

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Northern Local Schools Board of Education Regular Meeting – May 18, 2026

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:

Dale DeRolph

Levi Dupler

Steve Lemon

David Weals

Members Absent:

Patrick Hogan

Recognition of Visitors and Public Participation – The Board of Education recognized and welcomed several visitors in attendance, specifically Mr. Tom Connors who requested to speak during the public participation. Others in attendance were Stephanie Connors, TJ Connors, Jason Barrera, Brody Barrera, Rick Barrera, Cindy Barrera, Lisa Householder, Lance Dupler, Bill Mallernee, Dow Jones, Travis Anderson, Amy Anderson, Graham Anderson, April Shonk, Tucker Shonk, Heidi Coble, Morgan Coble, Josh Coleman and Jessica Phillips.

Mr. DeRolph asked if anyone present wished to speak to the Board this evening. Mr. Tom Connors chose to address the Board stating that he had concerns about the basketball coach and the possibility of turnover due to the treatment of players. He also stated that he finds it hard to understand that the coach's values and actions this past season represent the same values as Northern Local Schools.

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

1. April 15, 2026

Mr. Lemon seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 4-0.

Mid-East Career & Technology Centers Report – Mr. Hogan was not present, but sent a comprehensive Mid-East Career & Technology Centers report to the Board in advance of the meeting, which will be attached to the official minutes.

Superintendent's Report – Mrs. Gussler informed the Board that there are three Board policies to be approved for first-reading this evening including PO 8500 – Food Services, PO 7540.09 – AI, and PO 8510 – Wellness. She stated that the District Wellness Committee has met twice, once on April 22 and again on May 14, to help develop and align the District standards with the requirements. Mrs. Gussler expressed her appreciation to the committee for the efforts.

Mrs. Gussler also provided an update regarding safety bollards which will be installed at the entrance of both Glenford Elementary and Thornville Elementary to enhance safety at the entrances at those buildings, as well as the new safety film that will be installed at all three elementary buildings and high school starting this week.

Mr. Lemon added that as the Legislative Liaison he wanted to inform everyone of a pending piece of Ohio legislation that would require all public schools to annually conduct radon testing and provide remediation if necessary.

Business and Finance

Treasurer's Report – Mrs. Clifton presented the Board with the monthly financial reports. She stated that 83.3% of the fiscal year is completed and our current general fund expenditures are at 81.3% of the total. Interest earnings for all funds for the fiscal year have reached \$310,371.71. She pointed out a few items of

interest in the various department reports including approx. \$130,000 lower food costs in the food service fund year-to-date than at the same time last year, and while the food service fund is still expected to be negative at fiscal year-end which will require a general fund transfer, the amount of the transfer will be less due to Ms. Larimer's efforts to reduce food costs; the self-insurance fund balance is currently about \$1.86 million with the rate adjustment and high-deductible plan option allowing for higher revenues while changing both the insurance and stop-loss carrier have resulted in lower expenses; and, the athletic fund cash balance is approx. \$60,000 higher than the same time last year due to higher than anticipated gate and pass sales, and lower than expected expenses.

The unencumbered permanent improvement fund balance is \$1,274,549.25.

Mrs. Clifton reported that the first half Homestead and Rollback settlements for Perry and Franklin counties were not received until May 4th and May 12th, respectively, so those payments will not be reflected until the May financial reports are presented. She also reported that Licking County has held any tax payments made during the 1st half collections toward the 2nd half bills in a surplus fund until the Ohio Department of Taxation has completed the calculations for the claw back credits resulting from HB186. She also shared that the County Auditors Association has shared that Ohio Department of Taxation has stated that there are still questions about how to calculate and apply the credits and that the deadline of May 20th for that leaves very little time for County Auditors to get 2nd half tax bills out by June 1. Therefore, it is unlikely that we will receive our 2nd half tax settlements prior to the required August filing date for the Financial Forecast.

Mrs. Clifton shared that insurance open enrollment ran from May 1st to May 15th, and there were 7 additional employees who chose to move to the high-deductible health plan this year, which will result in a small benefit cost savings.

Mrs. Clifton provided an update on the turf replacement project, which is scheduled to begin tear-out on Tuesday, May 26th and installation of the new turf is scheduled to begin on or around June 3rd.

Mrs. Clifton also provided an update on the soccer/track lighting project, which is scheduled to begin directional boring within the next few weeks, with foundations arriving mid-June and poles and lights arriving mid-July.

Mrs. Clifton also reported that she applied for the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio grant to be used toward the Glenford playground replacement project, if awarded.

Finally, Mrs. Clifton shared that HB420 is currently in the House Ways & Means Committee with a hearing scheduled on May 20th. HB420 is a proposal to sunset all current continuing levies by the end of tax year 2029, and prohibit new continuing levies. Continuing levies are the only type of operating levies that Northern Local currently has in place, which is a main source of revenue for the district. In FY24, continuing levies provided \$14.27 billion in funding for Ohio schools.

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

A. Recommendation for Approval

1. April Financial Reports

Attachment

Recommend the Board approve the April 2026 financial reports, as presented.

2. Budget Adjustments

Recommend the Board approve the following budget adjustments:

Revenue:

a.)	Baseball (300-950U)	\$10,440.92
b.)	Turf Replacement Fund (003-9025)	\$277,063.80
c.)	Athletic Improvement Fund (003-9026)	\$5,000.00
d.)	MS Principals Support Fund (018-900J)	\$17,134.42

e.)	HS Principals Support Fund (018-900H)	\$21,074.56
f.)	HS Cheerleading (300-950I)	\$5,411.10

Appropriations:

a.)	Baseball (300-950U)	\$12,190.92
b.)	FFA (300-933H)	\$20,563.00
c.)	Permanent Improvement Fund (003-0000)	\$397,650.00
d.)	Turf Replacement Fund (003-9025)	\$278,464.50
e.)	Athletic Improvement Fund (003-9026)	\$40,000
f.)	MS Principals Support Fund (018-900J)	\$22,260.40
g.)	HS Principals Support Fund (018-900H)	\$28,093.58
h.)	HS Cheerleading (300-950I)	\$5,605.00
i.)	Somerset Legion Scholarship Fund (008-925A)	\$7,834.93
j.)	Ricketts/Hughes Scholarship Fund (008-925G)	\$3,076.75
k.)	Amvets Scholarship Fund (008-924A)	\$26,386.70
l.)	Moose Scholarship Fund (008-925B)	\$26,386.70

3. Then & Now Certificates

Recommend the Board approve the following Then & Now Certificates:

- a.) PO# 134049; Frank Beickelman, Holy Trinity Math PD & Coaching, \$3,000
- b.) PO# 134048; Kathleen Quinn, Holy Trinity ELA PD & Coaching, \$1,455.96
- c.) PO# 134120; Magnetic Springs Water, Bottled Water, \$67.45
- d.) PO# 134123; Kelly Wright, Mileage, \$394.40
- e.) PO# 134143; St. Jude's Children's Research; Math-A-Thon Donation, \$621.74
- f.) PO# 134160; OHSBCA, Girls Basketball Midwest Live Camp, \$370.00
- g.) PO# 134134; Adrenaline Fundraising, Track Fundraiser Costs, \$4,239.00
- h.) PO# 134169; Creative Coach, STARS Field Trip Transportation, \$6,720.00
- i.) PO# 134163; Ohio Dominican University, Girls Basketball Shootout, \$500
- j.) PO# 134171; The Works, STARS Hands on Learning Activities, \$864.24
- k.) PO# 134188; G & J Pepsi, District Office Soda & Bottled Water, \$288.60
- l.) PO# 134231; The Air Force Museum, STARS Field Trip, \$375.00
- m.) PO# 134241; XTek Partners, Commercial Building Security License, \$2,625.00
- n.) PO# 134199; New Lexington City Schools, Book Challenge Lunches, \$70.00

4. High School Chiller Replacement Project Proposal Attachment

Recommend the Board accept the proposal from Johnson Controls to replace the high school chiller, as presented.

5. Financial Audit Memorandum of Agreement Attachment

Recommend the Board accept the memorandum of agreement between the Ohio Auditor of State, Northern Local Schools, and Perry & Associates for financial audit services for a period of five fiscal years (FY26 through FY30), as presented.

6. K-12 Business Consulting Agreement Attachment

Recommend the Board accept a consulting agreement with K-12 Business Consulting for FY27 financial forecasting, as presented.

7. Licking County Educational Service Center Agreement Attachment

Recommend the Board accept the general services agreement with the Licking County Educational Service Center for the 2026-27 school year, as presented.

8. Muskingum Valley Educational Service Center Agreement Attachment

Recommend the Board accept the Driver's Education service agreement with the Muskingum County Educational Service Center for Driver's Education for a period of three fiscal years (FY27 through FY29), as presented.

9. Memorandum of Agreement – FFA Advisor Positions Attachment

Recommend the Board approve a Memorandum of Agreement with NLEA regarding FFA Advisor positions, as presented.

10. Donations

Recommend the Board approve the following donations:

- a.) Choir Risers; Gahanna Lincoln High School to Sheridan High School Choir
- b.) Sheridan Athletic Boosters; \$761.84 to the Athletic Fund
- c.) Amazon Building DCM5; Plastic tables & chairs to Sheridan High School
- d.) Sheridan Athletic Boosters; \$12,000 toward the purchase of a new Pole Vault Pit

Mr. Dupler seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.
Motion carried 4-0.

Executive Session

Mr. Weals moved to enter Executive Session at 6:51 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.

Mr. Lemon seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.
Motion carried 4-0.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 7:50 p.m.

Employment

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

1. Certified Resignation

Recommend the Board accept the following resignation:

- a.) Jessica Lane, Intervention Specialist, effective end of the 2025-26 school year

2. Extended Day Contracts

Recommend the Board approve the following extended day contracts for the 2026-27 school year, as presented:

- a.) Paul Culver, Football Coach, 10 Days
- b.) JD Walters, Girls Basketball Coach, 10 Days
- c.) Emma Taylor, Volleyball Coach, 10 Days
- d.) Dave Fazakas, Band Director, 10 Days
- e.) Alicia Stocker, SHS Guidance Counselor, 10 Days
- f.) Stephanie Winters, SHS Guidance Counselor, 10 Days
- g.) Mandy Fox, SMS Guidance Counselor, 5 Days

3. Academic Supplemental Contracts

Recommend the Board approve the following academic supplemental contracts for the 2026-27 school year, as presented:

- a.) Steven Gioffre, Art Club, High School, Step 21
- b.) Dave Fazakas, Band Director, Step 20
- c.) Elizabeth Hoover, Band Director, Step 1
- d.) Beth Oehrtman, Choir Director, Step 20
- e.) Lena Moore, Drama Club, High School, Step 22
- f.) Audra Wills, National Honor Society, High School, Step 0
- g.) Katie Huffman, Newspaper, High School, Step 1
- h.) Mary Peresta, Student Council, High School, Step 2
- i.) Sarah Smathers, Yearbook, High School, Step 2
- j.) Steve Gioffre, Prom Advisor, Step 21
- k.) Kari Langanke, Student Council, Middle School, Step 10

5. Athletic Supplemental Contracts

Recommend the Board approve the following athletic supplemental contracts for the 2026-27 school year, as presented:

- a.) Josh Coleman, Baseball, Head Coach, Step 14
- b.) Caleb Bennett, Baseball, Assistant Coach, Varsity, Step 7
- c.) Hunter McCartney, Basketball, Boys Assistant Coach, Varsity, Step 0
- d.) Dow Jones, Basketball, Boys Assistant Coach, JV, Step 4
- e.) Landen Russell, Basketball, Boys Assistant Coach, 8th Grade, Step 1
- f.) Mason Purvis, Basketball, Boys Assistant Coach, 7th Grade, Step 1
- g.) JD Walters, Basketball, Girls Head Coach, Step 17
- h.) Troy Wolfe, Basketball, Girls Assistant Coach, Varsity, Step 28
- i.) Ryan Yzenski, Basketball, Girls Assistant Coach, JV, Step 11
- j.) Grace Conrad, Basketball, Girls Assistant Coach, 8th Grade, Step 1
- k.) Craig Axline, Basketball, Girls Assistant Coach, 7th Grade, Step 24
- l.) Brandy Culver, Cheer, Head Coach, Fall, Step 4
- m.) Jillian Wetmore, Cheer, Assistant Coach, Fall, JV, Step 3
- n.) Jamie Wall, Cheer, Assistant Coach, Fall, Middle School, Step 0
- o.) Stephanie Parker, Cheer, Head Coach, Winter, Step 3
- p.) Jillian Wetmore, Cheer, Assistant Coach, Winter, JV, Step 3
- q.) Jamie Wall, Cheer, Assistant Coach, Winter, Middle School, Step 0
- r.) JD Walters, Cross Country, Boys Head Coach, Step 18
- s.) Broc Wilkins, Cross Country, Assistant Coach, Step 9
- t.) Troy Wolfe, Cross Country, Girls Head Coach, Step 8
- u.) Lena Moore, eSports, Step 1
- v.) Paul Culver III, Football, Head Coach, Step 26
- w.) Josh Coleman, Football, Assistant Coach, Defensive Backs, Step 13
- x.) Nick Bendle, Football, Assistant Coach, Defensive Line, Step 38
- y.) Chad Culver, Football, Assistant Coach, Linebackers, Step 21
- z.) Bo Brandon, Football, Assistant Coach, Offensive Line, Step 14
- aa.) Nathan Reedy, Football, Assistant Coach, QB's & RB's, Step 14
- bb.) Kirk Washburn, Football, Assistant Coach, Tight Ends & H-Backs, Step 13
- cc.) Brady Blattner, Football, Wide Receivers, Step 0
- dd.) Landen Russell, Football, Assistant Coach, Middle School, Step 2
- ee.) Adam Huffman, Football, Assistant Coach, Middle School, Step 19
- ff.) Mike Midkiff, Football, Assistant Coach, Middle School, Step 0
- gg.) Trent Smith, Football, Assistant Coach, Middle School, Step 4

- hh.) Jason Daly, Golf, Boys Head Coach, Step 3
- ii.) Casey Cordray, Golf, Girls Head Coach, Step 0
- jj.) Emily Heath, Gymnastics Head Coach, Step 0
- kk.) Chris McKinney, Soccer, Boys Head Coach, Step 4
- ll.) Chad Hamilton, Soccer, Boys Assistant Coach, JV, Step 2 (pending team numbers)
- mm.) Jeremy Strong, Soccer, Girls Head Coach, Step 3
- nn.) Shane Kays, Soccer, Girls Assistant Coach, JV, Step 1 (pending team numbers)
- oo.) Mark Paxton, Softball, Head Coach, Step 18
- pp.) Jason Barrera, Softball, Assistant Coach, Varsity, Step 3
- qq.) Jeff Woods, Softball, Assistant Coach, JV, Step 0
- rr.) JD Walters, Track, Boys Head Coach, Step 18
- ss.) Emily Heath, Track, Girls Head Coach, Step 1
- tt.) Katie Huffman, Track, Assistant Coach, Jumping, Step 5
- uu.) Clay Fisher, Track, Assistant Coach, Running, Step 3
- vv.) Trent Smith, Track, Assistant Coach, Throwing, Step 6
- ww.) Troy Wolfe, Track, Assistant Coach, Middle School, Step 4
- xx.) Emma Taylor, Volleyball, Head Coach, Step 1
- yy.) Mandy Fox, Volleyball, Assistant Coach, Varsity, Step 14
- zz.) Joan Goldsberry, Volleyball, Assistant Coach, JV, Step 12
- aaa.) Grace Conrad, Volleyball, Assistant Coach, Freshman, Step 1 (pending team numbers)
- bbb.) Craig Axline, Volleyball, Assistant Coach, 8th Grade, Step 28
- ccc.) Jennifer Ward, Volleyball, Assistant Coach, 7th Grade, Step 11
- ddd.) Nick Dearing, Wrestling, Boys Head Coach, Step 14
- eee.) Derek Allen, Wrestling, Boys Assistant Coach, Varsity, Step 6
- fff.) Justin White, Wrestling, Boys Assistant Coach, JV, Step 0
- ggg.) Brady Blattner, Wrestling, Boys Assistant Coach, Middle School, Step 1
- hhh.) Tyler Barber, Wrestling, Girls Head Coach, Step 0

6. Summer Custodians

Recommend the Board approve the following employees as summer custodians at their regular hourly rate for the 2025-26 school year:

- a.) Rhonda Stretton
- b.) Brittany Butcher
- c.) Heather Hynus
- d.) Tim Gaskill

7. Student Teacher Placement

Recommend the Board approve the following student teacher placement for the 2026-27 school year:

- a.) Olivia Ault, Vocational Agriculture at Sheridan High School

8. Volunteers

Recommend the Board approve the following volunteers for the 2026-27 school year:

- a.) Bonita Leach, Glenford Elementary
- b.) Jody Bratton, Bowling
- c.) Jacob Cable, Bowling
- d.) Jennifer Kilbarger, Bowling
- e.) Karl Stemen, Bowling
- f.) Lisa Miller, Cheer

- g.) Caleb Bennett, Football
- h.) Collin Hill, Football
- i.) Gregg Forsythe, Football
- j.) Matt Gutridge, Football
- k.) Clay Fisher, Golf
- l.) James Hatem, Boys Soccer
- m.) Skyllar Strong, Girls Soccer
- n.) Joe Richard, Softball
- o.) Kevin Thompson, Softball
- p.) Tom Connors, Softball
- q.) Adam Huffman, Track
- r.) Genna Heileman, Track
- s.) Jillian Wetmore, Track
- t.) Liz Witt, Gymnastics
- u.) Caleb Bennett, Wrestling
- v.) David Gleason, Wrestling
- w.) Drew Abram, Wrestling
- x.) Greg Goebel, Wrestling
- y.) Levi Dupler, Wrestling
- z.) Logan Severance, Wrestling
- aa.) Paul Culver III, Wrestling
- bb.) Phil Eckelberry, Wrestling
- cc.) Terrance Talbot, Wrestling

Mr. Lemon seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 4-0.

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

4. Athletic Supplemental Contract

Recommend the Board approve the following athletic supplemental contracts for the 2026-27 school year, as presented:

- a.) William Mallarnee, Basketball, Head Coach, Varsity, Step 11

Mr. Dupler seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Weals, nay; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 3-1.

Curriculum & Instruction

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

1. Field Trips

Recommend the Board approve the following field trips:

- a.) May 6, 2026; Glenford 5th Grade to Mid-East Career & Technology Centers
- b.) May 19 to 21, 2027; 8th Grade to Washington DC
- c.) March 24 to 28, 2027; Baseball, Cal Ripken Experience, Myrtle Beach, SC

Mr. Josh Coleman spoke regarding the out-of-state baseball trip that is recommended for approval stating that this trip will provide exposure for 15-16 varsity baseball players to play in a different climate and against better competition, and a chance to build camaraderie. The cost is estimated to be approx. \$103 per player per day and includes everything except transportation and food costs. Mr. Lemon asked about transportation and if a charter bus would be taken, or if parents would be responsible. Mr. Coleman stated that most other schools who take a

similar trip rely on parents to provide the transportation, but he has looked into a charter bus, which would cost approx. \$8,000. Since the goal is to have \$0 out-of-pocket costs for players through fundraisers, he wasn't sure if that would be doable, but will continue to research that option.

Mr. Dupler seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 4-0.

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

2. 2026-27 Athletic Handbook

Attachment

Recommend the Board approve the 2026-27 Athletic Handbook, as presented.

Mr. Lemon stated that he still had some concerns with inconsistencies throughout the Athletic Handbook, which is why he requested a separate vote.

Mr. Weals seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. Lemon, nay; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 3-1.

Board Policy & Procedure

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

1. Board Policies – First Reading

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

a.) PO# 7540.09; Artificial Intelligence ("AI")

b.) PO# 8500; Food Services

c.) PO# 8510; Wellness

Mr. Weals asked if there was a workgroup in place regarding AI in schools since use of AI is likely to shift the landscape in schools. Mrs. Gussler stated that there are working groups of superintendents, technology directors and principals who are being consulted and working together to develop policies and monitor use of AI. Mrs. Householder also informed the Board that there is professional development being offered at the end of the school year to train teachers on proper use of AI, and detecting use of AI for dishonesty and/or cheating.

Mr. Weals seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 4-0.

Prior to going into Executive Session, Mr. Travis Anderson asked for an explanation from the Board and Mrs. Gussler on why it was decided to approve Coach Mallernee's contract given the complaints against him. Mrs. Gussler stated that due to the timing of the complaints received, and parent's failure to follow the proper chain of command, the recommendation moved forward. She expressed her and the Board's desire to have the best coach possible in the program while also allowing him the opportunity to improve.

Executive Session

Mr. Lemon moved to enter Executive Session at 8:12 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.

Mr. Dupler seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 4-0.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 8:40 p.m.

Adjournment – Mr. Dupler moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Weals seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

President DeRolph declared the meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:

President

Treasurer