BLACK RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Board Meeting Minutes

August 31, 2026

Item 1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Board of Directors of Black River Public School was called to order by President Tom McGough at 5:32pm on August 31, 2026, in room 229 at the school's Columbia Avenue campus. Recognition was made that a quorum was present through a roll call.

Item 2. ROLL CALL

Members Present:
Sarah Bast, Elisabeth Bauman, Matt Benson, Abe Carillo (5:36pm), Kim Koeman, Tom McGough

Members Absent:
TJ McDonald, Mary Mims

Staff Present:
Michelle Byrne (Administrative Assistant), Shannon Brunink (Head of School), Rachel Carlson (Business Director), John K. Donnelly (Dean of Students), Tara Gorris (BR Teacher)

Public Present:
Arabella Benson, Tracy Bolo, Gina Buma, Jonathan Buma, Megan Hanneken, Claire Rumpsa, Courtney Stahl

Media Present:
None

Item 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There being no corrections, all minutes of the Board's June 22, 2026 meeting were approved upon a motion by Mr. Benson, seconded by Ms. Bauman. (5-0)

There being no corrections, all minutes of the Board's August 24, 2026 meeting were approved upon a motion by Mr. Benson, seconded by Ms. Bast. (5-0)

Item 4. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Bauman asked to share before needing to leave the meeting early that Ms. Bast will be stepping into the Vice President role. The board will vote on her appointment at the September meeting.

Item 5. BUSINESS REPORT

Ms. Carlson reviewed the annual designations and outlined the changes.

Motion to approve the 2026-2027 Annual Designations as presented. The resolution passed unanimously upon a motion by Ms. Bast, seconded by Mr. Benson. (6-0)

Ms. Carlson indicated that the audit report will be presented in October after the finance committee meeting.

Item 6. ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Mr. Donnelly explained the updated signage throughout campus to communicate our PBIS expectations. He has had many positive interactions to start the school year and is really enjoying getting to know the students.

Mr. Brunink highlighted this year's staffing changes and was excited that a few additions are Black River graduates. He also shared that due to a grant, we have been able to add Ms. Kristen Hoffman in a part time nurse position.

This year's inservice featured a Paideia training for the Middle and High School teachers to support our Socratic teaching method. These trainings will continue on the half days throughout the rest of the school year and has been made possible by the Impact 30 Grant through Grand Valley State University.

Mr. Brunink explained that this year's Rat Camp will be held at Camp Geneva and the 6th grade field trip will be at Camp Roger. Curriculum Night takes place for all grade levels tomorrow and the Parent Organization's RatRaiser will be on October 3rd. He thanked Mary VanEenenaam and the rest of the volunteers whose amazing work brings everyone together in support of the school.

Black River's AI policy has been put in place and Mr. Brunink outlined different ways students may encounter it. He indicated that AI can be a tool but that it is necessary to take the mystery out of it and put parameters in place.

Mr. Brunink spoke about how staff and students are growing with the new cell phone policy. They continue to strive for a thoughtful approach when working with parents and Miss Benson was asked for the student perspective. Mr. Brunink asked for clarification on the usage of

earbuds for academic purposes. Ms. Stahl indicated that GVSU would like to dive in to cell phone policy data from their charter schools.

Mr. McGough briefly outlined updates to this year's student handbooks.

Motion to approve the 2026-2027 Elementary Student Handbook. The resolution passed unanimously upon a motion by Mr. Benson, seconded by Ms. Bast. (5-0)

Motion to approve the 2026-2027 Middle/High School Student Handbook. The resolution passed unanimously upon a motion by Mr. Benson, seconded by Mr. Carillo. (5-0)

Item 7. FACULTY COUNCIL REPORT

Ms. Gorris said that the first Faculty Council meeting will be held tomorrow. Mr. McGough thanked staff for their participation in the recent survey and is looking forward to continued conversations.

Item 8. STUDENT REPORT

Ms. Benson explained that she felt the cell phone policy was going well and that everyone is adapting. She provided highlights for the beginning of the fall sports season and stated that Student Council elections will be held next week. Homecoming will be held September 25th-26th.

Item 9. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. McGough received communications from a couple of families thanking the board for their work on the new cell phone policy. He has continued conversations with members of the community and wants to maintain an open dialogue.

Mr. Benson asked about getting the previously discussed strategic planning underway.

Ms. Koeman asked about plans to fill the 9th board seat and bring in a new member. Ms. Stahl explained GVSU's timeline for adding to the board. She also indicated that Black River has maintained one of the larger boards in their charter schools.

Item 10. GVSU REPORT

Ms. Stahl shared the experience of her daughter competing against Black River in volleyball. She explained the academic grant requirements for the 2026-2027 school year and that we are one year away from our contract renewal with the Grand Valley Charter Schools office. Since Black River is in good standing they are extending an offer to renew early. She reminded members of the upcoming board training opportunities as well as the November 5th Board President Retreat in Detroit.

Item 11. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business for the board to address.

Item 12. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Tracy Bolo shared her experience as a High School parent and her thoughts on what improvements and tone she felt could have aided the cell phone policy roll out.

Ms. Clara Rumpsa expressed appreciation for the ability to hear about what is going on and gratitude for the school's patience, thoughtfulness, and respect.

Item 13. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:49pm.

NEXT MEETING:
The next regular meeting is scheduled for 5:30pm on September 21, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Board President