Board of Education Regular Meeting (Tuesday, July 14, 2026)
Generated by Kimberly Grilli on Thursday, July 16, 2026

Members present
Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

Meeting called to order at 6:32 PM

A. Opening Items

Procedural: 1. Call to Order at 6:32 pm

Procedural: 2. Roll Call - LaToya Dowdell-Burger is absent.

Dear Treasurer, Superintendent, and Board Members,
Please accept this formal statement. I request that it be read aloud during this evening's meeting and entered into the official public record.
First, I apologize for missing tonight's meeting. A pressing professional obligation has called me out of the state to support a critical mission serving our veterans.
While I cannot be present, I must share my deep concern regarding tonight's agenda. Seeing our time and energy spent on parsing past comments—specifically Item I-6's extensive review of past agenda requests and email communications—is incredibly disheartening. Turning this meeting into a dissertation on internal grievances distracts us from the core mission we were elected to uphold. Look at what is actually on our plate tonight: approving middle school trips to Washington, D.C., securing critical special education contracts, finalizing SRO agreements for school safety, and celebrating the final graduation list for the Class of 2026. That is what matters. Our focus must stretch far beyond the walls of this room. Public education is being intentionally handcuffed by state and federal actions, and our energy belongs on the front lines. I hope each member of this board can demonstrate what they have personally done to better public education—rather than tanking local levies, refusing to support resolutions opposing budget cuts, or choosing to stay silent instead of writing to lawmakers. We cannot afford to look inward while massive external shifts threaten our families: FCC E-Rate Cuts: The FCC recently voted 2-1 to issue a proposal seeking to scale back or entirely eliminate the $2 billion E-Rate program, which has provided vital telecommunications discounts to schools since 1996. This follows their recent elimination of E-Rate funding for school bus Wi-Fi and hotspot lending. Stripping this program will place a devastating financial and technological strain on our district.
Our primary focus must always remain on educating our students, supporting our staff, and uplifting our communities. If the same amount of effort spent reviewing old emails were redirected toward championing public education, our board would be a much more powerful, effective, and unified body.
Thank you for ensuring these words are shared tonight. I wish you a productive meeting.
Warm regards,
LaToya Dowdell-Burger
Board Member

Procedural: 3. Pledge of Allegiance

Action 2026-246: 4. Adoption of Meeting Agenda
G5 - Please pull because of incorrect dates - Columbus Hearing contract.
Kathy - Item to be moved to H2 from G5 - Special Ed contract.

During the adoption of the agenda, the Board spent considerable time discussing proposed changes before moving forward with the meeting. The Board requested several amendments to the consent agenda, including removing the special education contracts due to incorrect contract dates and moving another special education contract to an individual action item. Board members also debated whether to remove two discussion items from the agenda: the review of the agenda request process and supporting documentation, and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) corrective action discussion. Supporters of removing the items argued they were not action items and could be discussed during board comments, while others believed they were necessary to ensure the public record was complete and accurate. Both motions to remove the items failed on 2–2 votes. Following those votes, the Board attempted to adopt the amended agenda, but the motion also failed on a 2–2 tie. This led to an extended discussion regarding Robert's Rules of Order and whether the agenda could be reconsidered. The Board recessed twice to review procedural options and seek guidance before ultimately determining that, without an adopted agenda, it would proceed using the standard order of business. The discussion delayed the meeting by approximately 30 minutes before the Board moved on to public participation.

Action 2026-247: 5. Move that the Board of Education approve the agenda. We move on with the agenda that was presented at the beginning of the meeting.

Motion by Kathleen Walsh, second by John Kershner.
Final Resolution: Motion Fails
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner
No: Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

Action 2026-248: 6. Move that the Board of Education remove I5 - Review of Agenda Request Process and Supporting Documents.

Motion by Dionna Herbert, second by Ashley Zimmer.
Final Resolution: Motion Fails
Yes: Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert
No: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner

Action 2026-249: 7. Move that the Board of Education remove I4 - ODEW Correction action - Ashley

Motion by Ashley Zimmer, second by Dionna Herbert.
Final Resolution: Motion Fails
Yes: Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert
No: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner

Action 2026-250: 8. Move that the Board of Education to take a 5 min recess at 6:46 pm. Back in session at 6:56

Motion by Kathleen Walsh, second by John Kershner.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer
No: Dionna Herbert

Action, 9. Move that the Board of Education approve the agenda minus I4 provided that legal counsel advises that it is not a public communication item. If we can talk about it in public than we can after legal counsel lets us know. - Motion had no 2nd.

Motion by John Kershner, second NONE.

Action 2026-251: 10. Move that the Board of Education take a 10 min recess to talk to legal counsel. At 7:01 pm Return at 7:11 pm.

Motion by Kathleen Walsh, second by John Kershner.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

B. Public Participation

Information: 1. Guidelines for Public Participation
Allow 6 minutes for the speaker - Bryan Tothe - Fraternal Order of Police - Oversees 4500 members. Here on behalf of Groveport and Madison Twp police. I want to discuss the disrespect that Mr. Kershner showed for the SRO's. SRO's are not trained to escalate situations but to de-escalate. Mr. Kershner has said SRO's are dumb and unfit for duty. This is so disrespectful. Mr. Kershner said we maybe need to control more and have private security. SRO's are handpicked by the Chief of both depts. Many districts have removed them and then brought them back. Bryan is also reading on behalf of Pete G. - Fraternal Order of Police - We had an officer in a situation and Pete had to leave, so I am reading his statement. Partnerships with schools and police are where friendships are formed. They attend school events and build relationships. These 2 depts know the teachers, students, and community. We need to support our schools. When schools succeed, our communities succeed. Please, lets continue to support the SRO's, students, teachers and community.
Krena Hubner - Secretary and coach. - I want to speak about SRO's and how great they are at the High School. SRO's sit with our kids and talk to them. They know our students and check on them and their mental health. They are mentors and protectors of our kids. Kids look up to the SRO's. Kids struggle with many things and the SRO's talk to them and really help with everything. SRO's change the lives of our kids. News and social media paint the police in a bad way, but the SRO's show they are kind and heart warming.
John - I did not say private security is better trained than our current SRO's. Plus, the Board did not have the input on who to get as a SRO. I could have said things differently before.
Dionna - Can we improve in de-escalation? I do think it is important to have SRO and the partnership.
Bryan - Yes, we can always do better, I agree. There is a new police chief in Groveport so maybe he and the Superintendent can meet to improve things.

C. Executive Session

Action 2026-252: 1. Motion to Enter at 7:45 pm.
It is recommended that the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education enter executive session to consider the investigation of charges or complaints against a district employee or official pursuant to ORC 121.22(G)(1), to confer with the Board’s attorney concerning disputes involving the public body that are subject to pending and imminent court action, if applicable, pursuant to ORC 121.22 (G)(3), and matters required to be kept confidential by federal law or regulations or state statute pursuant to ORC 121.22G(5). The Board further acknowledges that no formal action or vote will be taken in executive session and that any subsequent Board action will occur in open session.

Motion by John Kershner, second by Kathleen Walsh.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

Action 2026-253: 2. Move to take a 5 min recess at 7:36 pm. Return at 7:44

Motion by Ashley Zimmer, second by John Kershner.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

D. Reconvene in Open Session

E. Action Items Resulting from Executive Session

F. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Action 2026-254: 1. Approve the Minutes of the March 18, 2026, Regular meeting, April 7, 2026 Regular Meeting, April 14, 2026 Regular Meeting, April 27, 2026 Special Meeting-1, April 27, 2026 Special Meeting-2, May 5, 2026 Regular Meeting, May 12, 2026 Regular Meeting, June 2, 2026 Regular Meeting, the June 16, 2026 Regular Meeting and the June 30, 2026 Special Meeting

During the discussion on approving the meeting minutes, the Board considered approval of the minutes from ten previous meetings. Before the vote, Board Member John Kershner raised concerns about inaccuracies in the June meeting minutes, stating that some events were recorded out of order and did not accurately reflect what occurred during the meeting. Treasurer Adam Collier explained that preparing the current detailed minutes requires many hours of staff time because they rely on transcripts, notes, and audio recordings, and he encouraged board members to submit corrections before meetings so they could be addressed in advance. The initial motion to approve all ten sets of minutes failed on a 2–2 vote after concerns about accuracy were raised. Members also discussed changing the format of future meeting minutes from a near-verbatim record to a concise summary format. Supporters of the change said it would significantly reduce the time required to prepare minutes while still documenting discussions, motions, votes, and official actions. After discussion, the Board amended the proposal to allow board members to have specific requested statements attached to the minutes when necessary. The amended motion was approved, establishing that future meeting minutes will be prepared in summary form with the option to include requested board member statements.

The Treasurer recommends the Groveport Madison Local Board of Education approve the minutes for the following meetings:
a. March 18, 2026 Special Meeting
b. April 7, 2026 Regular Meeting
c. April 14, 2026 Regular Meeting
d. April 27, 2026 Special Meeting (1)
e. April 26, 2026 Special Meeting (2)
f. May 5, 2026 Regular Meeting
g. May 12, 2026 Regular Meeting
h. June 2, 2026 Regular Meeting
i. June 16, 2026 Special Meeting
j. June 30, 2026 Special Meeting
k. All minutes may be approved by one motion unless a Board member requests removal of a specific date(s).

Motion by Ashley Zimmer, second by John Kershner.
Final Resolution: Motion Fails
Yes: Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert
No: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner

Action 2026-255: 2. The Board recommends the Groveport Madison Local Board of Education approve the motion for all future board minutes to be prepared in a summary format. The minutes shall include a concise summary of the Board discussion for each agenda item and accurately record all motions, seconds, amendments, roll-call and official actions taken by the Board. Unless a Board member asks for a statement to be added to the minutes.

Motion by Kathleen Walsh, second by John Kershner.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer
No: Dionna Herbert

Action 2026-256: 3. The Treasurer recommends the Groveport Madison Local Board of Education approve the minutes for the following meetings:
a. March 18, 2026 Special Meeting
b. April 7, 2026 Regular Meeting
c. April 14, 2026 Regular Meeting
d. April 27, 2026 Special Meeting (1)
e. April 26, 2026 Special Meeting (2)
f. May 5, 2026 Regular Meeting
g. May 12, 2026 Regular Meeting
h. June 2, 2026 Regular Meeting
i. June 16, 2026 Special Meeting

k. All minutes may be approved by one motion unless a Board member requests removal of a specific date(s).

Motion by Ashley Zimmer, second by Dionna Herbert.
Final Resolution: Motion Fails
Yes: Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert
No: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner

Action 2026-257: 4. The Board recommends the Groveport Madison Local Board of Education accept all written statements by Board members, if requested, be added to the minutes.

Motion by Kathleen Walsh, second by John Kershner.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer
No: Dionna Herbert

G. Consent Agenda

Action 2026-258: 1. Approve Administrative Personnel Items
The Superintendent recommends the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education approve the attached administrative personnel items:

2. Approve Certificated Personnel Items
Resolution: The Superintendent recommends that the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education approve the following Certificated Personnel Items:

3. Approve Middle School Trips to Washington, D.C.
Resolution: The Superintendent recommends the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education approve the Middle School trips to Washington, D.C.

Motion by Kathleen Walsh, second by Ashley Zimmer.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

H. Pulled Items from Consent Agenda

Action: 1. Pulled Items if Needed

Action 2026-259: 2. Approve Special Education Contracts
The Superintendent recommends that the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education approve the following Special Education contracts:

Motion by Ashley Zimmer, second by Dionna Herbert.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

Action 2026-260: 3. Approve New Salary Schedule for Systems Administrator
The Superintendent recommends the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education approve the new salary schedule for Systems admin in Tech.

The discussion centered on whether creating a new salary schedule for a Systems Administrator position was the most appropriate and cost-effective approach, particularly given the district's ongoing budget concerns. One board member questioned whether the district had explored contracting for the service through the Educational Service Center (ESC) instead of employing an in-house systems administrator. The administration responded that while some services can be provided through the ESC, those arrangements typically use comparable salary structures and include an additional administrative fee, making it unclear whether outsourcing would actually reduce costs. District leadership also emphasized that savings were already being realized because the position was being converted from an administrative role to a classified position.
The conversation then shifted to the proposed salary range and the nature of the position itself. Concerns were raised that the starting salary appeared significantly higher than comparable published positions and that the salary index exceeded other district positions. In response, the technology director explained that he had conducted a market salary study across central Ohio school districts and designed the schedule to be competitive in the middle of the market. He also stated that the position encompasses responsibilities beyond those of a typical systems administrator, including management of the district's network and server infrastructure. When asked whether the role could instead be filled by a junior-level IT employee**,** he responded that it could not, explaining that the district has no junior systems administrator position and that this is an advanced technical role requiring specialized expertise. He further clarified that the district's IT job classifications consist of Technology Coordinator, Technology Integration Specialist, and Systems Administrator, and that the proposed salary schedule applied only to the single Systems Administrator position.
Following the discussion, the board voted on the proposed salary schedule. The motion failed on a 2–2 vote. Because the salary schedule was not approved, the board was unable to move forward with hiring Daniel Scott into the Systems Administrator position. His name would need to be removed from the classified personnel agenda and he would not be starting work as planned. The classified personnel recommendations were subsequently approved only after Daniel Scott was removed from the list.

Motion by Dionna Herbert, second by Ashley Zimmer.
Final Resolution: Motion Fails
Yes: Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert
No: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner

Action 2026-261: 4. Approve Classified Personnel Items- Daniel Scott will be pulled off the classified list.
The Superintendent recommends that the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education approve the following Classified Personnel Items:

Motion by Ashley Zimmer, second by Kathleen Walsh.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

I. Board Items-New Business

Discussion: 1. Policy Committee Report - John - Did 1st review of DJH and it is on tonight. Ashley will be stepping down from Policy Committee.

Discussion: 2. Review Policy DJH- First Read

Action 2026-262: 3. Review Policy IGCG - Second Read
The Board recommends that the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education approve the attached Board Policy.

Motion by Kathleen Walsh, second by John Kershner.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

Discussion: 4. Review ODEW Corrective Action - Kathy - Board would like to be kept up on the process. Ashley - That is not what the full Board wants.

Discussion: 5. Review of Agenda request process and supporting documentation Kathy - I want to make statements. I stated at meeting that I will provide documentation and those are on the agenda. Community can see the public record. Ashley - Full emails are not included in the attached. Some did get added, but some did not. Dionna - I do not think this is appropriate use of Board time.

Discussion: 6. Discussion of Educational Trust Golf Outing - It was a great day and we raised $12,800. YEAH

Discussion: 7. Resolution for Board Legal Liaison and Procedures for Communications with Legal Counsel - Ashley - Wanted to be an action item. Now we can keep as a discussion. Kathy - Do we want to discuss this? Who does liason actually represent? Ashley - Yes the Board. We need to save money and use money for the students not attorneys. Sometimes we have 2 attorneys in a meeting. Kathy - Would we be screening? Ashley - If something is in ORC, you could have them directed to that. Not an attorney. I am just trying to save money. Kathy - What if liaison is slow? Ashley - We get that now! It could be a Board member or Supt. or Treasurer. Adam - I will get FY26 legal fees out to the whole Board. John - I think we should not tie the hands of the Board to be able to call attorneys.

J. Superintendent's Agenda

Action 2026-263, Discussion, Presentation: 1. Approve the Attached Contract with Abre - Presentation by Abre. John - $80,000 savings comes from where? Casey - We lost an employee and so their salary and benefits and also other programs. Mandie - We can also use grant money because our dispro is out of compliance.
The Superintendent recommends the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education approve the attached contract with Abre.

The Board discussed a proposal to purchase the **Abre** platform, a data management and analytics system intended to consolidate student, staff, and operational data into a single platform. Superintendent Casey Martin explained that the software would improve data reporting, support Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), streamline intervention tracking, and reduce reliance on multiple standalone software programs. Administration stated that implementing Abre would allow the district to eliminate several existing software subscriptions and, combined with a vacant position that would not be replaced, result in an estimated savings of more than $80,000 while providing enhanced data dashboards and reporting capabilities. Representatives from Abre also demonstrated how the platform could identify students needing interventions, centralize data for educators and administrators, and provide customizable dashboards to support decision-making.
Board members asked numerous questions regarding the financial impact, implementation timeline, security, and functionality of the system. Topics included projected savings, grant funding that could offset part of the cost, software programs that would be replaced, confidentiality of staff surveys, training for employees, and whether comparable products had been evaluated. Administration responded that implementation could begin immediately, with key features available before the start of the school year, and emphasized that the platform would improve collaboration and provide more comprehensive reporting than the district's previous processes. Following the discussion, the Board voted to approve the purchase of the Abre platform.

Motion by Ashley Zimmer, second by Dionna Herbert.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

Action 2026-264: 2. Approve Final Graduation List
The Superintendent recommends that the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education approve the attached final graduation list for the Class of 2026.

Motion by Ashley Zimmer, second by Kathleen Walsh.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

Action 2026-265, Discussion: 3. Approve Ohio School Plan Insurance Renewal
The Superintendent recommends that the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education approve the Ohio School Plan Insurance Renewal as attached.

Motion by Ashley Zimmer, second by Dionna Herbert.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

Action 2026-266, Discussion: 4. New Story School Autism Contract
The Superintendent recommends that the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education approve the Autism Contract.

The Board discussed renewing its contract with **New Story School** to continue operating the district's autism program. Administration reported that although the program opened later than planned during its first year, enrollment has grown significantly, with approximately 30 students already committed for the upcoming school year and the potential to reach 33 of the program's 36 available seats. District officials explained that the program allows Groveport Madison students to receive specialized services closer to home while also serving students from neighboring school districts. They noted that, with increased enrollment, the program is expected to become financially self-sustaining and generate revenue for the district. Administration also highlighted plans to partner with Cruiser Excel to provide paraprofessional internship opportunities and discussed efforts to reduce transportation costs by serving students locally rather than sending them to programs outside the district.
Board members asked questions about the financial analysis, contract terms, enrollment projections, responsibilities outlined in the agreement, and the costs associated with operating the program. Administration explained that many of the startup costs had already been incurred during the initial buildout and that the district already had the necessary facilities, equipment, and infrastructure in place. They also clarified that the district bills participating school districts for tuition, while New Story provides the educational programming and related services under the agreement. After discussing the projected enrollment, anticipated financial benefits, and operational details, the Board voted to approve the New Story School Autism Contract.

Motion by Ashley Zimmer, second by Dionna Herbert.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

Action 2026-267: 5. Approve SRO MOUs with Groveport Madison Police Department and Madison Township Police Department
The Superintendent recommends the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education approve the attached SRO MOUs with Groveport Madison Police Department and Madison Township Police Department.

John - Look at contract and have legal tighten it up with good communication between Supt and Chief's and not so one-sided. Also, look at who can serve us. Also, I would like a shorter-term agreement. Maybe use County or other services. Kathy - I would like a one yr commitment. I would like to look at Franklin County or Columbus PD. I would like a 1 yr. Dionna - Supt had a round table with Admin. The videos came to all of us and how the admin wants the SRO's and how these SRO's help kids and know things that school people do not know. We need to equip and move forward with this. John - The round table was good but the contract was not shown. This contract does not have language that I like. I want to look at Franklin County police and Columbus PD.

The Board discussed the proposed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the Groveport Police Department and Madison Township Police Department to continue providing School Resource Officers (SROs) in the district. Several board members expressed strong support for maintaining the SRO program, emphasizing the importance of school safety, the relationships officers build with students, and the value of local law enforcement's familiarity with the community. Other board members raised concerns about the three-year term of the agreements, the level of district input regarding officer assignments, and the language of the contracts. Suggestions included shortening the agreements to one or two years, strengthening provisions related to communication and accountability, and exploring whether Franklin County or the City of Columbus could provide additional law enforcement resources in the future.
A motion was made to postpone approval of the MOUs so the contracts could be reviewed by legal counsel and potentially revised to address these concerns, but the motion failed. The Board then returned to the original motion to approve the agreements. Supporters of immediate approval emphasized that the school year was approaching and that students and staff needed the assurance of having SROs in place when school begins.

Motion by Ashley Zimmer, second by Dionna Herbert.
Final Resolution: Motion Fails
Yes: Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert
No: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner

Action 2026-268: 6. The Board recommends the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education postpone the attached SRO MOUs with Groveport Madison Police Department and Madison Township Police Department to have reviewed by Board Counsel from Western Hurd.

Motion by John Kershner, second by Kathleen Walsh.
Final Resolution: Motion Fails
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner
No: Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

Action 2026-269: 7. Approve Franklin County Interagency Agreement

The Superintendent recommends the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education approve the attached the Franklin County Interagency Agreement

Motion by Ashley Zimmer, second by Dionna Herbert.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

K. Treasurer's Agenda

Discussion: 1. Financial Reports

Action 2026-270: 2. Authorize Submission of the FY26 Final Appropriations and FY26 Amended Certificate of Estimated Resources to County Auditor
The Treasurer recommends that the Groveport Madison Schools Board of Education authorize the Treasurer to submit to the Franklin County Auditor the FY26 Final Appropriations and FY26 Final Amended Certificate of Estimated Resources as of June 30, 2026 finals.

Motion by Ashley Zimmer, second by Kathleen Walsh.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert

L. Board member comments

Discussion: 1. Board member announcements or brief comments

M. Adjournment

Action 2026-271: 1. Motion to Adjourn
Motion to adjourn at 12:23 am.

Motion by Kathleen Walsh, second by Ashley Zimmer.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yes: Kathleen Walsh, John Kershner, Ashley Zimmer, Dionna Herbert