team from Grades 2-4 really emphasized strong attendance with public recognition efforts of students who displayed good attendance at the elementary level. Across those three grade levels, there were only a total of 7 students considered chronically absent during the 2024-2025 school year and two of those grade levels had no students who were chronically absent. He stated that this work needs to be continued and spread to other grade levels and buildings. He commented that kids need to be here and learn and if not, it is harder to learn.

Mr. Cornwell then reviewed graduation data. Overall, the graduation data remains strong. Strong percentages of students earning Regents diplomas with Advanced Designation (+ Honors). The District also had a lot of students who earn CTE endorsement through their work at BOCES which is a strong increase this past year. The highest percentage of students to earn the Seal of Biliteracy from NYS also occurred in 2024-2025. He stated that Barker first bestowed the Seal of Civic Readiness on 20% of its graduates this past year. In addition, one student from this cohort dropped out and two students were considered non-completers for the 2024-2025 school year.

Work on academic achievement is tied directly to the District Strategic Plan. The data driven instruction initiative that we have worked on over the past 18 months is helping Barker see improvements over various areas at differing grade levels. This initiative will continue to play a vital role in the ability of our faculty, staff, and eventually students, to examine and analyze data, set goals and targets, and develop plans to reach these goals and measure their progress. Mr. Cornwell wanted to give a shout out to the staff, students, and parents as a collective whole to achieve these results.

Mr. Cornwell continued by highlighting Opening Days with the faculty and staff on August 27th and 28th before the students returned. Wednesday, August 27th was mainly utilized to prepare for the orientations, welcome back night and the first day of classes. On Thursday, August 28th teachers heard presentations on Project-based learning and Performance based assessment which relates to the new graduation measures being developed by NYS. A presentation by Dr. David Meichenbaum on students who exhibit challenging behaviors was also shared. This presentation focused on the factors that contribute to persistent challenging behaviors as well as practical and evidence-based



strategies to reduce these challenging behaviors and provide alternative behaviors to adopt.

Financial Update - Mr. Carter

Mr. Carter noted that earlier was the Audit Committee meeting to wrap up the 2024-2025 year-end financial audit. The audit went well with no significant findings. He noted that the general fund closed out at approximately \$40,000 under budget which was positive especially give the Special Education concerns that were addressed. The general fund increased \$450,000 and the District's aid figures were good. Mr. Carter noted that tax collection has started, along with processing and depositing of checks. He reminded the Board that the District does this in-house so processing takes a few weeks compared to it being outsourced which many districts do. He noted that the state reporting for state aid has commenced and it is a big job for the Business Office to do this. This impacts state aid and requires a lot of information including student data and it is a multi-month process to complete.

Mr. Carter noted that the Board received his resignation as a Business Administrator. He said he has been in administration for eight years in different capacities from Principal to now, and he thanked the Board for hiring him and their continued support and trust. He noted that he could not have had such an experience if it were not for the Board support and the experience with them, Dr. Reimer, the Administrative Team, and others such as Mr. Hoar, Ms. Heiligenthaler, Mrs. Farese, and Mrs. Thibault through the years. He noted too that he saw this evening that Mrs. Ecker, a past-Board member, was here that he worked with. He thanked everyone. Mr. Atwater noted his appreciation for all that Mr. Carter did for the District, and wished him well in his next career.

Student Representative - Miss Stoll

Miss Stoll noted that she did not have any student items to report.

Building BOCES Capacity - Dr. Farrar and her team will present

Dr. Taweepon Farrar introduced herself and two of her team members, Lorrina Kostuk-Madonia and Danielle Leonardis who are the Associate Directors of Special Programs. She discussed her role as the District Superintendent and what some of her state and local responsibilities were with regard to that role. She noted she is visiting with component districts and discussing who they are and what they due. She has met with many Niagara Orleans component districts to date to receive feedback and is looking at how to increase efficiencies for them and the services for all students in BOCES. She noted one of her jobs is to build BOCES' capacity and her role is similar to superintendents of school districts. She is 1 of 37 District Superintendents that support the school districts in the regions. She defined BOCES, which stands for Board of Cooperative Educational Services. BOCES are regional organizations that provide a wide range of educational services to school districts. These services are



designed to enhance student learning, support educators, and improve efficiency. She discussed the mission of the Orleans/Niagara BOCES which is to be the premier provider of innovative and effective solutions for the evolving needs of our component districts and other learning collaboratives. She reviewed the Board of Education for BOCES noting that Carol Feltz represents the District through 2026. She then highlighted the areas of her district and the administrators in charge and their overall responsibilities. She discussed the Orleans Career and Technical Center in Medina with 710 students and the Niagara Career and Technical Center in Sanborn which Dr. Michael Weyrauch oversees. There are currently 24 NYS approved programs between both the centers. She noted they have started a 2.5 hour per day hands-on vocational training for junior and senior high students that is focused around industry standards to help students determine a path they would like to explore. In 2025-2026 they started a sophomore career exploration program and piloted it in Medina this year. She also discussed that BOCES provides and coordinates career development services and noted what is included with those services. She highlighted the career and technical education programs available to students. BOCES also provides adult education which is coordinated by Maureen Bartlett and focuses on literacy, which helps individuals also obtain their GEDs, skilled trades, and health occupations. She noted there these training centers were located in Niagara Falls and Lockport. She reviewed educational services which have expanded based on needs as discussed with district superintendents and principals, and noted which were recently added to the list of services available. She discussed education programs/services and the work of Dr. Ron Barstys, Lorrina Kostuk-Madonia and Danielle Leonardis. They broke down classroom programs addressing emotional disabilities, alternative education, multiple disabled autism, and work study/job coach programs for students. They also discussed the ancillary programs of special programs which include art, music, PE, ENL, Spanish, technology, and FACS, and also the related services areas of vision, hearing, speech, OT, PT, orientation and mobility, and counseling.

They discussed Niagara Academy which is an alternative and special education middle and high school, as well as the Newfane Godfrey and Orleans (Medina) Learning Centers. Newfane has grades 6-12, and Orleans has grades 7-12+ for special education. The Royalton-Hartland Learning Center has grades K-6 for special education students. North Tonawanda and Niagara Wheatfield Learning Centers educate students in grade K-6 with special education needs.

Dr. Farrar discussed the various BOCES leases currently and the ones that are ending and options they consider for education centers with regards to staff, students, and needs. She noted that the North Tonawanda lease is ending and they are not renewing due to shifts in enrollment and thus they now need the space they leased to BOCES. This is why she has been looking at a number of sites to see if any would fit the needs of the



group at North Tonawanda. She noted that over the past twenty years BOCES has gone in and out of areas. She discussed options of partnering with a component district and leasing space, leasing pre-existing private/parochial schools, leasing of other spaces, purchasing buildings, and partnering with component district for a capital project in their district with BOCES paying the unaided portion. She noted potential barriers of shared resources and potential utilization of shared spaces. Some of the barriers, if at Barker might be, if the staff would travel the distance; start and end times of the BOCES programs and how to work around bus schedules; parking limitations, and transportation. She discussed the process involved in looking at spaces and provided an example of a layout suggestion she put together for space in Barker that would be an ideal situation for BOCES. She noted some reasons why Barker should consider partnering with BOCES which included, but were not limited, to that it provides regional services to all 13 districts, expanded opportunities for Barker, facilities utilization, and financial benefits; strengthening community connections as it positions Barker as a regional leader and brings families from across 13 districts to campus and enhances its visibility and reputation. She also noted the full support services included for classrooms and related services; long-term partnership and stability; the alignment of state expectations as NYSED encourages district-BOCES collaboration; and it would demonstrate compliance and innovation under IDEA. It would also provide a shared commitment to regional student success. She discussed next steps in this process whether with Barker or another resource. She noted that North Tonawanda's not wanting to renew the lease just happened, resulting in her discussing next steps for BOCES to explore partnerships for 2026-2027 for the 70 students and developing a long-term facilities plan for BOCES programs with existing and new partnerships to include potential new construction. Dr. Farrar then addressed questions. Mr. Atwater inquired as to how long a space is typically used. She noted that BOCES is flexible, typically an average of 5 years, however some have been leased from 3 – 10 years, even a year in one instance. Mrs. Gancasz asked about the age of the placement of children which was from grades K-6. Dr. Reimer noted that if the Board were to look to the possibility of a partnership, there needs to be analysis done to see if this is viable and suggested there would be talks with teachers and staff. Dr. Farrar noted that if the Board is considering this, she would need to know sooner than later, ideally by October or November due to approvals required by the State and NYSED. Mrs. Voss inquired if all BOCES would need is to house approximately 70 staff and 70 students and 11 rooms. Dr. Farrar said ideally as BOCES come in as a fully functioning school. Some locations do share resources some do not. Mrs. Mason inquired about where the District would house them. Dr. Reimer noted that if the Board decides to look at this, then the District would have to see what would work as there could be many options, there would need to be some shifts in rooms, and analyze the pros/cons of the process. Mrs. Mason commented that she did not want it to be a struggle like at Roy-Hart, a struggle for space, etc., and what would be the costs,



would the District need to add parking; and thought it would not hurt to investigate. Mr. Atwater noted any capital costs, as noted by Dr. Farrar, would be picked up by BOCES. Mrs. Gow felt it would be worth going down the path to look into and see how the staff and community feel about it. She sees both benefits and concerns. Mrs. Gancasz felt it definitely was worth looking into. Mrs. Voss stated more information is needed and to look into it to see if sharing is worth it, and the District needs to do its due diligence. She commented that the District can change and the Board is open to dialogue. She noted that this must be reviewed carefully as we owe it to the tax payers and a lot of moving pieces to this. Dr. Farrar noted that no district can take all the students and thus BOCES needs to come up with a solution. Mrs. Carnes noted she is open to dialogue. Mr. Sweeney, Jr. said he was on board with continued discussion. Mr. Atwater stated he too was open to more dialogue regarding the potential opportunity for the District.

Superintendent's Information

Dr. Reimer noted that he sensed the Board would like to move forward and continue the discussion relative to the utilization of space by BOCES. Therefore, he will put a plan together to receive feedback, receive and respond to questions, compile information received, and provide to the Board. He commented he will provide his thoughts on how to do this in the Friday letter for feedback from the Board.

Dr. Reimer provided a capital project update, commenting a lot of space has been turned over this week and last week. There has been no shift in timing since the last week and more spaces will be turned over in September, October, and November. The \$14 million capital project is taking some structure and concept for the rooms consistent with the large project. The current estimated expense is lower than projected due to changes in costs so Dr. Reimer asked for components to be added to the original scope to expand the area within the total budget. He noted once set he will bring the information back to the Board on the initial scope and options to select due to the change in costs. Once the Board approves, the information will be sent to the NYSED for approval. He anticipates, pending a future Board meeting, it will be sent to SED in late fall, approvals received so bids could be issued in December, received back January/February in order to award bids in a March/April timeframe, with work to commence thereafter and finish approximately the last third of the 2026-2027 school year. Final Costs Reports would therefore be able to be submitted prior to year-end 2026-2027. He noted that this is an aggressive timeline but it is doable.

Dr. Reimer then discussed the cell phone ban and noted he was happy with the process and was interested to see how it would go for the first month of school.



He provided an update on the grassland and the lease, noting the attorneys are working through the contract as there were components of it the attorneys wanted to look at further.

The solar field experienced an issue due to a lightening strike that was under warranty. Tomorrow, Solar Liberty will be here to fix and it will be brought back fully online. Dr. Reimer noted that the energy is covering about two-thirds of the District's electric, but that may change a little due to the time it was down due to the lightening strike.

Policies/Plans

The Board review the first reading of policies and there were no questions raised.

- 5610 Insurance
- 5620 Inventories and Accounting of Fixed Assets
- 5630 Facilities: Inspection, Operation and Maintenance
- 5631 Hazardous Waste and Handling of Toxic Substances by Employees
- 5632 Pest Management and Pesticide Usage
- 5640 Smoking/Tobacco Use

The Board reviewed the Cardiac Emergency Plan (Confidential) presented. Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Carnes to waive the second reading and approve the policy as presented.

Yes: 7; No: 0

Motion carried.

Education

Boys Soccer Discussion

Mr. Mucha discussed the boys' soccer matter and noted that as Athletic Director, he evaluates and looks at the best interest for the entire program and overall health of the athletic program. He noted that people questioned his personal integrity and commented that he would never make a decision for personal benefit or at the expense of the students. He noted that he appreciated the many voices, perspectives of the parents and his decision had zero bearing related to the golf team. His decision was to protect the strength of the athletic program. He felt he needed to clear his name and that his decision was again for the greater good of the students now and in the long-term. He noted that what the Board decides, he will support and move forward with whatever is decided.

Mrs. Gow noted that the Board is seeing the same people and feelings, and understands, commenting it is a struggle to provide for our kids, and noted that Mr. Mucha was an excellent AD and the original analysis was not to approve the boys team last year as it could hurt the program, and to stay as decided.

Mrs. Mason noted it "could" hurt which she felt was speculation. She noted she was totally open to the option to do a two-year program and see the results. She stated to not have the boys soccer fall sport was not right,



and Barker should combine with another school to start and maybe would not lose as many students if joined together. She said to attempt to have boys soccer and look for students and the numbers.

Mrs. Gancasz stated she was sorry if Mr. Mucha's integrity was questioned and it was never in question with him or any coaches, and that it was never an issue with her. She also noted that she appreciates and hears the voices of people and she does care about the students but the District can't always do every thing individuals or groups want. She noted that combined/shared sports, impact on tradition, and that the decision should be based on the kids interest and not the parents. She commended the parents for their passion on this matter and told them not to give up. She noted she was open to looking at the addition of the boys team.

Miss Stoll noted she was not really sure how she felt about the subject noting she could see both sides. She noted she would want to see the boys interested have a team but also did not want the current teams to diminish due to it and did not want to see all the sports join with other schools just to continue.

Mr. Sweeney, Jr. noted that Mr. Mucha's integrity was never in question. He said to stay with the decision. He knows what parents and students want too and understands but supports Mr. Mucha's decision.

Mrs. Carnes noted that this is a struggle for her too, data is a struggle, and to put the numbers out there and see.

Mrs. Mason asked what is required to have the team. Mr. Mucha noted that you must consider that you can have twenty students interested and try out but the question is, will all twenty make the team if you are with another district as others school may have more students and at a higher level of talent.

Mrs. Voss commented that they care for the whole community and students, and relied on Mr. Mucha's recommendation.

Mr. Atwater noted that the Board seems split evenly on this item this evening. He noted that no one should question their integrity and the recommendation should be respected. Given the activity, petition, and community and student interest, he could see a shift in the types of sports offered. He was in support to explore the soccer for the 2026-2027 school year. He noted that this is a tough call.

Dr. Reimer noted that the District will due its due diligence, see what opportunities are available now that a direction has been given by the Board to look at adding boys soccer. He noted Mr. Mucha will have work to do and will work to bring a shared agreement forward which could be a 1- or 3-year agreement.



Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Mason to approve the overnight Boys and Girls Cross-country trip to Queensbury, NY from September 12 – September 13, 2025 as outlined in the Board package.
Yes: 7, No: 0
Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Masson to approve the District Bus Routes for the 2025-2026 School Year (Confidential).
Yes: 7, No: 0
Motion carried.

Personnel Items

Motion by Mrs. Gow, seconded by Mrs. Gancasz to approve the appointment of Darian Papia for the full-time probationary FACS/Physical Education Teacher position effective September 10, 2025. Her probationary period would be effective September 10, 2025 through September 9, 2029, and in the tenure area of FACS/Physical Education. The expiration date is tentative and conditional only. In order to be eligible for and considered for tenure, she must meet all requirements of the Educational Law and corresponding regulations. Her annual salary rate at MA15, Step 9, 2025-2026 BTU salary schedule at \$59,991.
Yes: 7, No: 0
Motion carried.

Dr. Reimer noted the rigorous number of interview stages Mrs. Papia went through to be chosen. He noted he was excited to have her join the team and congratulated her.

Motion by Mrs. Mason, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, Jr. to approve the resignation of Thomas M. Carter, Business Administrator, effective October 4, 2025.
Yes: 7, No: 0
Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Mason, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, Jr. to approve the appointment of Carol Heiligenthaler as Interim Business Administrator at a rate of \$50.00 per hour effective September 24, 2025.
Yes: 7, No: 0
Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Mason, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, Jr. to approve the change in appointment for Deanna Luckman from Step 2 to Step 3 as JV Girls Soccer Coach for the Fall Season of the 2025-2026 school year.
Yes: 7, No: 0
Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Mason, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, Jr. to approve the appointment of Wendy Harris as a full-time Teacher Aide effective August 27, 2025 at a rate of \$15.50 per hour.
Yes: 7, No: 0
Motion carried.



Motion by Mrs. Mason, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, Jr. to accept the resignation of Alura Steel as a part-time Food Service Helper effective August 6, 2025.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Mason, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, Jr. to approve the appointment of Jackie Cushman as a part-time Food Service Helper effective August 27, 2025 at a rate of \$15.50 per hour.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Mason, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, Jr. to approve the appointment of Alexandria Belotti as a part-time Food Service Helper effective September 9, 2025 at a rate of \$15.50 per hour.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Mason, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, Jr. to approve the following as community/parent volunteer: Britanee Holm.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Business & Financial

Items

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Carnes to accept the Warrant Report dated July 2025.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Carnes to accept the Treasurer's Report for June, July and August 2025.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Carnes to accept the Extraclassroom Report for June, July and August 2025.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Carnes to approve the resolution with Erie 1 BOCES for a Contract for Cooperative Educational Services.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Barker CSD hereby agrees to enter into the attached contract with the Erie 1 BOCES for a three-year period commencing on September 10, 2025 to authorize the Western New York Regional Information Center to furnish certain computer services to the District pursuant



to Education Law 1950 (4) (JJ) for an amount not to exceed \$17,889.84 and authorizes 36-monthly payments to be made to Erie 1 BOCES in the amount not to exceed \$496.94 per month.

Be it further RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Barker CSD hereby authorizes the Board President or the District Clerk to execute the contract on behalf of the District.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

**End of Public
Session**

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Gow to end the Public Session at 9:11 p.m. and moved to Executive Session for the purpose of the Superintendent's evaluation.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Prepared by,

Mary H. Eadie
District Clerk