

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Northern Local Schools Board of Education
Regular Meeting – December 16, 2025

The Northern Local Schools Board of Education met in regular session in the District Office Board Room.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Call to Order – President Dale DeRolph called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call – Treasurer Jennie Clifton called the roll:

Members Present:

Sharon Cains
Dale DeRolph
Levi Dupler
Patrick Hogan
Megan Miller

Members Absent:

Visitors and Guests – Mr. DeRolph welcomed the following guest; Mr. Steve Lemon.

The Board also welcomed several former employees and their families, who were in attendance to celebrate their retirement at the end of the 2024-25 school year. Each retiree was gifted an embroidered jacket as a token of appreciation for their many years of service and contribution to NLSD. Mr. DeRolph stated that he always feels mixed emotions during this evening and that while we are celebrating everyone, we are also missing those who have retired. Mrs. Gussler added that she sincerely appreciates all of the years and experience that those who have retired gave to this district. Those retirees in attendance were; Maureen Snider, Sharon Wise, and Tom Kunkler.

Recommendation for Approval – Mrs. Cains moved to approve the following meeting minutes:

1. Regular Meeting, November 20, 2025

Mr. Dupler seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mrs. Cains, aye; Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Hogan, aye; Mrs. Miller, abstain; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 4-0.

Mid-East Vocational School Report – Mr. France reported that all 13 Mid-East Board members were present for the last Board meeting of the year. There were several policy revisions that were considered and the culinary program students served dinner to showcase their skills. Mr. France stated that there are approximately 920 new incoming students for the 2026-27 year, 20 of which have been accepted to the new fire and EMS program. The Mid-East organizational meeting will be held January 12th at 6:30 at the Zanesville campus.

Mrs. Gussler presented Mr. France with a leather journal and plaque as a token of appreciation for 34 years of service to the Northern Local Schools, serving on both the NLSD Board and Mid-East Board.

Superintendent's Report – Mrs. Gussler provided an update on the ongoing conversation with Mid-East to partner with them in transitioning the high school agriculture program to a Mid-East satellite program. This partnership will allow students to continue to receive strong agricultural instruction while connecting them more directly to regional CTE opportunities. With the program scheduled to transition to Mid-East at the beginning of the 2026-27 school year, it will also provide a sustainable way to meet the new requirement to provide CTE programming for students in grades 7-12.

The current Sheridan Ag teachers would transition to Mid-East employees, but Mrs. Gussler did not feel this will cause any issues among staff as we currently contract a variety of positions, such as Speech, Mental Health, and Preschool through the ESC.

Northern Local would retain ownership of the FFA program, including fundraising, leadership activities, and competitions. Mrs. Gussler stated that maintaining the identity and traditions of Sheridan FFA is a priority.

From a financial standpoint, the district is expecting that this partnership will provide a substantial savings to the General Fund by approximately \$250,000 - \$300,000 per year in salaries, benefits, and related instructional expenses. Furthermore, as NLSD owned equipment becomes outdated, needs repairs or replaced, Mid-East will be covering those expenses providing opportunity for more up-to-date learning experiences. This is a win-win for our District.

Mr. France added that Mid-East is expecting to add up to 3 additional partner schools for agricultural education next year because of the financial benefit to do so.

Mr. Dupler, Mr. Hogan, Mrs. Cains and Mrs. Miller all asked questions about the specifics of the partnership such as extended days, transportation responsibilities, substitute teacher payment, and work calendars to which Mrs. Gussler stated that we are still working through extended day details, but one possible solution would be to offer a supplemental contract for FFA activities, much like a coach or other student activity advisor would receive versus extended days. She also stated that since most transportation costs are associated with FFA activities and not part of the agricultural curriculum, the district would still provide transportation. As far as calendar alignment, Mid-East will follow our school calendar for teachers on our campus but there could be a professional development day where a substitute would be required.

Mrs. Clifton stated that in the agreement, NLSD will process the pay for all agricultural substitutes, and then bill those costs back to Mid-East at the end of each year.

Mr. DeRolph stated that it is rare to find a partnership that is a win-win scenario, but he feels like this is one.

Mrs. Gussler also shared that Jenny Dupler, Kindergarten Teacher at Somerset Elementary, was nominated by Principal Kate Simmons, and awarded the CORA's Outstanding Elementary Teacher award. Mrs. Gussler stated that Mrs. Dupler is an outstanding educator and truly deserving of this award. Mrs. Dupler is always smiling and has a positive impact on all her students.

Mrs. Gussler informed the Board that the district received the 2025 Best-In-Class Award and asked Mrs. Clifton to expand. Mrs. Clifton stated that Gallagher Benefits conducts a nationwide survey each year and out of 4,000+ employers, NLSD came out in the top tier. This award recognizes the leadership team and insurance committee's commitment to supporting a workforce focused on comprehensive benefits and compensation planning, wellbeing initiatives, and effective healthcare cost management.

Treasurer's Report – Mrs. Clifton presented the Board with the monthly financial reports noting that our unrestricted state funding revenues are slightly less than anticipated, which is due to the State moving some of the funding into the restricted category, which is slightly more than anticipated. She also noted that interest earnings fiscal year-to-date in the general fund is \$178,623.74, and totals \$186,400.84 for all funds. For expenditures, we have completed 41.7% of the fiscal year and expenses are 41.3% of estimated.

The unencumbered permanent improvement fund balance is \$534,757.69 of which \$3,464.50 are earmarked donations for the football turf replacement and \$40,000 is earmarked for other athletic facility improvements.

Mrs. Clifton also highlighted our food service fund history report that indicates our revenues from Federal Subsidy payments are up by approx. \$140,720 from the same time last year. She noted that approx. \$85,000 was a FY25 receipt received in FY26, but we are still exceeding revenue expectations at this time. Mrs. Clifton noted that ala carte and extras sales are down at all buildings except Thornville, which indicates that more students are taking advantage of the qualifying free breakfasts and lunches, allowing us to claim more reimbursements and increasing the Federal Subsidy payments. Our food supply expenses are also down

approx. \$75,646 from this time last year. Mrs. Clifton stated that Lori Larimer, our new food service director, has done a great job at containing costs and being very aware of the challenges in the food service department in terms of finances, and while we did anticipate the need for a transfer from the general fund to the food service fund at year-end, Lori's efforts to reduce that transfer amount is much appreciated.

Mrs. Clifton also informed the Board that the Governor was delivered HB129, HB309, HB186 and HB335 on December 9th. Governor DeWine has 10 days to sign or veto, or if no action is taken these automatically become law. We should know something definitive by the 19th of this month. Mrs. Clifton shared that the simulations provided by the LSC were found to have errors, but at this time they have stated that they would not be attempting to correct those errors, leaving districts without a good way to accurately predict how these bills will impact them. She stated that she and Mrs. Gussler are monitoring the legislation, and as soon as we have better information, they will provide a better update.

Recommendation for Approval – Mrs. Miller moved to approve the following:

1. November Financial Reports Attachment
Recommend the Board approve the November 2025 financial reports, as presented.
2. Budget Adjustments
Recommend the Board approve the following budget adjustments:
Revenue:

a.)	SMS Honor Society (200-973J)	\$1,362.50
b.)	Football (4300-950X)	\$6,857.00

Appropriations:

a.)	Girls Basketball (300-950M)	\$5,835.00
b.)	SMS Honor Society (200-973J)	\$2,655.82
c.)	SMS Student Council (200-961J)	\$289.38
d.)	FFA (200-933H)	\$53,187.00
e.)	Football (300-950X)	\$38,857.00
3. Then & Now Certificates
Recommend the Board approve the following Then & Now Certificates:
 - a.) PO# 133388 Muskingum Valley ESC, STARS Support Services
 - b.) PO# 133393 Ohio Division of Industrial Compliance, Boiler Certificates
 - c.) PO# 133448 Brenden Trojan Magic, Thornville Magic Show
 - d.) PO# 133453 Katom Restaurant Supply, SMS Refrigerator
 - e.) PO# 133482 Central Ohio Photography, Girls Basketball Poster & Photoshoot
4. IXOM Watercare Contract Attachment
Recommend the Board approve a one-year contract with IXOM Watercare for water softener maintenance, as presented.
5. Riverside Insights Agreement Attachment
Recommend the Board approve a three-year agreement with Riverside Insights for comprehensive assessments, as presented.
6. 2026 OSBA Membership
Recommend the Board approve membership with the Ohio School Boards Association for 2026.

7. 2026 Perry County Chamber of Commerce Membership

Recommend the Board approve membership with the Perry County Chamber of Commerce for 2026.

8. Donations

Recommend the Board approve the following donations:

- a.) Tony & Tara Taylor; \$5,000 to SHS for Student Supports & Programs
- b.) RTZ Designs, Tara Crane; Basketball Team Manager Shirts
- c.) Glenford Mother's Club; 6 Turkeys for Families in Need
- d.) Buckeye Lake Christmas Bike Drive; 6 – 26" Bikes to SMS Students

Mrs. Cains seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mrs. Miller, aye; Mrs. Cains, aye; Mr. Dupler; aye; Mr. Hogan, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 5-0.

Employment

Recommendation for Approval – Mr. Dupler moved to approve the following:

1. FMLA

Recommend the Board approve the following FMLA request:

- a) Jenna McCandlish, up to 12 weeks of maternity leave beginning approx. April 2, 2026

2. Resignation

Recommend the Board approve the following resignation:

- a) Gracie Barcus, One-on-One Attendant, effective end of day December 19, 2025

3. Classified Employees

Recommend the Board approve the following classified employees for the 2025-26 school year:

- a) Daniel Leasure, Custodian, 8 hours per day, Step 0, effective December 1, 2025
- b) Rodney Trapp, One-on-One Attendant, 7 hours per day, Step 0, effective January 5, 2026
- c) Kalie Ridenour, One-on-One Attendant, 7 hours per day, Step 0, effective December 17, 2025

4. Classified Employee Transfer

Recommend the Board approve the following classified employee transfer for the 2025-26 school year:

- a) Brittany Butcher, from Vehicle Transporter to Bus Driver, effective November 19, 2025

5. Certified Substitutes

Attachment

Recommend the Board approve the following certified substitutes for the 2025-26 school year:

- a) MVESC Substitutes, as presented

6. Classified Substitutes

Recommend the Board approve the following classified substitutes for the 2025-26 school year:

- a) Caitlyn Cheney, Cook, pending successful background check results

- b) Krista Lozier, Cook, pending successful background check results
- c) Danielle Cox, Cook, pending successful background check results

7. Student Teacher Placement

Recommend the Board approve the following student teacher placement for the 2025-26 school year:

- a.) Elizabeth Gibson, Somerset Elementary

8. Volunteers

Recommend the Board approve the following volunteers for the 2025-26 school year:

- a.) Julie Gwinn, Somerset Elementary
- b.) Tyler Barber, Girls Wrestling

Mrs. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Dupler, aye; Mrs. Miller, aye; Mrs. Cains, aye; Mr. Hogan, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 5-0.

Curriculum & Instruction

Recommendation for Approval – Mr. Hogan moved to approve the following:

- 1. Memorandum of Understanding with Zane State College Attachment

Recommend the Board approve a MOU with Zane State College for the 2026-27 school year, as presented.

- 2. Early Graduation Approval

Recommend the Board approve the following student for early graduation:

- b) Liddell Pittman

Mrs. Cains seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Hogan, aye; Mrs. Cains, aye; Mr. Dupler, aye; Mrs. Miller, aye; Mr. DeRolph aye.

Motion carried 5-0.

Board Policy & Procedure

Recommendation for Approval – Mrs. Cains moved to approve the following:

- 1. Board Policies – Final Reading Attachment

Recommend the Board approve the following Board policies upon final reading:

- a.) PO# 2266; Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities
- b.) PO# 2430.02; Participation of Community/Stem School Students in Extracurricular Activities
- c.) PO# 3130; Assignment and Transfer
- d.) PO# 5130; Withdrawal from School
- e.) PO# 5136; Personal Communication Devices
- f.) PO# 5410; Promotion, Academic Acceleration, Placement, and Retention
- g.) PO# 6830; Audit
- h.) PO# 8300; Continuity of Organizational Operations Plan
- i.) PO# 8305; Information Security
- j.) PO# 8400; School Safety
- k.) PO# 8462; Student Abuse and Neglect

- l.) PO# 1422; Nondiscrimination, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Anti-harassment Nondiscrimination
 - m.) PO# 1623; Section 504/ADA Prohibition Against Disability Discrimination in Employment
 - n.) PO# 2260; Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Educational Opportunity
 - o.) PO# 2260.01; Section 504/ADA Prohibition Against Discrimination Based on Disability
 - p.) PO# 3122; Nondiscrimination, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Anti-harassment Nondiscrimination
 - q.) PO# 4123; Section 504/ADA Prohibition Against Disability Discrimination in Employment
 - r.) PO# 3123; Section 504/ADA Prohibition Against Disability Discrimination in Employment
 - s.) PO# 4122; Nondiscrimination, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Anti-harassment Nondiscrimination
 - t.) PO# 7540.02; Digital Content and Accessibility
2. Board Policies – Rescission, Final Reading Attachment

Recommend the Board approve the rescission of the following Board Policies upon final reading:

- a.) PO# 1662; Anti-harassment
- b.) PO# 1422.02; Nondiscrimination Based on Genetic Information of the Employee
- c.) PO# 3122.02; Nondiscrimination Based on Genetic Information of the Employee
- d.) PO# 3362; Anti-harassment
- e.) PO# 4122.02; Nondiscrimination Based on Genetic Information of the Employee
- f.) PO# 4362; Anti-harassment

Mrs. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mrs. Cains, aye; Mrs. Miller, aye; Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Hogan, aye; Mr. DeRolph aye.

Motion carried 5-0.

Other Business

Recommendation for Approval – Mrs. Cains moved to approve the following:

1. Elect President Pro Tempore for the Organizational Meeting

Recommend the Board elect a President Pro Tempore to open and preside over the organizational meeting until the new President of the Board has been duly elected.

President Pro Tempore: Pat Hogan

2. January 2026 Meeting Date and Time

Recommend the Board select a date for the organizational meeting to be held in January 2026.

Organizational meeting, January 15, at 6:30 p.m. and Tax Budget Hearing at 6:15 p.m.

Executive Session

Mr. Dupler moved to enter Executive Session at 7:30 p.m. for the appointment, dismissal, promotion, demotion or compensation of an employee or the investigation of charges or complaints against an employee or student unless the employee or official or student requests a public hearing and matters required to be kept confidential by federal law or rules or statutes.

Mrs. Cains seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Dupler, aye; Mrs. Cains, aye; Mr. Dupler, aye; Mrs. Miller, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 5-0.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 7:53 p.m.

Adjournment – Mrs. Cains moved to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mrs. Cains, aye; Mrs. Miller, aye; Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Hogan, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

President DeRolph declared the meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:

President

Treasurer