

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Northern Local Schools Board of Education
Regular Meeting – June 17, 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 Barbary Sanderson, Steve Carr, Eric Schneider, Rick and Teresa Stiffler, Susan Thrush, Catherine Dyer, and Jared Warthman who signed in to speak during the public participation.

Others in attendance were Richard France, Samantha Heidenreich, Jennifer Kilbarger and Laura Blackburn.

Ms. Sanderson addressed the Board regarding the reduction of the extended contract days of the band director and the continued expectations for the band, even though days were cut. Ms. Sanderson felt this decision was forcing parents and community to choose. She also expressed concern that the expectations for the band director to perform without proper compensation is sending the wrong message to the students. Ms. Sanderson closed her statement by asking the Board to show-up to the 4th of July parades and march alongside the band to show their support.

Mr. Schneider spoke to the Board stating that the band boosters and parents pay for the majority of the expenses for the band. He stated that band performances are lengthy and costly, and that while band parents pay the entrance fees to attend games to watch the band, the band does not receive any compensation from those fees collected. He requested that the Board improve the compensation for Mr. Fazakas, especially since his contract spans holidays and vacation times. Mr. Schneider closed by stating that he felt the band director and band boosters should be deciding what days and events that the band performs during summer and extended contract days, not the Board.

Ms. Thrush spoke regarding her experience and pride of the Sheridan band. She stated that while she no longer lives in the district, she often brings her family to parades and events to watch our band. Ms. Thrush stated that during her experience in school, she always felt that the band was treated as second rate to football, basketball and other sports, and she believes that we could have held on to better band directors in the past if we valued our band and directors more.

Ms. Stiffler spoke about how much her son enjoys band and that he is looking forward to performing in the 4th of July parades. Ms. Stiffler stated that she was upset when Mr. Fazakas announced that the band would not be performing in the 4th of July parades as this is the 250th anniversary of our nation. She stated that she felt the band director should be compensated, but she also feels that the Board has the best interest of students at heart. Ms. Stiffler continued to express that she understands the backlash but also understands that this is an economic problem and that there is a better answer than finger pointing and that the band needs the community's support. She closed by stating that she felt that Mr. Fazakas made a bad decision and that the Board needed to step in.

Ms. Catherine Dyer stated that her son transferred into the district to experience the band program. She stated that she felt all in attendance were on the same page but understands there are some constraints from outside the room but asked for a solution to be considered that would not pigeon-hole Mr. Fazakas.

Mr. Warthman spoke about the fears that he had for his son when he began attending Sheridan, but his son was welcomed with open arms. He stated that he really likes Mr. Fazakas and that he himself has a passion for the marching Generals. Mr. Warthman continued by stating that the band is a great program with great parental involvement, and asked that the Board do what is right and compensate Mr. Fazakas.

Mrs. Gussler spoke to inform all parents and those in attendance that she and the Board think very highly of Mr. Fazakas and the band, the same as they do of all staff and programs. She stated that financial decisions had to be made as a result of the financial correction plan required by ODE. Part of the plan included the reduction of extended days. Most districts only award supplemental contracts, or extended day contracts, but few, if any offer both. Currently, only 4 coaches and advisors (football, volleyball, girls' basketball and the band director) and 3 guidance counselors receive extended day contracts which are beyond their supplemental duty contract. All extended day contracts were reduced equally, by half. Mrs. Gussler stated that Mr. Fazakas made the announcement that the band would not be participating in the 4th of July parades without consulting with the administration. Once that news was shared, Mrs. Householder met with Mr. Fazakas, 2-3 weeks ago, to discuss and evaluate what days would be applied toward his extended day contract. At that time, everyone felt that the issue was settled. She also stated that all of our other fall sports programs chose to participate based on community pride, even though some of those coaches had extended days cut as well. Mrs. Gussler reiterated that she welcomes conversation from parents, and that if there are concerns to reach out to her.

Ms. Blackburn requested to speak, stating that her concern was about the quality of the band performance at the parades, and how that may affect student morale if they are unprepared to perform. She stated that the band members are not simply throwing candy from a float, that they must practice, rehearse, and read music that they may not have sufficient time to do prior to the parade.

Mr. Lemon explained that in the process of evaluating finances, the Board considered who was receiving extended day contracts and who was not. He explained that out of all the coaches, only the 4 mentioned were getting extended day contracts above their supplemental contract. He explained that cutting the extended day contracts saved a considerable amount to the budget. Mr. Lemon also reiterated that the decision for the band to not perform in the 4th of July parade was Mr. Fazakas' decision, not the Boards.

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

1. May 18, 2026
2. May 22, 2026

Mr. Lemon seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Dupler, 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. Mr. France added that the Mid-East certificate ceremony was again held outside, dodging the weather, and that 534 certificates were presented. Mr. France was also excited to relay that the new fire and EMS building is scheduled to be completed before the start of the new school year.

Superintendent's Report – Mrs. Gussler reported that the summer months continue to be busy, and reminded the Board of the upcoming office closure for the Juneteenth holiday. Mrs. Gussler summarized the three Board policies slated for final approval; PO 8500 – Food Services; PO 7540.09 – Artificial Intelligence; and, PO 8510 – Wellness.

Mrs. Gussler also notified the Board of the annual requirement that the district acknowledges the requirements and is in compliance with ORC 3313.814 which addresses the district's responsibility to establish and monitor standards for foods and beverages sold on school premises.

Mrs. Gussler also brought up a concern that was presented by Mr. Weals, regarding Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program that provides free lunch and breakfast to all students. Northern Local School applied for CEP in FY24 and qualified to begin participation in FY25. Mrs. Gussler shared that she feels the conversation surrounding the district's participation is worth looking at as we continue to evaluate the need to improve our financial outlook. However, she feels this deserves a broader discussion before a change is made as this impacts more than just revenue – it impacts students and families. Mr. Weals stated that the Board has hard decisions coming up, and that there are many unknowns with the legislation that doesn't allow us much time to make future plans. He questions whether students who otherwise would not qualify for free lunch should receive it. Mr. Weals stated that he feels we need to communicate with the community and get the word out about the financial situation of the district and that hard decisions will be being made. Mr. Lemon stated that CEP should be a topic that is looked at in the upcoming year.

Mrs. Gussler provided an update regarding the turf replacement and soccer / track stadium lighting projects that are in process. The turf installation is to begin this week and projected to be completed within two weeks. There was a slight delay due to a drainage issue near the "Rage Cage" endzone that needed to be addressed. Progress on the soccer/track lighting project continues however, the crew encountered an issue with the soil stability on the fourth foundation and are working with Musco on a solution. Lights and poles remain on schedule for delivery on June 22nd.

Mrs. Gussler spoke about the soccer field improvements that are being recommended for approval this evening, stating that the improvements will be completed in phases. The improvements include adding sand to level the playing surface, weed control treatment, and a bleacher pad installation at mid-field. Mrs. Gussler also stated that Mr. Lemon has been instrumental in assisting with the plans and arrangements for this project. Mr. Lemon informed that Board that he hopes that most of the improvements will be funded by donation and that there should be only a minimal cost to the district.

Mrs. Gussler also spoke about the Cybersecurity plan that is being approved this evening. This is a new requirement that district's must have in place by July 1 which is intended to protect technology systems, data, and operations from cyber threats. She reminded the Board that they have been provided the full document for review, but this is not a public document for obvious reasons.

Business and Finance

Treasurer's Report – Mrs. Clifton presented the Board with the monthly financial reports. She summarized general fund revenue received with property tax collections slightly above estimated at 111.8% but unrestricted state funding was lower than anticipated at 89.5%, as was restricted state funding at 80.3%. She stated that 91.7% of the fiscal year is completed and our current general fund expenditures are at 88.8% of the total, indicating that spending has been being monitored and controlled throughout the year. Interest earnings for all funds for the fiscal year have reached \$349,905.98.

The unencumbered permanent improvement fund balance is \$879,597.44

Mrs. Clifton shared that the treasurer's office will be working to transition the check printing software and AP workflows software to SCView as the current software is outdated and the owner of the software company is soon to retire. This will create an electronic and near paperless AP process, which will significantly reduce paper usage and reduce physical storage requirements. She also informed the Board that the office staff have been working to organize records that are eligible for destruction, and that those records were reviewed and approved for destruction by the LRC earlier this evening. Ohio Mobile Shredding will be providing an estimate for proper removal and destruction.

Mrs. Clifton also asked the Board to schedule a special meeting on June 30th to approve the final FY26 revenues and appropriations, and to approve the initial FY27 estimated revenues and appropriations, grant fund advances, and any other action that may be required by the Board. It was determined that the meeting would be held at 7 a.m. on the 30th.

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

A. Recommendation for Approval

1. May Financial Reports Attachment

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

2. Budget Adjustments

Recommend the Board approve the following budget adjustments:

Revenue:

a.) Boys Basketball (300-950L) \$5,581.36

Appropriations:

a.) Boys Basketball (300-950L) \$5,581.36

3. Then & Now Certificates

Recommend the Board approve the following Then & Now Certificates:

- a.) PO# 134302; Strong & Co., SHS Staff Lunch, \$250
- b.) PO# 145854; Northern Perry Water, Water Usage, \$7,200
- c.) PO# 134334; Brandon Fox, Sewage Plant Parts, \$161.55
- d.) PO# 134368; General Assembly, STARS Field Trip, \$1,500
- e.) PO# 134376; Legoland Discovery, STARS Field Trip, \$1,455
- f.) PO# 134325; Pugh Impact Designs, Wash. DC Trip Items, \$948
- g.) PO# 134432; Lancaster Parks & Rec, STARS Camp, \$300
- h.) PO# 134420; Ohio Div. of Industrial Compliance, Boiler Certificates, \$1,472.25
- i.) PO# 134419; Columbus Zoo, STARS Field Trip, \$2,973.75
- j.) PO# 134511; Bob Summerel Tire, Bus Tires, \$6,850.02
- k.) PO# 134508; BP Products, Fuel, \$3,984.43

4. District Cybersecurity Plan Attachment

Recommend the Board approve the cybersecurity plan as required by HB96, as presented.

5. Gifted Services Contract Attachment

Recommend the Board approve a contract with the Licking Regional ESC for gifted services for the 2026-27 school year, as presented.

6. School Outreach Caseworker Contract Attachment

Recommend the Board approve a contract with Perry County Job & Family Services for school outreach caseworker services at Glenford Elementary for the 2026-27 school year, as presented.

7. Property & Liability Insurance Renewal Attachment

Recommend the Board approve renewing the property & liability insurance policy for the 2026-27 school year with EMC, as presented.

8. Board Policy Services Contract Attachment

Recommend the Board approve a contract with Neola for Board policy services for the 2026-27 school year, as presented.

9. Fund Transfer

Recommend the Board approve the following fund transfer:

- a.) Tournament Control Fund (022) to Athletic Fund (300-950H) \$1,725.00

10. Approval of Student Activity Account

Recommend the Board approve establishment of the following student activity account:

- a.) Girls Wrestling

11. Approval of Soccer and Track Stadium Bleacher Improvements

Attachment

Recommend the Board approve the improvements to the soccer and track stadium bleachers, as presented.

12. Donations

Recommend the Board approve the following donations:

- a.) Somerset American Legion; 4' x 6' American flag to Sheridan Middle School
b.) Somerset American Legion; 4' x 6' American flag to NLSD Bus Garage
c.) Tonya McAlear; Craft Supplies and Tools to Somerset

13. Asset Disposal

Recommend the Board approve the following asset disposal:

- a.) Pole Vault Pit; obsolete/broken
b.) Qomo Board, Model QIT1355 S/N HBN163900070022QML060; Broken
c.) Qomo Board, Model QIT1365 S/N E65TQG38M23UMC00F0502; Broken
d.) Qomo Board, Model QIT1355 S/N HBN163900070017QML060; Broken

Mr. Weals seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried 4-0.

Employment

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

1. Certified Retirements

Recommend the Board accept the following certified retirements:

- a.) Brent Marshall, Intervention Specialist, effective 5/31/2026
b.) Jean Fealty, District Nurse, effective 12/31/2026

2. Classified Retirement

Recommend the Board accept the following classified retirement:

- a.) Morga Myers, Head Cook, effective 5/29/2026

3. Certified Resignations

Recommend the Board accept the following certified resignation:

- a.) Angela Gussler, Superintendent, effective 7/31/2026
b.) Mike Rodich, Assistant Middle School Principal, effective 7/31/2026
c.) Tyler Lones, Vo-Ag Teacher, effective end of the 2025-26 school year
d.) Jenna McCandlish, Vo-Ag Teacher, effective end of the 2025-26 school year
e.) Hayley Conn, Vo-Ag Teacher, effective end of the 2025-26 school year
f.) Lacey Haas, Intervention Specialist, effective end of the 2025-26 school year
g.) Paige Hynus, Teacher, effective end of the 2025-26 school year

4. Certified Employee Contracts

Recommend the Board approve the following certified employee contracts for the 2026-27 school year, pending certification, as presented:

- a.) Audra Cannon, Teacher, BA, Step 3
- b.) Rebecca Spicer, Intervention Specialist, BA, Step 4
- c.) Amy Koehler, Intervention Specialist, BA, Step 1
- d.) Emmalee King, Intervention Specialist, BA, Step 3

5. Classified Employee Position Transfer

Recommend the Board approve the following classified employee transfer for the 2026-27 school year, as presented:

- a.) Brandi Ridenour, from One-on-One Attendant to Library Technician
- b.) Brittany Sigler, from Cook to Head Cook

6. Retire/Rehire Employee Contract

Recommend the Board approve the following retire/rehire employee contract for the 2026-27 school year, as presented:

- a.) Dan Riggs, Teacher, BA5, Step 10

7. Degree Advancements

Recommend the Board approve the following degree advancements for the 2026-27 school year, as presented:

- a.) Ashley Hall, MA+15
- b.) Nathan Reedy, MA+15
- c.) Audra Wills, MA

8. Academic Stipends

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

- a.) Tyler Lones, FFA Advisor
- b.) Jenna McCandlish, FFA Advisor
- c.) Hayley Conn, FFA Advisor

9. Academic Stipends

Recommend the Board approve the following academic stipends for the 2025-26 school year, as presented:

- a.) Paul Culver, Mentor
- b.) Michelle Cardiel, Mentor
- c.) Casey Jones, Mentor

10. Academic Supplemental Contract

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

- a.) Michael Midkiff, Washington DC Coordinator, Step 0

11. Supplemental Contract Step Corrections

Recommend the Board approve the following supplemental contract step corrections for the 2026-27 school year, as presented:

- a.) Audra Wills, NHS Advisor, from Step 0 to Step 2
- b.) Justin White, Assistant Wrestling Coach, from Step 0 to Step 1

12. Classified Substitutes

Recommend the Board approve the following classified substitutes for the 2026-27 school year, as presented:

- a.) Vanessa Rupert, Cook
- b.) Beverly Johnson, Cook
- c.) Nancy Rice, Cook
- d.) Jane Bosworth, Educational Assistant
- e.) Caitlyn Cheney, Cook
- f.) Phil Dodson, Bus Driver
- g.) Steve Fealty, Bus Driver
- h.) Kim Freet, Bus Driver
- i.) Catie Fritsche, Educational Assistant
- j.) Catie Fritsche, Secretary
- k.) Rachel Frost, Cook
- l.) Sharon Herder, Cook
- m.) Sharon Herder, Custodian
- n.) Melissa King, Van Driver
- o.) Krista Lozier, Cook
- p.) Natalie Noyes, Educational Assistant
- q.) Natalie Noyes, Library Technician
- r.) Natalie Noyes, Secretary
- s.) Rayanna Rinehart, Educational Assistant
- t.) Rayanna Rinehart, Cook
- u.) Rayanna Rinehart, Secretary
- v.) John Shafer, Bus Driver
- w.) Mary Smith, Secretary
- x.) Margaret Wilkins, Secretary
- y.) Mike Wilson, Bus Driver
- z.) Mike Wilson, Custodian
- aa.) Sharon Wise, Secretary
- bb.) Becky Howell, Secretary

13. Volunteers

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

- a.) John Pennybacker, Band
- b.) Jared Warthman, Band
- c.) Joe West, Band
- d.) Cynthia West, Band

Mr. Dupler seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried 4-0.

Curriculum & Instruction

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

1. 2026-27 Northern Local Elementary Handbook

Attachment

Recommend the Board approve the 2026-27 Northern Local Elementary Handbook, as presented.

2. Field Trips

Recommend the Board approve the following field trips:

a.) June 23, 2026; Sheridan Cheerleaders to King's Island

Mr. Lemon seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried 4-0.

Board Policy & Procedure

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

1. **Board Policies – Final Reading**

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

a.) PO# 7540.09; Artificial Intelligence (“AI”)

b.) PO# 8500; Food Services

c.) PO# 8510; Wellness

Mr. Weals seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried 4-0.

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

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

President DeRolph declared the meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:

President

Treasurer