BLACK RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Board Meeting Minutes

September 21, 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 5:33pm on September 21, 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, Tom McGough, TJ McDonald, Mary Mims

Members Absent:
Abe Carillo, Kim Koeman

Staff Present:
Carrie Ames (Elementary Curriculum Director), Shannon Brunink (Head of School), Michelle Byrne (Administrative Assistant), Rachel Carlson (Business Director), John K. Donnelly (Dean of Students), Sarah Lozano (BR Teacher), Colin Murphy (BR Teacher)

Public Present:
Arabella Benson, Gina Buma, Megan Hanneken, Tim McMichael, Courtney Stahl

Media Present:
None

Item 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There being no corrections, all minutes of the Board's August 31, 2026 meeting were approved upon a motion by Mr. McGough, seconded by Mr. McDonald. (6-0)

Item 4. BUSINESS REPORT

Ms. Carlson indicated that they are finalizing the audit and there were no findings or recommendations. It will be presented to the board in October after the finance committee meeting.

Item 5. ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Ms. Ames was introduced as the Elementary Curriculum Director and shared Black River's Framework for Responsible Artificial Intelligence Use. She explained how this was developed and that it will continue to be reviewed by the district and building implementation teams as the technology changes.

Mr. Donnelly thanked Ms. Ames and the committee for their work with the AI policy and shared his experience in finding appropriate ways to utilize the resource. He also spoke about cell phone policy updates and comparing data from this year to last. He looks forward to collecting more information over the next few months.

Mr. Brunink expressed gratitude for the amazing work Ms. Mary VanEenenaam has done with Black River's Parent Organization. Fundraising for this year's RatRaiser is currently underway and this year's theme is The Ratitude of Gratitude. He explained that we are utilizing the Impact 30 Grant from GVSU for the upcoming half day inservices. Mr. Jeremy Spieiman from the National Paideia Center will be here for two days working with our teachers. He also stated that mid term grade reports and Parent Teacher Conferences are on the horizon.

Item 6. FACULTY COUNCIL REPORT

Ms. Lozano explained that the new members of Faculty Council are settling in. They continue their work with both staff and the board.

Item 7. STUDENT REPORT

Miss. Benson highlighted the achievements of Mr. Jake Levering who broke BR's soccer record for most career goals. She outlined recent sports stats and music performances and indicated that RatRaiser and Homecoming are upcoming events where people can get involved. It was also stated that the board will be conducting interviews for new student board representatives to be mentored under our current appointments.

Item 8. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. McGough explained that Mr. Benson and Mr. Carrillo have agreed to help build a framework for the upcoming strategic planning. Their target is to begin in November.

Item 9. GVSU REPORT

Ms. Stahl reminded members of the Board Retreat November 5th in Detroit. She provided guidance on how to select the next board member and outlined the steps the school will take for the next contract renewal with GVSU.

Item 10. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Benson explained that he has drafted a document to share with the BR community that includes information about why the cell phone plan was developed and some data from the surveys.

Motion to appoint Ms. Sarah Bast to the role of Vice President. The resolution passed unanimously upon a motion by Ms. Bauman, seconded by Mr. McGough. (6-0)

Item 11. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business brought before the board.

Item 12. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. McMichael spoke about the Black River cell phone policy and how it compares to other schools. He shared concerns and asked the board to consider these perspectives when continuing to develop and adapt the policy.

Item 13. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:32pm.

NEXT MEETING:
The next regular meeting is scheduled for 5:30pm on October 19, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Board President