

**MILAN AREA SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING  
Wednesday April 9, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Milan Area Schools Board of Education was called to order in the Milan Area Schools District Board Room located at 100 Big Red Drive, Milan MI, 48160, by President Cislo at 7:00 p.m. on April 9, 2025.

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

Board Members Absent: None

Signed in Staff: Bryan Girbach, Ryan McMahon, Aaron Shinn, Kristyn Pierfelice, Lon Smith, Jennifer Barker, Margaret Durkee

Signed in Guests: Ryan Rowe, Virginia Heikka, Craig Barker, Franklin Barker, Andrea Bennink, George Elder

Pledge of Allegiance

Motion by Faro supported by Gutierrez to thank the Paraprofessionals of Milan Area Schools as recorded in Attachment A. All Ayes. Carried 7-0

Public Comment:

- Franklin Barker, President of National Junior Honor Society at Milan Middle School, shared highlights from recent and upcoming activities at MMS. He spoke about efforts to promote inclusion through awareness events for ADHD, Down syndrome, and autism. He reported on the success of Quiz Bowl and a math contest before spring break, and mentioned current events like Walk/Roll to School Day and a rock-paper-scissors competition. Upcoming highlights include the band and choir concert, student-staff kickball game, the Amazing Shake, and field day. Students are also looking forward to field trips, including the SWWC Consortium, the zoo, 6th grade camp, and Greenfield Village. Sports teams, Esports, and robotics are all active and doing well. Franklin invited everyone to the *Wizard of Oz* performances and noted the yearbook club is wrapping up its work.

Motion by Burdette supported by Heikka to approve the bills/reimbursement of expenses. All Ayes. Carried 7-0

Motion by Heikka supported by Meray to approve the Adult Education Graduates (as listed in Attachment B) contingent upon their completion of all graduation requirements. All Ayes. Carried 7-0

Ryan Rowe, the Washtenaw Intermediate School District CTE Director, provided the Board an update on Washtenaw County CTE programs.

Andrea Bennink, WISD PAC Representative, provided the Board an update on the WISD PAC.

Motion by Heikka supported by Meray to adopt all policies, policy revisions, and policy rescissions as described in Attachment C and to further suspend the second-reading requirement

for these policy adoptions, policy revisions, and policy rescissions. The Board finds that, consistent with Bylaw 0131.1, recent changes to Federal and State laws creates a “compelling reason” to suspend the second-reading requirement and to otherwise adopt, revise, or rescind the policies as described in Attachment C. All Ayes. Carried 7-0

Public Comment:

- Andrea Bennink voiced enthusiasm for the county’s expanding CTE opportunities, but expressed concerns about the challenges of staffing specialized courses with credentialed teachers.
  - Mr. Girbach clarified that industry professionals with sufficient documented work experience can receive a temporary teaching certificate through an alternate credentialing pathway, which is already used in several county programs.

Student Board Member Comments:

- Heikka shared that spring sports are underway and wished all spring athletes good luck in their seasons.

Assistant Superintendent Comments were heard on the following topics:

- Grants
  - Benchmark Assessment Grant
  - Section 41 (EL) Grant
  - Board Training Reimbursement Grant
  - 27h (Mentoring and Induction) Grant
- 2024-2025 Benchmark Assessment Update
- Job Vacancies Posted
  - Paddock Principal
  - Assistant Superintendent
- Salary Benchmarking
- State Assessments
- Stakeholder Surveys

Superintendent Comments were heard on the following topics:

- MMS Productions Dates for Wizard of Oz
- Congratulations to FFA and Mr. Federer for Presenting at the County CTE Symposium
- Spring Sports
- Crystal Fenrich’s (Food Service) father passing away
- Sharon Caudill-Castellanos’s (Paddock Paraprofessional) father passing away
- Angela Creech’s (Paddock Teacher) mother-in-law passing away
- Thank You to Nancy Tetens Interim Paddock Principal
- Big Red Board Chat on May 8th
- Milan Rotary Rotary at Symons Flapjacks with Families

Board Member Comments:

- Prior shared appreciation for paraprofessionals and thanked them for being an integral part of our school community. She shared her experience at the Flapjacks for Families event and the successful craft fair at Paddock. She encouraged attendance at the Earth Day event on Sunday April 27th from 11:00 to 4:00 Wilson Park and shared condolences for the recent tragedy at Dundee Schools. She reminded families that support resources are available through Care Solace for those in need.

- Heikka shared her appreciation for paraprofessional staff, and wished students good luck as they prepare for testing, encouraging all to do their best. She thanked Franklin Barker for his MMS update and the Rotary Club for their support of Flapjacks for Families. She also wished all student athletes good luck.
- Faro thanked district paraprofessionals for choosing to work in Milan and for their contributions to student success. He praised the MHS production of *Seussical the Musical*, and congratulated the boy's soccer team on their recent win. He also thanked Mr. Shinn and Mr. Hoskins for their efforts with the recent National Honor Society inductions. Finally, he reminded families to participate in the K-12 Insight survey.
- Burdette thanked district paraprofessionals. He thanked Ryan Rowe for his update on the county-wide CTE expansion efforts, and Franklin Barker for his MMS updates. He shared about the girls' soccer team's strong start to their season, and noted the upcoming MSVMA State Solo and Ensemble choir competition. He also encouraged the community to attend the middle school performance of *The Wizard of Oz*.
- Gutierrez thanked people for attending Board meetings. She reported attending the Washtenaw Area School Board of Directors meeting and being elected Treasurer/Secretary. She mentioned that the WASB will be hosting a town hall on federal budget impacts, and will share the date as soon as it is scheduled. She also shared about a dyslexia education session she attended with other board members. She praised the MHS seniors who were interviewed for the Edna Mead scholarship. She praised the recent middle school quiz bowl competition, and thanked Saline Middle School for hosting. She thanked Franklin Barker for his MMS updates and suggested the board consider adding a middle school student representative. She expressed deep appreciation for paraprofessionals and encouraged additional professional development opportunities geared toward them.
- Meray shared concerns about the local impact of recent federal funding cuts, including the loss of the Health Resource Advocate grant affecting school nurses, closure of the regional Head Start office, and defunding of local addiction recovery programs that support families. She emphasized the destabilizing effects on essential programs and urged the community to engage with elected officials. She thanked Franklin Barker for his MMS update. She celebrated the MMS Quiz Bowl achievements, and thanked staff who lead clubs and extracurriculars. She thanked NJHS and Ms. Barker for their work on the MMS Neurodiversity Awareness campaign, and encouraged families to take advantage of the Special Education Information Series. She ended with thanks to district paraprofessionals for their vital contributions.
- Cislo thanked everyone for their updates. He expressed condolences to the Dundee community, noting that the student had connections to Milan FFA students. He reminded the Board about the invites to the Young Adult and Adult Education graduations. He reaffirmed appreciation for paraprofessionals and specifically thanked Ms. Durkee for her work and her regular representation of paraprofessionals at board meetings.
- Heikka requested that SAT Math scores be shared with the board as soon as they're available, and noted specific benchmark score gains on the NWEA across all buildings, which exceeded goals in nearly all student cohorts. She pushed back against negative narratives about Milan test scores.
- Faro noted that the Benchmark Achievement Goals report would be posted on the district website soon.
- Gutierrez added that the growth trends in the NWEA scores were broad, with meaningful growth occurring across all student subgroups as opposed to a few subgroups performing well and inflating the average. She thanked Mr. McMahon for his work leading assessments and compiling the data.

Motion by Heikka supported by Burdette to enter into closed session pursuant to Section 8(1)(b) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, and upon the request of the student's parent/guardian, for the purpose of conducting a hearing to consider the discipline of a student whose identity is known to the Board as student 2024-2025-5. All Ayes. Carried 7-0

Time entered closed session 8:28 p.m.

Time returned to open session 9:52 p.m.

Motion by Heikka supported by Faro to expel student 2024-2025-5 in accordance with the attached resolution as read by President Cislo. All Ayes. Carried 7-0

Time of Adjournment: 9:55 p.m.