

**MINUTES  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WARREN WOODS PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
MARCH 10, 2025**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by President Schulte at 6:00 p.m.in the Board Room of the Administrative Service Center, 12900 Frazho Road, Warren, MI.

**Roll Call**

Members present: Zannetti, Fitzpatrick, Hiller, Garcia, Nitz, Spicer and Schulte. Also present were Superintendent Stacey Denewith-Fici, Deputy Superintendent Neil Cassabon, Curriculum Director Michelle Voelker, Special Services Director Stacie Sward, Briarwood Principal Beth Mager, Early Childhood Coordinator Stacy Santamaria, Director of Facilities and Transportation Don Ball, Student Representatives Nataly Chang and Valorie Lee, and Executive Assistant Jackie Miracle.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Agenda Approval**

It was moved by Fitzpatrick supported by Nitz to approve the Agenda as presented. The motion carried 7 – 0.

**Minutes**

It was moved by Fitzpatrick supported by Zannetti to approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of February 24, 2025, as presented. The motion carried 6 – 0 – 1 with Schulte abstaining due to absence.

**Correspondence**

None

**Payment of the Bills**

It was moved by Hiller supported by Zannetti to pay the following bills as presented:

General Fund	\$ 877,017.95
Center Programs	8,270.19
Food Service Fund	110,025.24
Child Care Fund	4,383.81
Campus Corner	4,201.42
Bond 2020 Series I	27,083.06

The motion carried 7 – 0.

Trustee Garcia asked for clarification on an expense in the amount of \$4,498.50 to Character Strong and commented on the positive impact of the program. Curriculum Director

**Payment of the Bills** (continued)

Michelle Voelker stated that Character Strong was piloted this year at the elementary level and the payment was to continue the program for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Garcia noted that bond projects and heating and cooling repairs are yielding positive results as maintenance costs seem to be stabilizing.

**Old Business**

None.

**New Business**

**Reports**

**Student Representatives**

Superintendent Denewith-Fici introduced Student Representatives Nataly Chang and Valorie Lee and invited them to report on activities at WWT.

Valorie began with club news, reporting that NHS students recently took a field trip to Bovenschen School to help support their Special Olympics. Next, she stated that 11 DECA students will be competing this weekend at States in Detroit and four participants have already advanced to the international conference. Student Leadership classes are sponsoring 'Penny Wars,' with the winning class receiving a pizza party and the funds raised will be used for the upcoming Talent Show. Additionally, Leadership Classes are celebrating Teacher Appreciation by allowing students to nominate impactful teachers through a survey. Finally, a book drive is also being held with all books that are collected being donated to the elementary schools.

In other news, Nataly announced that students recently competed in Mock Trials with three attorneys earning Star Attorney awards and three witnesses earning Star Witness awards. StuCo members met earlier this week to start planning for Spring Spirit Week. Next, in sports, Nataly reminded everyone of the Unified Basketball Game at LCA on March 15. Finally, she announced that the Girls' Basketball Team recently wrapped up their season, and the Varsity Dance Team came in first place at States.

**Staff Recognition: Teacher of the Year**

Superintendent Denewith-Fici recognized WWPS 2024-25 Outstanding Teachers and presented each with a Certificate of Recognition. Kelley Schwertman, Early Childhood Teacher – WWEC, Nancy Sulkowski, Literacy Specialist – Briarwood Elementary, Tara Giacona, Math Teacher – WWMS, and Lesley Szubelak, Science Teacher – WWT.

Ms. Denewith-Fici read student and/or staff statements for each candidate and thanked them for their dedication and service, and for always doing what is best for kids.

**Student Achievement: Coaching Update**

Curriculum Director Michelle Voelker introduced Elementary Math Coach Kathy Hribar and Instructional Engagement Coach Erika Liska and stated they were here this evening to provide an update on their impact within their roles in the district, their collaboration as coaches, as well as their plans for future work.

**New Business**  
**Reports**

**Student Achievement: Coaching Update (continued)**

Ms. Hribar began with an introduction to the presentation, outlining her goals to discuss Learning Labs and coaching cycles, the 23g Grant initiative, the use of data to inform instruction, as well as efforts to build math engagement. The MSTEP elementary math data was shared with the Board (as previously shared by Michelle Voelker in October 2024). Ms. Hribar provided an overview of the work of Learning Labs, impacting all grade levels K-5, with more than 25 district educators taking part in this professional learning opportunity. It was also shared that due to the impact of learning labs, Ms. Hribar has extended her work into co-planning and co-teaching sessions with elementary teachers as well as collaborations with Ms. Liska and Ms. Meneghin. The work of learning labs within WWPS has also been celebrated at the county and state levels. The feedback from WWPS teachers is positive around learning labs, and the plan is to continue using this form of professional learning in the future. Both Ms. Denewith-Fici and Ms. Voelker participated in learning labs with the elementary math team. Ms. Hribar went on to share the AVMR initiative, which will be funded by a state-level grant (23h) in partnership with the Kent ISD. These trainings will help support our elementary teachers in their understanding of how students best learn mathematics.

Along with her work in learning labs, Ms. Hribar outlined her impact as a coach - providing co-teaching, lesson modeling, co-planning, unit and lesson planning supports, creation of mathematics manipulatives, as well as structures to support data analysis and next steps. To better support student engagement, Ms. Hribar shared her highly-successful Dreambox Challenge that took place in December. In addition, Ms. Hribar discussed plans to provide consistent preparation materials and instruction around the grades 3-5 MSTEP assessments. Those plans will happen in collaboration with Ms. Liska, Ms. Meneghin, and the literacy coaching team. To close her portion of the presentation, Ms. Hribar set goals for future math learning labs, to increase the participation of special education teachers, to develop intentional group-coaching cycles for cohorts of teachers, to continue to intentionally incorporate MSTEP preparations throughout the school year, and to expand the Crazy 8s math club to the other elementary buildings.

Ms. Liska began by informing the Board of her presentation goals: to provide information to support the impact and future of Internal Kagan Coaching in WWPS, as well as to outline the impact of instructional engagement coaching across the district. Ms. Liska explained the process of Internal Kagan Coaching: the gathering of information, analyzing data to find trends, developing a plan to support teachers, providing support and PD, and coaching rounds that provide in-the-moment feedback to teachers. Ms. Liska shared that by the end of the year 143 teachers across six schools will have been coached, with more than 400 classroom visits. She shared that there is evidence of improvement of student behavior due to the use of common language and think time. It was also shared that the use of Kagan structures supports the needs of all learners, building a community within classrooms to combat absences. Within the presentation, Ms. Liska shared celebrations and goals from all three levels in terms of Kagan coaching. One common goal was to encourage the use of heterogeneous groupings of students, which is a more challenging task for teachers but will make the

## **New Business**

### **Reports**

**Student Achievement:** Coaching Update (continued)  
use of structures more impactful for students.

When not in internal Kagan Coaching rounds, Ms. Liska engages in instructional coaching to improve student engagement. She highlighted how she has created materials for teachers, engaged in mini-cycles and informal coaching that included co-planning, co-teaching, and modeling. Ms. Liska also discussed her impact on teachers through the creation of professional development opportunities. She also shared her efforts to strategically support new teachers in WWPS.

To end her presentation, Ms. Liska shared her plans and goals for the future, including completion of the Kagan School Trainer training this summer, the expansion of SAT and MSTEP preparations, and to connect the work of student engagement coaching with the content area coaches in the future for more cohesive supports.

### **2025-26 Budget Forecast**

Deputy Superintendent Cassabon expressed his appreciation to the Finance Committee for meeting on March 6, 2025 to review the report in detail. He stated tonight's presentation would provide an update to the Board on the 2025-2026 budget development process and provide some background information on assumptions used throughout. He stipulated this was the first version and will continue to change until officially adopted at the end of June.

Mr. Cassabon began with Revenue and stated that due to the restoration of the Non-Homestead Act, the district will be levying the full 18.00 mills and a 5% increase in taxable values from original values in May 2024. He noted the expected decline in interest rates, in addition to many other unknown variables. Deputy Superintendent Cassabon shared with the Board the Budget Forecast for the 2025-26 school year based on the final 2023-24 audited numbers, the amended numbers for 2024-25, and the forecast for 2025-26. Based on the Governor's Budget proposal, he noted a \$392 per pupil increase to the Foundation Allowance. In addition to the loss of Hold Harmless Guarantee payments he noted that due to a stabilization in enrollment, he projects that the District will no longer be eligible for Declining Enrollment funds. Mr. Cassabon detailed other projected revenue changes including the elimination of several grants including Student Mental Health and Student Safety Grant funding which is the cause of much debate. Mr. Cassabon added that Federal grant funding is not expected to change, noting the expiration of the ESSER III and ARP ESSER III 11t funds.

Next, Deputy Superintendent Cassabon reviewed expenses including teaching staff salary adjustments based on collective bargaining agreements, while noting support groups are scheduled for bargaining this spring. He explained changes in substitute teacher pay rates in addition to increased pay rates due to minimum wage increases. Finally, Deputy Superintendent Cassabon reviewed utility rates noting anticipated increases, with the exception of electric, as the impact of the solar array is expected to keep electricity rates down.

In conclusion, Deputy Superintendent Cassabon reiterated that the budget was based on assumptions and he anticipates several updates prior to the final recommendation.

**New Business**  
**Reports**

**2025-26 Budget Forecast** (continued)

President Schulte thanked Mr. Cassabon for his detailed explanation of the budget process, recognizing his ability to simplify complex information.

**Appointment:** MISD Budget Review Delegate

Superintendent Denewith-Fici stated that it was necessary to appoint a representative to attend the April 17, 2025 MISD Budget Review on behalf of the Board. She noted traditionally, the Board Treasurer has represented the district and Mr. Fitzpatrick attended in 2024, with Vice President Zannetti representing as Treasurer in years prior.

It was moved by Hiller supported by Nitz to approve the Appointment of Mr. Fitzpatrick as MISD Budget Review Delegate and Mr. Zannetti serving as alternate. **ROLL CALL VOTE:**  
**Ayes:** Zannetti, Fitzpatrick, Hiller, Garcia, Nitz, Spicer and Schulte. **Nays:** None. The motion carried 7 – 0.

**Personnel Items**

**Leaves:**

As presented

It was moved by Fitzpatrick supported by Zannetti to approve the **Leaves** as presented. The motion carried 7 – 0.

**New Hires:**

**Dayna Dostilios** – Kitchen Helper – WWMS – date of hire 02/21/25.

**Kameron Francis** – Substitute Special Education Paraprofessional – date of hire 03/04/25

**Alissa Gorgas** – Childcare Assistant – date of hire 03/04/25.

**Harold Jankowiak** - Substitute Teacher – date of hire 02/20/25.

**Gabrielle Mortier** – Childcare Assistant – date of rehire 02/21/25. S

**Sandra Sesko** – Afternoon Custodian – WWMS – date of hire 02/26/25.

It was moved by Fitzpatrick supported by Hiller to approve the **New Hires** as presented. The motion carried 7 – 0.

**Public Expression**

Trustee Nitz announced that WWT Boys' Club Volleyball tryouts began today and their season will run through May.

President Schulte thanked Ms. Hribar and Ms. Liska for tonight's very informative presentations. In addition, he thanked Mr. Fitzpatrick for representing the district at the upcoming Budget Review.

Mr. Garcia acknowledged the work of Deputy Superintendent Cassabon on the budget. He stated that, in his opinion, Mr. Cassabon has a better grip on it than anyone else in the state.

Curriculum Director Michelle Voelker also thanked the coaches and added that both she and Ms. Liska were selected to receive intensive Kagan training this summer, where they will both become certified trainers enabling them to train new teachers as they are hired and continue the work of cooperative learning structures.

Superintendent Deneweth-Fici added that Mr. Cassabon was recently asked to present the breakdown of the Governor's budget due to his comprehensive understanding of the material.

**Adjournment**

It was moved by Zannetti supported by Fitzpatrick to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 PM. The motion carried 6 – 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Hiller  
Secretary