MILAN AREA SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, August 12, 2026
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 Faro at 7:00 p.m. on August 12, 2026.

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

Board Members Absent: Meray

Staff: Superintendent McMahon, Assistant Superintendent Bookout, Executive Finance Director Krista Hendrix, Margaret Durkee, Rebecca Forinash, Mary Hagley, Kristi Schwartz, Codi Benjamin, Brandi Ignagni, Heidi Phelps, Kristyn Pierfelice, David Middlin and Sara Beckman.

Guests: Erin Held, Jeff Hagley, Olivia Fink, Angela Chidester, Jessica Dotson, Barry Dotson, Robert Benjamin and Jeff Pierfelice

Public Comments:

- Jeff Hagley shared details on behalf of the Milan Swim Club, highlighting its nearly 60-year partnership with the district, its role in providing lessons, competitive, and masters programs, and its booster support for school teams. He thanked the district and Athletic Director Morlock for their ongoing support. Additionally, he outlined roughly $80,000 in recent pool facility improvements, including starting blocks, backstroke wedges, lane lines, timing equipment, sound system repairs, and ongoing safety equipment oversight. He noted that approximately $50,000 of the upgrades were funded through grants, donations, and club fundraising.

Motion by Heikka supported by Burdette to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on July 8, 2026. All Ayes. Carried 6-0.

Motion by Heikka supported by Gutierrez to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting Closed Session on July 8, 2026. All Ayes. Carried 6-0.

Motion by Burdette supported by Prior to approve the bills/reimbursement of expenses. All Ayes. Carried 6-0.

Motion by Gutierrez supported by Cislo to approve the Milan Area Schools 2026-2027 Course Offerings as detailed in Attachment A. All Ayes. Carried 6-0.

Superintendent McMahon shared a Bargaining Groups Update

Motion by Heikka supported by Burdette to approve the Annual Loan Activity Application Resolution to repay the School Loan Revolving Fund as provided in Attachment B. All Ayes. Carried 6-0.

Motion by Prior supported by Heikka to revise, repeal, and/or adopt Board policies as described in Attachment C. All Ayes. Carried 6-0.

Motion by Prior supported by Gutierrez to approve the Milan Area Schools Branding and Logo Guidelines effective the 2026-2027 school year. All Ayes. Carried 6-0.

Motion by Burdette supported by Gutierrez to approve Barry Dotson as an MMS STEM Teacher effective for the 2026-2027 school year. All Ayes. Carried 6-0.

Motion by Gutierrez supported by Prior to approve Oliva Fink as a MMS Social Worker effective for the 2026-2027 school year. All Ayes. Carried 6-0.

Motion by Burdette supported by Gutierrez to approve Kristyn Pierfelice as Milan High School Principal effective for the 2026-2027 school year. All Ayes. Carried 6-0.

Motion by Prior supported by Heikka to approve Codi Benjamin as the Executive Director of Paddock Early Childhood Center effective for the 2026-2027 school year. All Ayes. Carried 6-0.

Motion by Cislo supported by Gutierrez to approve the Master Agreement with the Milan Area Schools Transportation Association as detailed in Attachment D. All Ayes. Carried 6-0.

Motion by Cislo supported by Burdette to approve the Cafeteria Employee Policies as detailed in Attachment E. All Ayes. Carried 6-0.

Public Comments: None

Assistant Superintendent Comments:

- Assistant Superintendent Book recognized the work our administrative team has done this summer. The administrative team met regularly throughout June, July, and August, including a two-day administrative retreat, and really used that time

to step away from the day-to-day work of running our buildings and focus on strengthening some of our districtwide systems. Some of the highlights of the summer work include:

- Continuous Improvement Work (District & Building Improvement Plans)
- MTSS Systems (Building-level Handbooks)
- Data Analysis (Attendance, Behavior, Special Education, and Inclusion
- Emergency Operations Plans
- Professional Development Planning (Alignment across the district)

- Assistant Superintendent Book shared that Milan Area Schools was awarded a Section 35m grant to support literacy and dyslexia screening. Through this funding, we will be implementing mCLASS with DIBELS (on the Michigan approved list) as our literacy screening tool for students in Young 5s through fifth grade

- Assistant Superintendent Bookout shared that students in grades 6 through 8 will be moving from trimesters to semesters. This will better align the middle school calendar with Milan High School and create greater consistency across our secondary schools. As part of that transition, we've also taken the opportunity to revisit our elective offerings and look at how we can better respond to provide students with opportunities to explore different areas before they reach high school. This year, we're adding three new elective options: Journalism, Native American Studies, and Computer Science. We're excited about the opportunity to broaden the experiences available to our middle school students while also creating greater alignment between MMS and MHS.

Superintendent Comments:

- Superintendent McMahon welcomed the newly appointed staff members Mr. Dotson and Ms. Fink and also Codi Benjamin and Kristyn Pierfelice to our district's administrative team.

- Superintendent McMahon thanked Mrs. Ignagni and the Paddock Staff for the extra hours they put into Kindergarten Orientation last Wednesday. They welcomed our new and returning students and were able to conduct initial academic assessments. Our kindergarten enrollment has increased to the point that we have decided to add a fifth section. Mrs. Ignagni and her team are working through the hiring process now to find our next team member at Paddock.

- Superintendent McMahon shared that he met with Performance Services Incorporated last week to begin formal discussions about long-range facility planning and a potential energy bond program. We will have a representative from PSI attend a Board meeting in September to provide an overview of their work to the community and Board. PSI has been approved to start an in-depth facility study as an initial step in planning and that work will begin soon.

- Superintendent McMahon updated the Board on the status of some facility projects that are underway. The MMS water main project is still underway. We are waiting for clean testing to come back before the system can be fully pressurized and reconnected to the building. The tennis court project started this week, but there was a setback upon discovery of a lower than anticipated water table. The district is working with Thurn Law to see what potential solutions to this unexpected issue can be resolved with Sinking Fund dollars. The MHS concrete replacement has been finalized. The main trouble areas were addressed, but because we did not conduct a full replacement of all the walkways, we will still have areas to address within the next couple of years. The carpet installation in two classrooms at Symons has been completed.

- Superintendent McMahon updated the Board about the Filter First grant fund project. The district now has all of the drinking fountains updated to include additional filters. Part of this project included labeling faucets that still have city water but not an extra filter as "non-drinkable", even though the water quality is still the same as before. We will be directing all students to only use the water sources with filtered labels as a drinking water source.

- Superintendent McMahon shared an update on the 31aa grant. The new language in the law this year separates the mental health and student safety components of the law, at $73 per student and $147 per student respectively.. The district anticipates being able to apply for the mental health money without having to waive any attorney-client privileges, but the student safety portion will still have some requirements for the waiver. Districts are waiting to see how the language will be phrased in the grant application before being able to decide if they want to apply for that portion.

- Superintendent McMahon shared that the Milan Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a School Board Board Candidate Forum, ahead of the upcoming Board elections, on Monday, September 21, at 7pm in the MHS Theater.

Board Member Comments:

- Burdette thanked the community and district for the opportunity to attend the MASB Summer Institute to build his board skills. He commended the high school theater group and supporting adults for staging a 24-hour performance of *SpongeBob The Musical*. Furthermore, he recognized the start of the fall sports season and praised football Coach Trott for bringing a positive culture to the program.

- Gutierrez congratulated and welcomed all new hires and internal promotions. She thanked the coaches, directors, teachers, and community adults who dedicate their time to supporting student extracurricular experiences. Additionally, she noted upcoming building open houses and expressed specific appreciation to the high

school administrative team for hosting an open house to help families and students acclimate.

- Prior welcomed new staff members and expressed gratitude to the district for supporting her attendance at the MASB conference, where she completed four courses and earned three certifications. She reminded board members to review draft policies 4405 through 4602 ahead of the next meeting, noted that the policy committee will convene soon to review seven additional policies, and encouraged community participation in an upcoming fall workshop regarding a future cell phone policy. Additionally, she promoted local back-to-school initiatives, including the Big Red Bundles supply drive organized by Aid in Milan via Signup Genius. Lastly, she encouraged the community to support the Milan High School Sunshine Club by contributing through their Amazon wishlist.

- Heikka congratulated all new hires and promoted staff, thanked the Milan Swim Club for their financial and equipment support, and encouraged other district groups to seek similar community grants. She wished fall sports teams good luck, announced dance team tryouts for August 30th, and wished all staff and families a relaxing end to summer break. She later added a comment recognizing outgoing High School Principal Mr. Shinn for his service and ability to connect with students and the community.

- Cislo stated that he would be unable to attend the next board meeting. He thanked the Milan Swim Club for their presentation and fundraising leadership, and commended Finance Director Krista Hendricks and her office staff for their hard work managing the ongoing district financial audit. Additionally, he welcomed all new personnel, expressed appreciation to those continuing to choose Milan and stepping into new leadership roles, and wished everyone a great first day and a successful start to the school year.

- Faro stated he will coordinate upcoming meeting dates for the finance and communications committees and announced a Big Red Board Chat scheduled for September 22nd at Symons Elementary School. Additionally, he extended his gratitude to Krista Hendricks and the district office team for their hard work during the annual financial audit process. He closed by wishing everyone good luck with the start of the new school year.

Motion by Cislo supported by Heikka to enter into closed session pursuant to Section 8(1)(c) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act for Negotiation Strategies. All Ayes. Carried 6-0.

Time entered closed session at 7:57 p.m.

Time returned to open session at 9:29 p.m.

Time of Adjournment 9:29 p.m.