

**Board of Education
June 16, 2026 – 5:00 PM
Conference Room A/B/C
1819 East Milham Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Virgil “Skip” Knowles, Mr. David Webster, Mr. Randy VanAntwerp,
Ms. Lynne Cowart

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. James Devers

ADMINISTRATION/STAFF: Dr. Dedrick Martin, Ms. Mindy Miller, Mr. Brian Schupbach, Mr. Scott Thomas, Mr. Eric Stewart, Mr. Brad Storms, Ms. Sarah Mansberter, Ms. Angela Telger, Ms. Meredith Lewis, Ms. Sandy Barry-Loken, Ms. Jackie Martell

I. CALL TO ORDER – BUDGET HEARING

Mr. Knowles called the budget hearing to order at 5:00 p.m.

Scott Thomas and Brad Storms presented the 2026 -2027 projected budget resolutions.

II. Budget Hearing was closed at 5:18 pm.

III. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Knowles called the meeting to order at 5:18 pm.

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No public comments

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes – May 19, 2026
- B. Approval of Board of Education Closed Meeting Minutes – May 19, 2026
- C. Approval of New Hire
- D. Approval of Tenure Staff
- E. Approval of PAC Minutes
- F. Approval of Monthly Financial Report
- G. Approval of Head Start Financial Report

Mr. VanAntwerp moved; Mr. Webster supported approving the consent agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations this month.

VII. CENTER OF EXCELLENCE UPDATE

A. Early Childhood Update –Rachel Roberts

The Early Childhood, Special Education, and Educator Supports Centers of Excellence continue to strengthen inclusive early childhood practices through Tier 1 instruction, staff development, and coordinated services with the goal of improving outcomes for all children. We are focused on supporting children with disabilities in inclusive environments, rather than segregated Early Childhood Special Education classrooms. Efforts emphasize sustainable systems, evidence-based practices, and cross-program collaboration.

Key actions at our West Campus Head Start/GSRP classrooms include:

- Coaching staff to use strengths-based language
- Prioritizing Tier 1 practices before individualized interventions
- Setting consistent expectations for Head Start/GSRP and Early Childhood Special Education staff
- Providing special education teacher support for six students in Head Start/GSRP classrooms

We are also collaboratively expanding TEACCH, an evidence-based framework that supports independence through structured environments:

- Six Early Childhood staff and consultants completed TEACCH training through UNC Chapel Hill in July 2025, and three additional staff also attended a “digging deeper” training in October 2025
- Internal capacity is growing, with one certified trainer and additional staff pursuing certification
- This investment supports long-term sustainability across programs

Head Start system improvements are strengthening early identification and intervention through:

- Updated Student and Family Support Team (SFST) structures and processes
- Clearer, more efficient referral procedures
- Greater emphasis on focused classroom observations, fidelity of Tier 1 supports, frequency and intensity of Tier 2/3 supports, and family engagement before referral

Regional collaboration continues to expand inclusive opportunities and align services through:

- Developing an Inclusion Taskforce to guide systemwide implementation for local districts

- Exploring an inclusive GSRP model for students who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Continuing collaboration with KRESA on special education “push in” (versus “pull out” or segregated classrooms) service delivery

With the ongoing goal of improving outcomes for all children, we will continue to collaboratively build staff capacity, strengthen Tier 1 systems, expand inclusive programming, and deepen regional collaboration moving into the 2026-27 school year.

The Governing Body’s Monthly Report for ongoing monitoring in accordance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) were attached to the board agenda.

B. Special Education Update – Angela Telfer

KRESA Special Education Programs continue to strengthen systems that support students’ communication, self-advocacy, and social-emotional skills, with the goal of preventing unsafe behaviors in classrooms.

This year, a team of staff from across our programs participated in MAISA’s *Creating a Safe Learning Environments* train-the-trainer course. As a result, we have updated our behavior beliefs (attached to this report below) and are developing frameworks to support students during dysregulation using non-confrontational approaches. We primarily utilize the Ukeru model, which emphasizes de-escalation and maintaining positive relationships with students.

While these proactive strategies have led to progress, there are still instances when behavior escalates and requires immediate staff intervention to ensure safety. The accompanying graphs illustrate a high number of behavior incidents alongside a relatively low use of seclusion and restraint, which are implemented only when there is an imminent risk to safety. We are always working to eliminate the use of seclusion and restraint in KRESA programs.

C. Career Connect Update – Eric Stewart, Sarah Mansberger & Paige Daniels

EFA Multisensory Project Congratulations to the entire team who made this year’s EFA Multisensory Theatre Project, “The Nature Experience,” come to life in May. The Multisensory Theatre Project is a collaboration between EFA teaching artists and roughly 40 KRESA Transition Services (KTS) learners. Together, they devise original, adaptable theatre that allows every audience member to experience the arts in a space where they feel safe and regulated. Hosted at The Kalamazoo Civic Theatre, this year’s project featured exploration of a garden with hands-on elements, musical participation

with original scoring and accompaniment by a KTS student, and the integration of plants grown by CTE Horticulture students. Roughly 250 special education and KTS students attended performances.

MIX Design + Visits from African Delegations to the Career Connect Campus We continue to host regular tours and gatherings at the Career Connect Campus for interested parties curious about our work and approach. Recent highlights include two separate delegations of visitors from 20 African countries through Global Ties Kalamazoo and the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), the U.S. State Department's premier professional exchange program. The IVLP delegation came with interest in fostering a deeper understanding of advanced global economic growth and regional stability through workforce development and expanded pathways for youth.

On June 4, Career Connect hosted roughly 60 members of the regional design community through Southwest Michigan First's MIX Design group for an introduction to the CCC and deep dive into the Design program. MIX Design engages area creatives and designers to curate content for a regional design-centric program that will inspire innovation, connect designers from different disciplines, and encourage collaboration. Members of the MIX Design group have been instrumental to the creation, launch and continued evolution of the Design program at the CCC.

Career Connect Superstar

In May, we awarded the Career Connect Superstar award to Early/Middle College (EMC) Career Coach Joe Lukowski. He was nominated by EMC Program Coordinator Lisa Bartell, who noted in her nomination Joe's work with the Student Leadership Group (SLG). She stated that "with Joe's leadership, the group has started an EMC Club at KVCC. The club is open to all KVCC EMC students including our KRESA EMC program and the Gull Lake and Van Buren EMC programs. The club will provide opportunities for EMC students to increase their sense of belonging in the program and on the KVCC campus." Kalamazoo RESA Service Center 1819 E. Milham Avenue, Portage, MI 49002 T: 269.250.9200 | F: 269.250.9550 www.kresa.org The EMC team, including several Career Connect Campus team members, were part of the unveiling for Joe at the campus.

Lemonade Day

The Career Awareness and Exploration (CAE) Team supports the implementation of Lemonade Day, an engaging, experiential program for students in grades 3–5 that introduces the fundamentals of entrepreneurship. Through this hands-on learning experience, students design, market, launch, and operate their own lemonade stand businesses. The program fosters an entrepreneurial mindset while supporting project-based learning, helping students identify personal strengths and interests, and develop essential skills in goal setting, business planning, and financial literacy. This spring, participating districts included Comstock, Gull Lake, Kalamazoo, and Vicksburg. With support from the CAE Team and local educators, a total of 337

students successfully launched and operated their own lemonade stands, demonstrating creativity, problem-solving, and entrepreneurial skills.

D. Educator Supports Update –Stephanie Brown

Update: REMC 12 West

REMC 12 West, based at Kalamazoo RESA, supports local districts by providing instructional resources, technology, and programs that enhance teaching and learning. As part of Michigan's Regional Educational Media Centers network, it connects educators to statewide initiatives while delivering direct, hands-on support locally. Its work is centered on removing barriers, expanding opportunities, and helping schools use technology in ways that directly impact student learning.

REMC 12 West continues to expand student opportunities through strong Ed Tech and STEM initiatives. The organization recently secured a \$7,500 grant to support participation in the Aerial Drone Competition, which enabled the launch of four student teams in the Kalamazoo area. In addition, regional robotics programs have demonstrated significant success, with eight FIRST Robotics teams qualifying for State Championships and four advancing to the World Championships in Houston, Texas. These programs provide students with hands-on experience in emerging technologies while building critical skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and career readiness.

Educators across the region benefit from access to classroom resources through the MyTurn lending library, which allows them to browse, reserve, and borrow instructional tools, kits, and technology. These resources support a wide range of classroom needs and subject areas, helping to enhance instruction without requiring additional district investment. The lending library also includes iPads equipped with communication tools that support student accessibility, enabling some learners to better express themselves and more fully participate in classroom activities.

To further support effective technology integration, the REMC Training Center provides educators with hands-on exposure to modern classroom tools such as 3D printers, laser engravers, robotics systems, and control systems. This dedicated space is designed to build educator confidence and capability, helping transform emerging technologies into meaningful classroom applications that engage students and support authentic learning experiences.

REMC 12 West also delivers substantial financial value to districts through its participation in REMC SAVE and related statewide initiatives, which have generated approximately \$3.3 million in savings. By providing access to competitively bid contracts for technology, furniture, supplies, and software, REMC SAVE eliminates the need for separate local bidding processes. This increases efficiency and allows districts to redirect more resources toward teaching and learning.

E. Operational Supports Update

1. Business Supports Update – Scott Thomas

Michigan law requires that public schools adopt their annual budgets before July 1. A school district must also hold a budget hearing prior to adopting the budget to levy its full millage rates. Included for action please find the proposed 2026-2027 original budgets and 2026 tax levy resolution. Also included please find the 2025-2026 final budgets.

There was a recent article published by MLive regarding assessing and tax errors on property owners by Schoolcraft Township. We have discussed the issue with our attorneys and do not plan on trying to recoup any loss tax revenue because of these errors. You can find the article here: [Tax shock: Homeowners hit with huge increases after years of errors - mlive.com](#)

2. Communications & Community Engagement Update – Sandy Barry Loken

National Recognition

Our Communications team has received two national honors for our work over the last school year.

The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) recognized the We Are KRESA Brand and Awareness Initiative with a Golden Achievement Award which recognizes outstanding, strategic work in all aspects of school public relations, communication, marketing and engagement; the KRESA 24-25 Annual Report received an Award of Excellence, the highest level of recognition in the Publications and Digital Media Awards category.

These honors will be listed on the NSPRA website and on display at this summer's NSPRA National Seminar. Golden Achievement winners also receive a special recognition during the NSPRA Annual Meeting on the first day of the seminar which takes place July 20th in New Orleans.

Video Creation

We're working to elevate our storytelling with more video. See some of our recent features below.

Adaptive PE Class Fun!

Work-Based Learning Experience at Beacon Health

Annual Fundraising

An overview of the fund development efforts year to date was attached to the agenda.

3. Human Resources Update – Meredith Lewis

Culture & Belonging

The Culture and Belonging Team completed their Team Charter, which articulates the purpose, systems, structure, and decision-making processes that the members will use to support their work. The Director of Culture and Belonging is meeting with all administrators to reflect on the 2025-26 culture work and plan for the 2026-27 school year. The results of these meetings will be used to determine administrative team professional learning, finalize C&B continuous improvement goals, and create program level professional development.

Union Negotiations

KRESA and KCTEA have continued to exchange proposals and letters of agreement (LOAs) related to the imposed contract however the parties have not yet reached agreement. In the absence of agreement, KRESA has moved forward with implementing the Board-approved wage increases and step advancements for the 2026–27 school year for KCTEA bargaining unit members, consistent with the imposed contract.

At the union's request, the parties have agreed to participate in mediation with a state appointed mediator on June 11.

4. Technology & Operations Update – Brian Schupbach

In collaboration with Kalamazoo Public Schools, Valley Center School is currently undergoing these significant facility improvements:

- A secure vestibule will be constructed to enhance building security
- New windows and cooling units in the classrooms
- New play set, swings, and additional seating
- Re-asphalt basketball court (will also be marked for pickleball and foursquare)
- Updated security cameras

To meet the need for additional conference room space, we are converting the Wile Auditorium into a standard flat-floor conference room, consistent with the other conference rooms at the Service Center. This work is expected to be completed by September 1.

VIII. Superintendent Report – Dr. Dedrick Martin

End of year Celebrations and Wrapping Up the 2025-2026 Year:

As we wrap up the 2025–2026 school year, there is much to celebrate. Over the past four weeks, I had the opportunity to attend the Valley Center graduation ceremony, the ILC prom, and the Career Champions Showcase alongside teachers from across the county. I also had the privilege of recognizing multiple TAG grant recipients for the upcoming school year.

To cap off the year, our communications and community engagement team received national recognition for their outstanding work in rebranding KRESA, including the website, logos, publications, and more.

Additional Highlights:

Opening of Career Center:

We successfully completed the first year of programming at the new Career Connect Campus, serving nearly 1,200 students. Early outcomes have been strong, with several students already securing jobs and participating in work-based learning experiences across organizations throughout the county.

In addition, we have hosted multiple high-level tours and meetings with a wide range of stakeholders, including business partners, industry executives, business owners, and state and federal legislators.

Thrun Policy Change:

With the anticipated adoption of the new Thrun policies, we are on track to complete a full transition from the current NEOLA policies by July 1, 2026. This change will align KRESA's policies and procedures more closely with those of our primary legal counsel.

All policies have been reviewed by the appropriate members of the administrative team to ensure consistency with district operations, as well as compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

VI. Thrun Law Notes

A. Correspondence/Informational

IX. Thrun Law Notes

A. Correspondence / Informational

X. Public Comment

No Public Comment

XI. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION

A. Approval of 2026 Tax Levy Resolution (roll call vote)

Ms. Cowart moved, Mr. Webster supported the approval of the 2026 Tax Levy Resolution

(Cowart – yes, VanAntwerp – Yes, Webster – Yes, Knowles – Yes)

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of 2025-2026 Final Budget Resolution (roll call vote)

Mr. VanAntwerp moved, Ms. Cowart supported the approval of the 2025-2026 Final Budget Resolution.

(Cowart – yes, VanAntwerp – Yes, Webster – Yes, Knowles – Yes)

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Approval of 2026-2027 Original Budget Resolutions (roll call vote)

Mr. Webster moved, Ms. Cowart supported the approval of the 2026-2027 Original Budget Resolutions.

(Cowart – yes, VanAntwerp – Yes, Webster – Yes, Knowles – Yes)

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval to impose the first 4 months of the 10 month and 11 month CTE calendars.

Mr. VanAntwerp moved, Ms. Cowart supported the approval to impose the first 4 months of the 10 month and 11 month CTE calendars.

Motion carried unanimously.

E. Approve the recommendation to repeal the existing NEOLA board policies and adapt Thrun Law Board Policies with the exception of NEOLA board policy 0144 and Thrun Law anti-bullying policy 5207 that requires a public hearing.

Mr. Webster moved, Mr. VanAntwerp supported to approve the recommendation to repeal the existing NEOLA board policies and adapt Thrun Law Board Policies with the exception of NEOLA board policy 0144 and Thrun Law anti-bullying policy 5207 that requires a public hearing.

Motion carried unanimously.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Cowart
Board Secretary

Jackie Martell
Recording Secretary

Minutes Approved on