MILAN AREA SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, September 30, 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 September 30, 2026.

Board Members Present: Faro, Meray, Burdette, Prior, Cislo, Heikka arrived at 7:11 p.m.

Board Members Absent: Prior

Staff: Superintendent McMahon, Assistant Superintendent Bookout, Margaret Durkee and Sara Beckman

Guests: Sarah Norton, Andrea Bennink and Jennifer Elrod

Public Comments: None

Motion by Burdette supported by Gutierrez to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 9, 2026. All Ayes. Carried 5-0.

The Board heard a 2025-2026 Assessment Update from Assistant Superintendent Bookout.

The Board heard an update from WISD PAC representative Andrea Bennink.

Public Comments:

- Jenny Elrod shared her views related to the early-grade reading curriculum implementation and teacher feedback, requesting information regarding its possible impact on recent test scores. She asked a question about whether the 36% proficiency rate for ninth-grade math represented a historical trend or area of concern. Additionally, she highlighted student challenges associated with differing standardized test formats between NWEA and MSTEP, and thanked the district for sharing the assessment data presentation.

Assistant Superintendent Comments:

- Assistant Superintendent Bookout shared that communication was sent to families last week about our Standard Response Protocol, or SRP, and our schools also reinforced that information through their parent newsletters. As we've shared previously, the SRP provides common language and clear procedures for how

students and staff respond to different types of emergency situations. An important part of implementing the new protocol is making sure our families understand that language as well, so we'll continue reinforcing it throughout the year.

- Assistant Superintendent Bookout also highlighted some work happening at Paddock with their Outside Learning Lab, or OLL, formerly known as the Nature Center. The space has received some much-needed attention and clean-up so that it can once again be more intentionally used as an outdoor learning environment for students. Assistant Superintendent Bookout specifically thanked Gary Cox, Molly Jeppesen, Tom Zilke, and the Milan Garden Club for their time and help with this project. We're fortunate to have people within our district and community who are willing to invest their time and energy into creating meaningful spaces and experiences for our students.

Superintendent Comments:

- Superintendent McMahon thanked the Milan Area Chamber of Commerce for hosting the School Board Meet the Candidate Forum last week. A special thanks to Angela Thomas and Dave Baldwin for their planning and participation. It was a nice opportunity for our community to hear from our candidates and for those that were unable to catch the event live, you can find it streamed on the district's Youtube channel.

- Superintendent McMahon thanked all the participants in our Milan Homecoming celebration last week. The students had an active week last week, culminating with the parade, community celebration, football game, and Homecoming Dance on Saturday. A special thanks to Mrs. Mahaney, Mrs. Gill, and the building administrators, along with all of our Class Sponsors and dance chaperones.

- Superintendent McMahon shared appreciation for our Custodians, with the School Custodian Appreciation Day coming up on October 2. We are grateful for the work that they do keeping our facilities clean and safe.

- Superintendent McMahon shared that he and Gary Cox met with representatives from ReLeaf Michigan, in coordination with the Milan Beautification Committee and the City of Milan, to plan a tree planting project through the U.S. Forest Service next Spring. Anticipated to occur on April 30, we will be planting approximately 15 trees each on Paddock and Symons property. We will have students involved in the project and we are also working to organize an Arbor Day assembly for students at Symons.

- Superintendent McMahon shared that Elise Hill and Sophie Kleyla, representing our be nice. student group, received WISD mini-grants in the amount of $4,000 and $5,000, respectively. The grant is co-sponsored by the Washtenaw County Mental Health Public Safety Preservation Millage and the WISD. The funds are to be used to purchase materials to support the group with interactive activities,

student prizes and incentives, t-shirts, art supplies, self-care and wellness items, guest speaker, transportation to community events, to promote positive student behavior and interactions.

Board Member Comments:

- Heikka thanked district staff, students, volunteers and administrators for organizing homecoming events, commended the junior class for winning the battle cry competition, and praised the new parade route and post-parade community tailgate attendance. She suggested improvements for future parades, including maintaining band participation through the end of the route and communicating designated student drop-off locations to parents for safety. She contextualized ninth-grade math proficiency figures by noting growth from 27% alongside student performance that is above state averages, and added that high school attendance trends also impact assessment scores. Lastly, she affirmed the district's proactive focus on improvement.

- Meray expressed gratitude for participating in her first homecoming celebration, commended the community's adaptability with the new parade route, and recognized Trustee Cislo during his final homecoming event. She thanked the volunteers staffing the high school football concession stand, and voiced support for the outdoor learning space improvements at Paddock and the Middle School courtyard. Additionally, she shared positive feedback received from a countywide service provider regarding Milan facility cleanliness and welcoming environments across district buildings, expressing appreciation to the custodial team for their work.

- Gutierrez thanked the community for a successful homecoming celebration, and commended fellow board members for volunteering on short notice at the football concession stand. She advocated for the board to explore additional collaborative community service initiatives aligned with service-minded curriculum goals. She commended the assessment data presentation, expressing optimism that the multi-year data reflects genuine instructional growth rather than post-COVID recovery and emphasizing the value of data-guided decision-making.

- Burdette praised the administration, teachers, staff, and students for their hard work driving academic growth as reflected in the assessment report. He highlighted his positive experience attending the homecoming pep rally and praised performances by the band, choir, dance team, and cheerleaders, while noting strong community turnout across the parade, food truck rally, and football game.

- Cislo commended the expanded homecoming parade route, thanking community members for their turnout. He thanked Andrea Bennink and Sarah Norton for their leadership on the Parent Advisory Committee, and recognized Mayor Kolar and community volunteers for edging sidewalks around Paddock and Symons, praising their community and school pride.

- Faro reminded board members to complete their policy reviews for policies 5213 through 5404 prior to the next meeting, and expressed gratitude to the district and community for supporting board attendance at the upcoming MASB conference. He noted plans to review student community service ideas suggested by the city's Senior Advisory Committee with the superintendent. Additionally, he reminded families of the October 7th Count Day, thanked Trustees Heikka and Burdette for participating in the September 22nd Big Red Board Chat, and reflected on his positive experience volunteering at the homecoming concession stand.

Motion by Gutierrez supported by Meray to enter into closed session pursuant of Section 8(1)(a) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, and upon the request of the employee, for the purpose of conducting a periodic personnel evaluation. All Ayes. Carried 6-0.

Time entered closed session 7:54 p.m.

Time returned to open session 9:19 p.m.

Time of Adjournment 9:19 p.m.