

**MILAN AREA SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, September 24, 2025
MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Milan Area Schools Board of Education was called to order in the District Office Boardroom located at 100 Big Red Drive, Milan MI, 48160, by President Cislo at 7:02 p.m. on September 24, 2025.

Board Members Present: Faro, Gutierrez, Heikka, Prior, Meray, Cislo and Burdette

Board Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Ryan McMahon, Jen Bookout, Margaret Durkee, Carrie Mink, Connie Cox and Sara Beckman

Guests Present: Ianna Loring, Sara Norton, Amy Loring, Beth Vandergrift, Andrea Bennink, David Taepke, Zoey Taepke and Amanda Taepke

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comments:

Ianna Loring: Shared her experiences and concerns regarding policies to support LGBTQIA+ students. She also shared ideas for the district, and information about the Milan High School GSA.

Zoe Taepke: Shared her positive experiences in Ms. Bagnall's classroom, and expressed gratitude for her teacher's support. She shared specific examples of strategies her teacher uses to support learning.

Amanda Taepke: Shared positive feedback about the strong start to the year for her children, noting that they are happy and doing well. She expressed gratitude to the staff and administration for supporting her children.

Motion by Burdette supported by Gutierrez to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of September 10, 2025. All Ayes. Carried 7-0.

Motion by Heikka supported by Meray to approve the minutes of the regular meeting closed session of September 10, 2025. All Ayes. Carried 7-0.

The Board watched a presentation by Carrie Mink and Connie Cox from the Milan Adult Education and FCI Programs, who provided an overview of their departments.

The Board heard the WISD PAC update by Andrea Bennink.

The Board discussed the State Aid Budget and read the Resolution of the Milan Area School Board of Education regarding delays to the FY 2025-26 Michigan School Aid Fund budget and its impact on State Aid.

Public Comments:

Carrie Mink: Asked a question about informing the community about a potential school closure and encouraging families to contact legislators.

Assistant Superintendent Comments:

- First, congratulations to Milan Middle School for leading Washtenaw county in participation with the *My Future Fund* program at the middle school level in the 2024-2025 school year. They will be recognized at a special breakfast later in October. My Future Fund helps families start saving for their child's education after high school, and it's exciting to see so many of our students taking part in this opportunity.
- On the state level, new proposed Health Education Standards were presented to the State Board of Education earlier this month. The state is asking for public feedback, and comments are due by October 10. Assistant Superintendent Bookout encourages everyone to take a few minutes to review the draft standards and share their input. You can find the proposed standards on the MDE Health and Safety website.
- Finally, Assistant Superintendent Bookout shared an update on the DESSA, which is our district's social-emotional learning screener. For our Young 5s through 5th grade students, teachers complete a teacher-report based on their observations of students' skills and behaviors. For grades 6–12, students complete a self-report, which allows them to reflect on their own social and emotional strengths. The results help us identify student needs, guide classroom practices, and connect students with additional supports when needed. This year we'll complete three DESSA ratings (fall, winter, spring) so that we have additional information to support our students. A parent letter with more information will be going home next week.

Superintendent Comments:

- Superintendent McMahon shared a reminder of the upcoming CTE Millage vote on Nov. 4. It is important for our community members to visit the WISD website for up to date information about the CTE millage. In addition to increased opportunities for K-12 students and increased access for all students, it is important to consider the long-term impact that this millage could have for the greater Washtenaw County area. As an area impacted by rapid industrial changes, consider the impact that additional career-readiness programming for our students may have on the future industrial growth of our surrounding areas.
- Superintendent McMahon shared a reminder that the Fall Count Day is October 1st, which also closes out our school-of-choice window. If any area families are considering school-of-choice options in Milan Area Schools, there is still a week remaining to get enrolled for this semester.
- Superintendent McMahon informed the Board that Paddock and Symons will be hosting their Fall Festival on October 2, 2025, at 5PM at Paddock. Please consider joining our elementary staff for this community gathering and activities.

- Superintendent McMahon shared that the WISD is hosting a series of workshops for parent and caregiver mental health support. Please see the district's Facebook or Instagram pages for more information on a post shared this afternoon.
- Superintendent McMahon provided an update from his experience at the MASA Superintendent's Conference last week. The conference extensively covered the lack of a State Budget from a number of aspects. The highlight for me was being introduced to a group called the Equity Caucus, which is a group of education administrators that gather to promote equity in school funding. I was able to speak with the Executive Director and learn that a number of their initiatives align closely with rural schools similar to MAS. I am looking forward to attending upcoming meetings to see where Milan fits in with their association.
- Superintendent McMahon thanked Carrie Mink and Connie Cox for their program update presentation this evening. Connie and Carrie work with students that deviate from the traditional path, and they constantly flex and adjust to respond to their students' needs, including obtaining grant funds.

Board Member Comments:

Cislo: Shared that he has approved tuition reimbursement for Mr. McMahon's PhD program. He thanked Mr. Burdette and Ms. Prior for attending the WISD legislative breakfast, and then thanked Ms. Prior, Ms. Heikka and Ms. Meray for hosting the Big Red Board Chat.

Prior: She shared updates from the Big Red Board Chat and expressed appreciation for the conversation with community members. She reminded the community about homecoming and spirit week coming up the week of Sept. 29, and encouraged families to get involved. She thanked the community for attending events to support students. She also noted the final week for the GMACF fundraiser to benefit their CTE scholarship, and shared details for a GMACF pep rally at Munson Park. She thanked the students who spoke during public comment.

Heikka: She thanked attendees of the Big Red Board Chat, and expressed gratitude for the community discussion. She shared about attending a boys soccer game and praised players for their perseverance. She encouraged the community to check out a soccer game this season. She thanked the students who spoke at public comment, and suggested working with Ms. Taepke to organize a flag retirement/replacement ceremony. She complimented the student-led flag ceremony and encouraged the community to attend. She thanked Carrie Mink and Connie Cox for their incredible work with Adult Ed and the Milan FCI programs. She suggested sending a reminder for families to add money to meal accounts in the event that the state free-meals-for-all funding is cut from the budget.

Faro: He echoed thanks and praise for the work and dedication of Connie Cox and Carrie Mink. He thanked Ianna for sharing her experiences and expressed the importance of students feeling safe at school. He praised Mr. Middlin for his participation with the band students at a recent football game. He noted looking forward to reviewing the audit for FY25 and requested insurance rate information to be shared as soon as it's available.

Burdette: He thanked students for sharing their experiences during public comment, and requested administration ensure students are supported. He shared about attending middle and high school football games, as well as the JV volleyball game. He also thanked Mr. Middlin for engaging with middle and high school band students at the game.

Gutierrez: She humorously suggested formation of a school board pep band. She then expressed thanks to students for sharing their experiences during public comment. She expressed gratitude for the positive comments shared, and reiterated that all students have a right to safety and respect at school. She shared support for the Milan High School GSA, and expressed interest in hearing about upcoming events. She thanked Connie Cox and Carrie Mink for their passion and dedication to their programs. She thanked Andrea Bennink and Sara Norton for their work with the WISD PAC, and for supporting school open house events. She clarified the difference between the ending of state funding for free meals for all, and the federal free and reduced lunch program--noting that those who qualify for the federal program will still receive those free or reduced cost meals. She wished the community a safe and fun homecoming week.

Meray: Shared thanks and praise to Zoe for her comments and her specific feedback for her teacher. She thanked Ianna for sharing her honest experiences, and feedback about the Milan HS GSA. She expressed the importance of all students being made to feel not just safe, but also valued and welcome. She also thanked Ms. Taepke for sharing her family's joy and positive experiences so far in the new school year. She noted gratitude for the district employing the DESSA screener. She offered assistance in getting CTE millage signs out in the community. She expressed gratitude to Connie Cox and Carrie Mink for their work with their continuing education programs. She also thanked Andrea Bennink and Sara Norton for their work with WISD PAC.

Burdette: He added a final shout-out to the cheerleading team, noting their lengthy practices and expressed gratitude for their contributions to the district sporting events.

Motion by Heikka supported by Gutierrez to enter into closed session pursuant to Section 8(1)(c) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act for Negotiation Strategies. All Ayes Carried 7-0.

Time entered closed session 8:50 p.m.

Time returned to open session at 9:32 p.m.

Time of Adjournment 9:32 p.m.