

Meeting
Wednesday, December 3, 2025 4:00 PM
Eastern

Van Buren Conference Center
490 S Paw Paw Street
Lawrence, MI 49064

I. REGULAR MEETING

I.A. Approval of Draft Agenda (**ROLL CALL VOTE**)

I.B. Consent Agenda - (**ROLL CALL VOTE**)

I.B.1. Minutes

The **Regular Meeting** of the Van Buren Intermediate School District Board of Education was held in person on **October 29, 2025**, in the Board of Education office and called to order at **4:00 PM** with all Board members present.

Weiss moved to approve the October 1, 2025, draft agenda as presented. Supported by Kent. Roll call vote. Makay – yes, Faul – yes, Kent – yes, Weiss - yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Kent moved to approve the Consent Agenda (**October 1, 2025, Minutes, Composite and Summaries**). Supported by Makay. Roll call vote: Faul – yes, Kent – yes, Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Makay moved to approve the Board and Superintendent Travel for October/November 2025. Supported by Faul. Roll call vote: Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, Faul – yes, Kent – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.



**Board of Education
&
Superintendent Travel
Pre-Approval**

Name	Date(s)	Location	Estimated Cost
Dave Manson	November 3-4, 2025	Delamar Traverse City, 615 East Front Street, Traverse City, MI 49686	\$800

Approved, Not Yet Attended

Name	Date(s)	Location	Estimated Cost
MaryAnn Middaugh	October 23 - 25, 2025	MASB Annual Leadership Conference 2025 Grand Traverse Resort, Acme, MI	\$1,400
Kenny Kent	October 22 - 26, 2025		\$1,200
John Faul	October 24 - 26, 2025		\$1,000
Karen Makay	October 22 - 26, 2025		\$2,000
John Weiss	October 22 - 25, 2025		\$1,800
Dave Manson	October 23 - 25, 2025		\$2,000

Post Approval

Name	Date(s)	Location	Actual Cost

Board Members' Updates:

All board members attended MASB's annual leadership conference at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme, Michigan, where they had a great experience and learned a lot from their CBA courses. The keynote speaker's talk on communication was a highlight, and a special thank you went out to Damian Koob for his outstanding presentation. Everyone felt proud to have such a talented employee representing the organization and sharing his expertise with leaders from near and far.

Superintendent Updates: Superintendent Manson gave an update on the following:

Strategic Planning: *As part of developing the district's strategic plan, staff were surveyed to identify shared values. Of the 737 full- and part-time employees, 136 responded. The top five values were compassion, respect, quality, trust, and communication, reflecting a strong focus on kindness, integrity, and collaboration. The lowest-rated priorities included being results-oriented, innovative, and governance-focused. These findings will be combined with input from other key stakeholders to help shape the district's vision, mission, and goals.*

MASA Impact Award: *VBISD received the MASA Impact Award, recognizing excellence in community relations, staff relations, business and finance, and instructional leadership. In partnership with MASA, the district chose to use this honor to support about 300 multilingual and migrant families by providing winter weather totes filled with essential items. The MASA team will deliver the totes on November 11 at 11:45 a.m. at the VBISD Conference Center. Special appreciation goes to Angie Gutierrez and Ashlee Ferguson for organizing this meaningful effort.*

Recent Budgetary News: *VBISD has been awarded \$425,000 to responsibly conclude Project Shine during the 2025–26 school year. The funds will allow the district to continue key initiatives, expand services at special education centers, and strengthen community partnerships for long-term sustainability. At the same time, the loss of Early Childhood 32p Block Grant funding threatens long-standing programs that serve children and families, impacting around ten employees. VBISD will maintain these programs through the current year while working with statewide partners to advocate for restored funding and explore future solutions. In addition, Section 31aa school safety and mental health funding remains available but now includes new conditions that could waive confidentiality and expose sensitive communications to public review. These legal implications have prompted boards to weigh the funding's benefits against potential risks, with VBISD continuing to monitor developments and provide updates.*

Presentation: Karoub Lobbyist: *The presentation provides an overview of Karoub Associates, a multi-client lobbying firm representing 19 ISDs and several statewide school associations, including VBISD since 2014. It outlines the firm's focus on complementing statewide advocacy efforts while prioritizing local policy and budget concerns. The presentation emphasizes the importance of relationship-building with legislators, strategic issue selection, and maintaining flexibility in political environments. It also reviews the current policy landscape, including discussions around HB 5044 on BCBA/ABA services in schools, and notes shifting political control in Michigan's legislature. The budget outlook highlights challenges such as School Aid fund diversions, the use of lottery revenues, categorical funding structures, literacy priorities, and MPERS considerations.*

The following departments provided updates to the Board and the community:

Instructional Services: *Major updates across several VBISD programs. Project SHINE received additional Michigan Fitness Foundation funding to conclude its final year with a focus on sustainability, including new facilitator guides, enhanced nutrition initiatives, and expanded wellness programs. Literacy coaches led professional learning sessions and statewide collaborations centered on assessment literacy and coaching practices, while math consultants provided hands-on instructional support and professional development for teachers. Adult Education ESL enrollment increased to 62 learners, with expanded small-group instruction and partnerships to improve employment opportunities. Mental health efforts emphasized integrating social-emotional learning throughout schools to strengthen Tier 1 supports. The Van Buren Youth Initiative advanced arts access through partnerships with KVCC, supported hands-on learning with an auto program donation, expanded environmental education, and engaged future educators through career events showcasing ISD opportunities.*

Technology: *The PowerSchool Shared Services team, led by Lukas Enciso, provided extensive training and support to district staff to ensure smooth student data management at the start of the school year, earning positive feedback for their expertise and customer service. Director Damian Koob attended the CrowdStrike Fal.Con Cybersecurity Conference, gaining valuable insights into advanced cybersecurity strategies, AI-driven threats, and best practices for strengthening network defenses. He also participated in the Microsoft AI Tour in Chicago, which focused on integrating AI in education and promoting collaboration among institutions. Both conferences provided important knowledge to enhance VBISD's technology and security practices.*

Special Education: *The department conducted a survey to guide future professional development, with top interests including behavior interventions, collaboration, and IEP compliance. The October 24 Professional Learning Day focused on these areas through workshops and team sessions. Dr. Christopher Bernick joined as the new principal of Maple Creek, bringing extensive experience in special education leadership. Some staffing vacancies remain, including positions in administration, social work, and program assistance. The Professional Support Services team continues to expand training opportunities, hosting collaborative sessions for special education teachers and district representatives. The report concludes with a community highlight from the Bert Goens Learning Center's Apple Crunch Day, celebrating Michigan's local agriculture and school spirit.*

Early Childhood: *emphasizes VBISD's ongoing commitment to supporting young children and families through collaboration, inclusion, and equity. Despite the state's elimination of key 32p grant funds, the district continues to sustain essential early childhood programs through local investment. The Great Start Collaborative remains a cornerstone effort, engaging over 40 community partners to deliver thousands of books, educational materials, and trainings to families and professionals. VBISD also participates in Michigan's Help Me Grow pilot, integrating early learning, health, and family services to streamline access and improve outcomes for children from birth to five. Advocacy at the state level continues to focus on restoring and securing long-term funding for early childhood systems. The report also highlights a successful intergenerational partnership between Family Links and the Paw Paw District Library, connecting young children with older adults to foster empathy, joy, and community connection.*

Weiss made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED that the Board of Education authorizes and directs the Superintendent or designee to sign the attached Attorney-Client Fee Contract on behalf of the School and to take such other action as necessary to obtain monetary damages and injunctive relief for the School in the Lawsuit, subject to review by the School's legal counsel.

Supported by Kent. Roll call vote. Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, Faul – yes, Kent – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Makay made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD) Board of Education hereby approves the engagement of GMB Architects & Engineers for a fee of \$77,000 to provide Architectural, Interior Design, Structural, Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing design services related to the renovation of the Bert Goens Learning Center Pool.

Supported by Faul. Roll call vote. Faul – yes, Kent – yes, Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Kent made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following policies as presented for approval effective October 29, 2025:

3118 Title IX Sexual Harassment - *Revision*

Supported by Weiss. Roll call vote. Kent – yes, Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, Faul – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Faul made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the VBISD Board of Education hereby approves the conceptual budget and site plan for the Bright Futures project as presented. A subsequent resolution will be brought before the Board following the competitive bidding process to consider final approval of the construction contract.

Supported by Makay. Roll call vote. Makay – yes, Faul – yes, Kent – yes, Weiss - yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Weiss made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the posting for an additional Social Worker at Van Buren Tech.

Supported by Kent. Roll call vote. Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, Faul – yes, Kent – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Faul made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the employment of the staff listed.

<u>New Employee</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Start Date</u>
Jeremy Thompson, LEA Accounting Specialist	\$57,000.00	10/15/2025
Donald Herber, School Counselor	\$77,962.00	10/20/2025

Supported by Makay. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Makay made the motion to approve the following resolution:

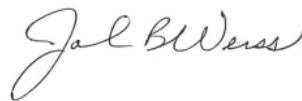
RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accepts the resignations/retirements of the staff listed.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Resignation/Retirement Date</u>
Amy Steinman, School Social Worker	11/15/2025 - Resignation

Supported by Weiss. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Weiss made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Kent. Voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 5:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



John Weiss, Vice President
Van Buren Intermediate School District
Board of Education, Lawrence, Michigan

I.B.2. Composites, Payroll and Imprest Summaries

VAN BUREN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
NOVEMBER 2025

VOUCHERS

Imprest Fund	2,314,022.85
Payroll Fund	6,804,312.07
Purchasing Cards	90,379.02
EduStaff ACH	30,935.87

PAYROLL SUMMARY

General	1,719,556.84
Special Education	3,990,076.90
Vocational Education	1,094,678.33
Student Activity Fund	-
Total	6,804,312.07

IMPREST VOUCHER SUMMARY

FUND	CHECKS	TRAVEL	PURCHASING	TRFS/SALES	TOTAL
General	1,429,216.23	14,577.23	42,392.71	(16,392.47)	1,469,793.70
Special Education	200,272.34	22,459.23	21,131.20	7,087.25	250,950.02
Vocational Education	684,534.28	2,354.63	26,811.97	9,305.22	723,006.10
Student Activity Fund	-	-	43.14	-	43.14
Total	2,314,022.85	39,391.09	90,379.02	(0.00)	2,443,792.96

**VAN BUREN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
NOVEMBER 2025**

BUDGET TO EXPENDITURE COMPARISON 25-26

FUND	BUDGET	ACTUAL & ENCUMBERED EXPENSES	UNENCUMERED BALANCE	YEAR TO DATE VARIANCE
General	26,221,227	9,508,004	16,713,223	324,956
Special Education	43,256,264	14,031,152	29,225,112	2,189,947
Career Tech Education	17,411,809	6,078,275	11,333,534	451,153

CASH FLOW SUMMARY

	ENDING BALANCE 10/01/2025	CASH RECEIPTS	CASH DISBURSEMENTS	ENDING BALANCE 10/31/2025
General	4,496,434	1,916,234	4,162,324	2,250,343
Special Education	15,854,736	3,919,084	7,189,645	12,584,176
Career Tech Education	7,093,602	1,036,436	2,815,693	5,314,345
Student Activity Fund	33,051	50	43	33,059
Total	27,477,823	6,871,804	14,167,705	20,181,923

I.C. Board/Superintendent Travel (**ROLL CALL VOTE**)



Board of Education & Superintendent Travel *Pre-Approval*

Name	Date(s)	Location	Estimated Cost

Approved, Not Yet Attended

Name	Date(s)	Location	Estimated Cost

Post Approval

Name	Date(s)	Location	Actual Cost
MaryAnn Middaugh	October 23 - 25, 2025	MASB Annual Leadership Conference 2025 Grand Traverse Resort, Acme, MI	\$1,556.00
Kenny Kent	October 22 - 26, 2025		\$2,101.60
John Faul	October 24 - 26, 2025		\$979.20
Karen Makay	October 22 - 26, 2025		\$2,536.70
John Weiss	October 22 - 25, 2025		\$2,083.17
Dave Manson	October 23 - 25, 2025		\$895.80
Dave Manson	November 3 - 4, 2025	Delamar Traverse City, 615 East Front Street, Traverse City, MI 49686	\$742.90



Upcoming Events and Key Dates Fall & Winter 2025

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Board Attendance</i>
11/25	11:30 am	Thanksgiving Lunch	Maple Creek	Voluntary ▾
11/26 - 11/28		VBISD Thanksgiving Break	VBISD	Informational Only ▾
12/3	4 pm	VBISD School Board Meeting	Conference Center	Requested ▾
12/5	11 am - 12	ISD-Family Links Intergenerational Playgroup	Paw Paw District Library	Voluntary ▾
12/5	9:30 - 11:30	Superintendent's Council Meeting	Conference Center	Informational Only ▾
12/8	8:30 am	School Board Work Session	The Backyard Restaurant	Requested ▾
12/8 - 12/12		VB Tech 10th Grade Visits	VB Tech	Informational Only ▾
12/10	12:30 pm	Winter Program and Bazaar	BGLC	Voluntary ▾
12/12	7 - 10 am	VBISD Holiday Breakfast	Conference Center	Requested ▾
12/15	4:30 pm - 6:30 pm	VB Tech 10th Grade Visit Open House	VB Tech	Voluntary ▾
				Please Select ▾
				Please Select ▾

I.E. Public Comments

II. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

II.A. Board Updates

II.B. Superintendent Update

MEMO



DATE: DECEMBER 3, 2025
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: SUPERINTENDENT OFFICE
RE: MONTHLY UPDATE

Michigan Association of School Administrators - Impact Award: (Governance & Board Relations, Community Relations, Staff Relations)

This fall, VBISD was selected to receive the third annual Education Impact Award, which is an initiative from the Michigan Association of Superintendents and Administrators (MASA) in collaboration with SetSeg, Train, and Kingscott. This award provided totes to over 300 students with a few cold-weather essentials, which were delivered to multilingual students in multiple Van Buren County districts during the second and third week of November.



Professional Learning: MAISA/John Hattie: (Business & Finance, Instructional Leadership)

The Michigan Association of Intermediate School Districts hosted a two-day event beginning on November 3, 2025, that included essential conversations around current and potential legislative issues as well as an interactive presentation with Dr. John Hattie, a world renowned education researcher best known for his work on visible learning, which is a comprehensive synthesis of over 1,500 meta-analyses covering more than 300 million students. His research identifies which factors have the greatest impact on student achievement, including student driven learning, evaluative thinking and collective responsibility. The overarching goal was to initiate a “statewide movement” among Michigan ISDs to strengthen instructional practices through research-based strategies and collective leadership. From Van Buren County, the following leaders attended: Dave Manson, Melissa Corona and Carrie Frost.

****Strategic Planning:** (Governance & Board Relations, Community Relations, Staff Relations, Business & Finance, Instructional Leadership)

On November 18, 2025, Katy Holverstott and consultant Aisha Coulson-Walters from Western Michigan University facilitated a meeting with VBISD’s department directors to gather input for the development of a new strategic plan. This session will be the first in a series of roundtable discussions designed to build consensus around the “why” behind VBISD, deepening a shared understanding of how the organization fulfills its mission and the impact it has on the community.

Similar sessions will be conducted with the Board of Education, VBISD staff members and other key stakeholders. Regular updates on the progress of this work will be provided as the process moves forward.

****Impact of State Budget on VBISD:** (Governance & Board Relations, Community Relations, Staff Relations, Business & Finance, Instructional Leadership)

Recently, VBISD shared a press release that was featured on WWMT News 3 and the local newspapers regarding the impact of the state budget. Unfortunately, there was some inaccurate information in the summary provided by News 3. Here is follow-up communication that clarified this matter:

On November 6, VBISD released a press statement explaining how the recently approved state budget impacts our district. The purpose of this release was to help lawmakers and the public better understand the budget’s effects on Van Buren ISD.

*In summary, VBISD saw modest increases in funding for **Special Education** and **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**. However, we experienced reductions in*

Adult Education, the Great Start Collaborative, Home Visiting, and retirement funding, resulting in an overall net loss of approximately \$845,000 across the organization.

*Following our release, WWMT News 3 contacted me for comment and published a story. Unfortunately, their article incorrectly stated that funding for programs such as Special Education and CTE would be “wiped out.” **This is not accurate.***

*I want to reassure everyone that **VBISD remains financially stable** despite the budget reduction. Our teams in Adult Education, the Great Start Collaborative, and Home Visiting are aware of the changes, and we are working collaboratively to support affected staff, students, and families while continuing to advocate for these vital programs.*

Wood School Supports: (Community Relations, Instructional Leadership)

Katy Holverstott and Melissa Corona have been providing Wood School with assistance on several policy and leadership matters. In addition, Damian’s team has offered essential IT support. Their combined efforts, along with ongoing collaboration with the Wood School Board, have strengthened the school’s instructional operations in multiple areas. As a result of this support, Wood School shared a note of appreciation with VBISD.

II.C. Department Updates

II.C.1. Presentation - Finance & Operations

II.C.2. Finance

MEMO

DATE: DECEMBER 3, 2025
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: REBECCA DEPAS, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS
RE: FINANCE & OPERATIONS UPDATE

FY 2025-26 School Aid Fund Budget

Headline Items:

- \$10,050 Foundation Allowance (4.6% increase)
- Sec 30d MI School Meals
- Sec 31a Increase 25%
- Sec 31aa At Risk Caviot
- Loss of 32p Early Childhood Block Grant
- Loss of Sec 147a1 (local districts)
- Loss of Sec 147a3 (ISDs)
- More Higher ed Funding (loss for locals/ISDs)(-\$400 million)
- **Loss of Sec 147a4 (HUGE HIT to district/ISD bottom line) - 598 million**

Sec 147 MPSERS other items to note

- The 5.75% rate cap reduction (to 15.21%) goes into effect, but so do normal cost increases...is your district somewhere around the 3% blended rate reduction?
 - FY 25 Basic Rate: 31.36%
 - FY 26 Basic Rate: 29.91%
 - Equals a 1.45% decrease
 - FY 25 Pension Plus 2/DC Rate reduction: 5.75%
 - VBISD' weighted average rate in FY 25 was 27.35% and in FY 26 it is 23.54% which is a 3.81% decrease in cost to VBISD.
- At 10/1/25 – no more 3% EE HCC deduction
- MPSERS UAAL Stabilization goes back up...15.02% published rate (this is offset with 147c funds)

Continuations:

- Sec 22L Transportation
- Sec 29 Enrollment Stabilization
- Sec 31n Mental Health
- Sec 35a4 Literacy Coaches

31aa Mental Health and School Safety

- \$321 million for FY2025-26 only
- New requirements for SROs (licensed law enforcement)

- Adds: safety dogs, cell phone free policies as allowable
- Sec. 31aa(3) – per-pupil grants
- Sec. 31aa(4) added - \$53.5 million – competitive grants for SRO’s and safety dogs
- Sec. 31aa(5) added - \$53.5 million – competitive grants for mental health professionals
- Sec. 31aa(9) added - To receive funding under this section, **a district must agree to be subject to a comprehensive investigation, must affirmatively agree to waive any privilege that may otherwise protect information from disclosure in the event of a mass casualty event, and must agree to comply with a comprehensive investigation...**
- **Update:**
 - *extend the deadline to opt-in to receive Section 31aa funding until December 4, 2025, at 11:59 p.m., and (2) allow schools to rescind your opt-in, including the privilege waiver, no questions asked, by December 30, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.*
 - *Both courts have committed to issuing a final decision on the merits of their respective cases by no later than December 19, 2025.*

Sec. 27L Educator Compensation – NEW \$350.3 million - Two distinct parts

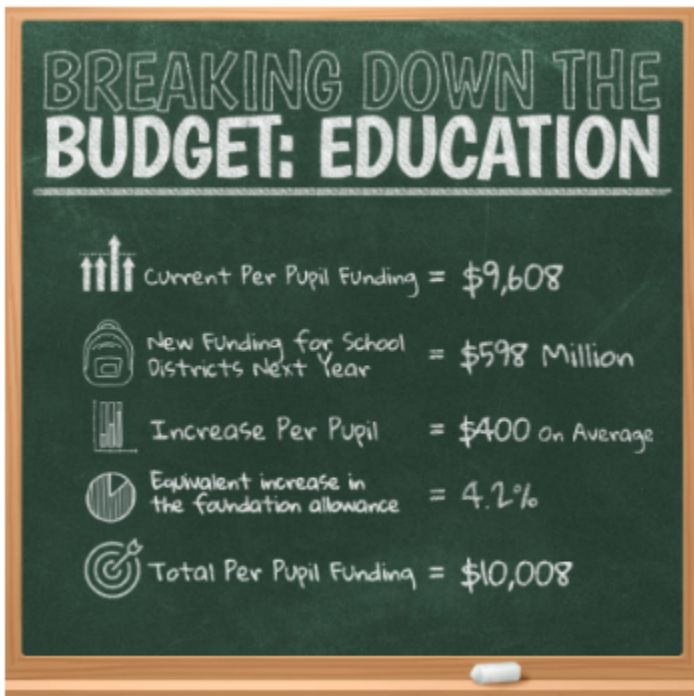
- Sec. 27L(2)
 - \$203 million SAF for FY2024-25 only
 - • Allocated on a per-pupil basis...districts shall increase compensation for educators.
 - An educator is defined but not limited.
 - Includes union EE’s
 - District shall bargain any increases in compensation with unions and payments shall be in addition to existing CBA
- Sec. 27L(4) (est. remaining bal. of MPSERS reserve fund)
 - Offset normal costs of retiree health, allocation spelled out below
 - Allocated for payments to participating entities to offset normal costs associated with retiree health benefits. The amount allocated to each participating entity under this subsection must be based on the participating entity’s proportion of the total funding distributed in 2024-2025 under section 147g.
 - Participating entities must use funding distributed under this subsection as an offset for normal costs associated with retiree health benefits.

Estimated FY 2025-2026 Impact of State Budget

	Sec 31aa	Sec 32P Early Childhood Block Grants Elimination	Sec 51e Special Education	Sec 61a CTE	Sec 61b Early Middle College	Sec 81 ISD Operations	Sec 107 Adult Education Reduction	Sec 147a3 elimination	Sec 147a4 elimination	MPSERS cap reduction	Net Change
VBISD	\$ 8,330.00	\$ (341,682.00)	\$ 98,535.00	\$ 21,744.00	\$ 5,571.00	\$ 79,384.00	\$ (68,000.00)	\$ (315,165.72)	\$ (1,668,937.70)	\$ 1,335,419.95	\$ (844,801.47)

Remember last year...FY 24-25 Last Year New Headlines

The budget makes direct investments in Michigan's students, allocating \$598 million in ongoing payments to school districts across the state. The payments are equivalent to a 4% increase per pupil, representing an average \$400 per pupil increase over FY24. In total, Governor Whitmer has increased per-pupil funding by 26% since taking office.



II.C.3. Human Resources

MEMO

DATE: DECEMBER 3, 2025
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: BRITANI OLDS, ADMINISTRATOR FOR HUMAN RESOURCES
RE: HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE - (Leadership, Communication Skills, Resourcefulness, Creativity, and Innovativeness, Professional Preparation, Decision Maker, Planner and Organizer.)

****Mentoring Project**

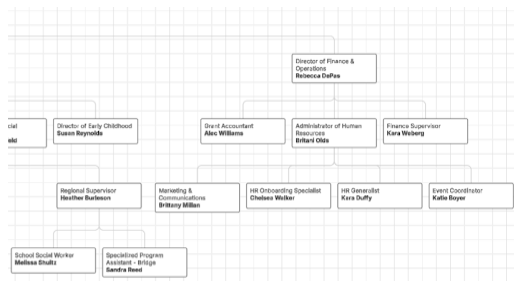
Mentoring is a major focus area and project for this school year. Having an established mentoring program in place plays a key role in employee retention, and Karla Vandenburg and I are partnering to strengthen this initiative.

Our first step involved organizing focus groups with employees who are current or recent mentees, mentors and supervisors. We want to extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who took time out of their busy schedules to meet with us and share their experiences. Your input is invaluable and this is the only way we get better!

During these sessions, we asked targeted questions that will help us clearly define roles, outline responsibilities, and identify the tools and resources that will be most helpful and meaningful for all participants in the mentoring process.

Our goal is to have the updated mentoring program fully developed, refined, and ready to launch before the start of next school year.

****Org Chart**



We've been wanting to create an organizational chart for quite some time, and we're excited to share that we've found a promising free tool that should make this possible. Thank you to Ashlee Ferguson for finding this tool! It allows us to build and maintain the org chart with relative ease.

This is a small preview of what the layout could look like. This is still a work in progress, and we expect the initial set up to take some time. However, we are optimistic that this will provide a long-term solution that's relatively easy to update and maintain going forward!

Business Office Fun and Engagement



My goal is to continue to try and incorporate something fun for the team on a regular basis that allows us the opportunity to be all together even for a short time. In October, we did "You've Been Booed" where everyone was able to secretly "boo" someone with treats or something fun throughout the month of October.

We also participated in the trick or treating at the Learning Center, which we love being able to see all of the kids! Our theme this year was Hungry Hungry Hippo!

II.C.4. Multilingual Migrant Services

Memorandum	
Date:	December 3, 2025
To:	VBISD Board of Education
From:	Angie Gutiérrez <i>Administrator of Multilingual and Migrant Services</i>
Subject:	Multilingual/Migrant Services Update



Irma Aranda-Cruz joined the VBISD Migrant Education Program last May. She brings a lifelong passion for helping others and a personal understanding of the challenges migrant families face. Her compassion, empathy, and commitment to service inspired her to become a recruiter, where she could make a meaningful difference by helping families access the resources and support they need. Irma finds the most fulfillment in connecting families with health care, employment information, legal services, food assistance, and educational supports that help them feel more secure while living in Michigan.



One of Irma’s most memorable experiences this season involved supporting a family with a deaf son. She helped enroll him in school, provided transportation to medical appointments, and accompanied him to Paw Paw High School to meet his teachers in the Special Education Program. Experiences like this strengthen her dedication to the program.

Irma believes strong communication—in both English and Spanish—is essential to building trust with families. She values following through on promises, knowing that reliability helps families feel respected and supported. She also notes that migrant recruitment requires flexibility, often involving evenings and weekends to meet families when they are available.

Working in the Migrant Education Program has humbled Irma and deepened her commitment to advocating for families who face significant barriers. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her husband, family, and three grandchildren, as well as spending full days with her sister catching up on the latest *chisme*. She loves gardening in the summer, organizing in the winter, and finding new recipes and ideas on TikTok and Pinterest—hobbies that bring her joy and balance.



At the end of October 2025, I traveled to Phoenix, Arizona, for the OSY Consortium Fall Summit, and it was an incredibly productive and energizing two-day experience. I was invited to attend the meeting with Michelle Headley, the MDE Migrant Consultant. We began with updates on Year 2 reporting, the Annual Performance Report, and reflections on our Professional Learning Circles. Hearing directly from PLC facilitators and reviewing survey feedback helped me better understand what is working well and where we can strengthen our approach to at-risk youth. We also began planning for Year 3, including new PLC groupings and the rollout of the updated Fidelity Implementation Index. One highlight for me was Milenka Gutierrez’s presentation on the Hispanic Heritage Foundation Project, which reinforced the importance of culturally grounded work for the youth we serve.

Throughout the trip, I had valuable time to network, share ideas, and collaborate with colleagues from other states. We reviewed new curriculum materials, including the Winter Storm Safety STAT lesson, and then broke into work groups focused on curriculum, wellness, professional learning, the student portal, and synchronous/asynchronous resources. This time allowed us to coordinate deadlines, refine materials, and build consistency across states. I am on the material integration subcommittee.

On Day 2, we continued work time and participated in sessions centered on wellness and supporting students. Presentations from Liz Bliss on secondary students at risk of dropping out and from Emily Hoffman on preparing youth for the future gave me practical tools I can bring back to my team. We also planned for the dissemination of materials, heard updates from each work group, and finalized our Spring 2026 meeting plans.

The summit concluded with a luncheon hosted by iSOSY and IDRC, featuring a meaningful message from IMEC Executive Director Francisco Garcia about national advocacy and inter-state collaboration. Leaving Arizona, I felt recharged, supported, and excited for the work ahead. The trip reinforced how powerful our collective efforts are and how important it is to stay connected as we move into Year 3.

“**Angie Gutierrez** is sunshine. Everything she lights upon grows and flourishes. The program that she runs in Van Buren is large and complex including ID&R, Summer Migrant Education, Regular Migrant Programming, and all things English learner. She always has a smile and an encouraging word for her team, her families, for the students she serves and for us too! Her investment in people is her gift, and the result is continuous growth and support for everyone her light touches.”



Michelle Williams

Michigan

“**Michelle Headley** is a superhero when it comes to problem solving! She is always willing to be a thought partner with programs as they identify challenges and bust barriers. She is creative, innovative and 100% focused on our guiding light, our children and youth.”



Michelle Williams

Michigan

Anita Solis Robles honored at the 2025-2026 Annual Data and Recruiter Training on November 12th:

On November 12, 2025, at the Annual Data and Recruiter Training, Anita Solis Robles was recognized with one of the Michigan Department of Education's highest honors—the Shining Star Award. The award was presented by Michelle Headley, Migrant State Consultant, who praised Anita for her exceptional dedication, consistency, and impact on Michigan's Migrant Education Program. Anita's work has transformed the way data is collected, interpreted, and used to support Migrant children and youth across the state. Her mastery of data systems—including MSIX and MIS2000—has significantly strengthened the accuracy and efficiency of identification and recruitment efforts. Through her diligence, districts have been able to more effectively locate eligible students, ensure timely services, and maintain smooth continuity of records as families move between states. Beyond technical expertise, Anita brings a deep commitment to equity and access. By improving data integrity and building stronger processes, she has helped ensure that Michigan's Migrant students receive the educational opportunities, supports, and resources they deserve.



Van Buren ISD Hosts Regional Parent Leadership Team Meeting



The Michigan Migrant Education Program (MiMEP) Parent Leadership Team (PLT) convened virtually on October 14, 2025, in a meeting hosted by the Van Buren ISD at the Conference Center. Representatives from all districts within the VBISD Migrant Consortium, as well as Bangor, Hartford, South Haven, Benton Harbor, Coloma, and Dowagiac, joined to discuss program updates, parent concerns, and new supports for migrant youth and families. We enjoyed a dinner together and also had activities for the children. A major highlight was a presentation from Ana Karen Salinas of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO), who shared opportunities available through the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP). She outlined career and training services such as skills assessments, labor market information, job search assistance, occupational skill development, on-the-job training, and industry-recognized credential programs. Youth services were also emphasized, including tutoring, graduation support, leadership development, mentoring, and financial literacy training. These offerings are designed to prepare migrant youth and adults for in-demand careers and long-term success.



The presentation also highlighted NFJP's Housing Assistance Program, which provides both temporary and permanent housing support for farmworker families. Services range from emergency payments for rent, utilities, or temporary lodging to long-term housing development and renovation. By strengthening access to employment pathways, educational supports, and safe housing, the meeting reaffirmed the PLT's commitment to elevating family voice and improving outcomes for migrant students across Southwest Michigan.





Van Buren Multilingual Educator Network

On December 3, 2025, the Van Buren Multilingual Educator Network (VBMEN) hosted a professional learning session for multilingual educators, bringing together teachers, coordinators, and support staff across the region. The session provided a mix of informative presentations, committee updates, and collaborative learning opportunities to support educators working with multilingual learners.

The session began with an icebreaker and provided key updates and resources for the 2025–26 school year. Educators engaged with new guidance, instructional tools, and supports designed to enhance services for multilingual learners, including updates on MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports), assessments, program requirements, and strategies for classroom implementation. Educators were also introduced to Larry Ferlazzo's curated AI chatbot database and received practical strategies from Heather Scheuer (Covert ESL teacher) and Zenia Gutierrez (VBISD-Gobles ESL teacher) for classroom use.

The session highlighted committee work from VBMEN's subgroups: Evaluation & Indicators, 5-Year Graduation Plan Committee, Newcomer Handbook Plan, and Mini-Professional Development for General Education Staff. Collaborative learning included rotations through tables focused on the Staffing Calculator & LAP, Seal of Biliteracy, WIDA, and appropriate school or class placement. The session concluded with a debrief, and notes were shared for ongoing reference. We have four sessions scheduled for the 25-26 school year, along with committee work.



II.C.5. Career & Technical Education

MEMO

DATE: DECEMBER 3, 2025
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: ROBERT SMITH, DIRECTOR
RE: CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION BOARD UPDATE

CTE RECEIVES MICHIGAN COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK PATHWAY AWARD

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The Michigan College Access Network (MCAN) honored college access and success professionals from across the state during its 14th annual conference on November 4th. The 2025 College Access Impact Awards celebrated 13 individuals, organizations, and initiatives making a measurable difference in advancing postsecondary access and attainment in Michigan. As part of that event, the Michigan Department of Education's Office of Career & Technical Education (OCTE), along with all of the Career Education Planning District (CEPD) administrators, were awarded the MCAN Pathway Award. The Pathway Award honors a workforce agency or employer for an innovative project, strategy, or initiative that connects K-12, higher education and workforce partners in support of the Sixty by 30 goal. This year, MCAN recognized the collective impact of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, which enrolled nearly 115,000 students last year, with completers more than doubling over the past



decade to over 55,000. Reaching students statewide, MCAN noted that CTE programs provide hands-on learning, career-connected college credit, and pathways to both college and careers, making them vital to Michigan's future workforce. As the chair of the Michigan CEPD Council Executive Board, I accepted the award alongside Celena Mills, Director of Career and Technical Education at the Michigan Department of Education. This recognition is significant considering that, in the past, CTE has not been viewed as an equitable preparation option for post-secondary training. Interim State Superintendent Dr. Sue C. Carnell commented that "The Michigan Department of Education is excited to see Michigan's Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs receive the Pathway Award from the Michigan College Access Network. This recognition reflects the State's deep commitment to expanding high-quality Career and Technical Education opportunities that connect Michigan students to real-world skills, credentials and careers. In partnership with MCAN and other dedicated organizations, we are building a future where every student has access to multiple, flexible pathways to success—whether through technical training, apprenticeships, community college or university."

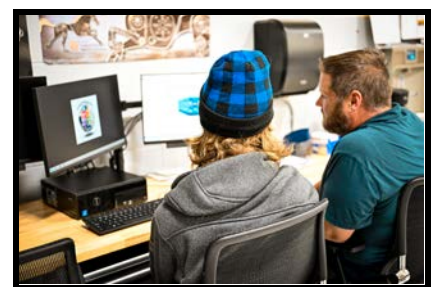
PRETTY IN A MINUTE GUEST PRESENTER

Students in Van Buren Tech's Cosmetology program recently had the opportunity to learn from industry professional and Pretty In a Minute educator, Joséh. He traveled from Tampa, Florida, to share his expertise. During his time with students, Joséh emphasized that education is the most important aspect of the industry and he provided students with the opportunity to try professional styling products, build product knowledge, and explore pathways to professional certifications. Through the Pretty In a Minute student program, VB Tech students also gained access to exclusive discounts and valuable tools to support their growth in the industry. Opportunities like this give VBT students the skills, connections, and confidence to succeed in their future careers.



BACK TO SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

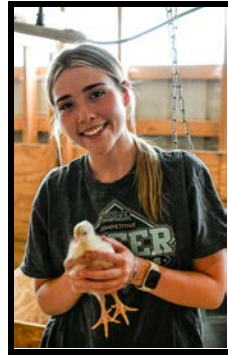
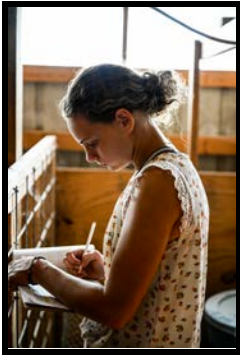
VB Tech held their annual Back to School Open House event in late September for current students and parents. A special Thank You to all the families and guests who attended the event. Those in attendance had a great time connecting with instructors, touring classrooms, and learning more about the opportunities available at Van Buren Tech. We are excited for another great school year and look forward to supporting students as they build skills, earn college credit, achieve industry certifications, and prepare for their future.



MICHIGAN FFA BROILER PROJECT

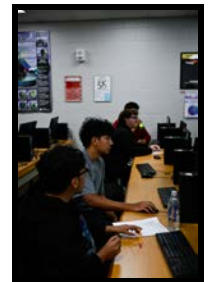
Van Buren Tech Agriculture & Natural Resources students recently participated in the annual Michigan FFA Broiler Project, which challenges them to raise the largest birds in the shortest amount of time, while following safe and ethical industry practices. Through this process, students develop skill sets in problem-solving, teamwork, time

management, and other personal development. As part of the process, students compute the average weight of their chickens daily, track feed intake, calculate the rate of gain, and convert feed consumption into a Feed Conversion Ratio (FCR) to measure efficiency. Students have shared that they enjoy the math involved and find it rewarding to watch their chickens grow from small chicks into full-size broilers. Program instructor, Nikki Meachum, says, “I hope students gain a glimpse of what it’s like to be a producer and understand the commitment that goes into providing a healthy product for consumers.” Great job students!



“TRASH TALKS” MARKETING

VBT students in the Marketing, Sales & Business program recently completed a “Trash Talks” marketing project, a technique designed to utilize recycled “trash” items to uncover clues about a person’s identity, lifestyle, and buying habits and apply core marketing concepts to reach specific markets. As part of the process, students applied market segmentation and the process of grouping consumers with shared characteristics such as age, lifestyle, or interests. Once complete, students then created a buyer persona - a fictional profile that represents a specific type of customer. Students also studied consumer behavior to understand how individuals make decisions and what influences their choices. To complete the project, students applied the 4 Ps of marketing (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) by developing a product for their persona, setting a price, determining where it would be sold, and creating a slogan and promotional strategy. Overall, the project provided students with an excellent opportunity to apply classroom knowledge in a collaborative project, connecting theory to real-world marketing concepts.



COLLEGE & CAREER FAIR

On October 21st, Van Buren Tech held their annual College & Career Fair, providing students with the opportunity to connect with representatives from nearly 50 colleges, trade programs, and branches of the Armed Forces, as they plan for their future. As part of the event, representatives shared information about career paths, programs, and opportunities available after graduation. With all programs at Van Buren Tech attending the event, every student had the chance to engage with professionals. The event provided an excellent opportunity to explore various future possibilities. Thanks to all involved in planning this wonderful event.



TINY HOMES CONSTRUCTION

The Construction Trades program at Van Buren Tech is learning a new build process this year as they transition to building four “Tiny Homes.” The four, 8 ft. x 30 ft. units, are somewhat standard in design, with the exception of a couple offering lofts that provide some additional living space. Overall, the homes offer between 240 square feet and 264 square feet of living space. Students are currently finishing framing and will be soon transitioning to windows, siding, and the remaining exterior portions of the homes before moving inside to complete the interior construction. Thus far, students are loving the change and are excited about the opportunities they have for input into the design of each home. Once completed, homes will be sold to the general public via a sealed bid auction. Great job to all involved!



III. ACTION ITEMS

III.A. Approval of Anticipated Board Vacancy and Appointment Process to Board of Education (ROLL CALL VOTE)

MEMO

DATE: DECEMBER 3, 2025

To: BOARD OF EDUCATION

FROM: JOHN FAUL, BOARD OF EDUCATION SECRETARY

RE: **APPROVAL OF ANTICIPATED BOARD VACANCY AND APPOINTMENT PROCESS TO BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Whereas the Board of Education has been informed of an anticipated vacancy that will occur upon the conclusion of Treasurer Kent's service, effective January 7, and

Whereas the Board of Education is responsible under Michigan law, including the Revised School Code, to fill a vacancy within thirty days of its occurrence and

Whereas the Board desires to conduct a transparent, timely, and orderly appointment process consistent with statutory requirements and the parliamentary principles outlined in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised and

Whereas the Board affirms the importance of public notice, equal opportunity for interested qualified residents, and an open interview process consistent with the Open Meetings Act

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Education establishes the following timeline for posting, receiving applications, conducting interviews, and selecting an appointee to fill the anticipated vacancy.

Posting Period- December 4 to December 18

The vacancy shall be publicly posted and distributed for fourteen days. The posting shall outline the eligibility requirements for service on an ISD Board of Education, the application or letter of interest process, and the submission deadline.

Applicant Contact and Scheduling- December 19 to December 30

The Board President or designee shall contact all applicants, verify initial eligibility, and schedule interviews. Materials submitted by applicants shall be provided to all Board members.

Interview Session- January 5

Interviews shall be held during an open session of the Board consistent with the Open Meetings Act. The Board shall conduct interviews using a consistent set of questions and procedures. At the conclusion of the interviews, the Board shall identify the preferred candidate and confirm statutory qualifications, including residency and voter registration.

Vacancy Becomes Official and Appointment Made- January 7

The Board shall convene at 4 p m for Treasurer Kent's final meeting. The vacancy becomes official at 5:15 p m. At approximately 5:20 pm, the Board shall proceed to appoint a new member in open session. A recognition and reception for Trustee Kenny shall follow the meeting.

Oath of Office- January 8 or later

The selected appointee shall take the oath of office administered by an authorized official. The oath shall be documented and placed on file with the Board Secretary.

First Meeting of the Newly Appointed Board Member- February 3

The appointed trustee shall participate fully as a member of the Board beginning with the regular meeting scheduled for this date.

Be it further resolved that the Board directs the Superintendent and Board Secretary to carry out all required notices, postings, and procedural steps necessary to implement this timeline and to ensure compliance with Michigan law and Board policy.

III.B. Approval of 31aa Opt In Subject to Rescission (ROLL CALL VOTE)

**Resolution D:
Opt-In Subject to
Rescission**

Van Buren ISD, Michigan (the “District”)

A Regular meeting of the board of education of the District (the “Board”) was held in person, in the Board of Education Office, within the boundaries of the District, on the third day of December, 2025, at four o’clock p.m. (the “Meeting”)

The Meeting was called to order by Mary Ann Middaugh, President.

Present: Members

Absent: Members

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member _____ and supported by Member _____:

WHEREAS:

1. Public Act 15 of 2025 amends State School Aid Act Section 31aa, MCL 388.1631aa, to allocate funding for fiscal year 2025/2026 to support school safety and student mental health initiatives, as well as to provide certain competitive grant funding (“31aa Funding”); and

2. To receive 31aa Funding, the District must agree to receive the funding in the form and manner established by the Michigan Department of Education (“MDE”) and either formally opt in or seek a competitive grant; and

3. As a condition of receiving either type of 31aa Funding, the District must agree in advance that, in the event of a “mass casualty event,” as defined in MCL 388.1631aa: (1) the District will be subject to and comply with a comprehensive investigation following such an event, and (2) the District will waive any privilege that may otherwise protect related information from disclosure; and

4. Litigation challenging the legality and enforceability of the privilege-waiver requirement is currently pending; and

5. The opt-in deadline for 31aa Funding is currently December 4, 2025, at 11:59 p.m., and it may be subject to further extension (the “Opt-In Deadline”); and

6. The litigation parties have stipulated that a district may later rescind its opt in by providing notice to MDE no later than December 30, 2025, at 11:59 p.m., as may be subject to further extension (the “Rescission Deadline”), in the form and manner established by MDE; and

7. The Board has been fully advised of the legal and practical implications of the privilege-waiver requirement, including its potential effect on attorney-client privilege and other applicable privileges; and

8. The Board desires to preserve the District’s eligibility for 31aa Funding while avoiding any present waiver of privilege and while allowing time for the courts to determine the legality and enforceability of the privilege-waiver requirement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Board hereby authorizes the Superintendent of Schools, or designee, to submit the District's opt-in form to MDE on or before the Opt-In Deadline, solely for the purpose of preserving the District's eligibility for 31aa Funding, and only on a conditional basis, as provided in this Resolution. Submission of the opt-in form shall not constitute a present waiver of the attorney-client privilege or any other privilege.

2. The District's conditional opt in shall be automatically rescinded without further action of the Board, unless, on or before the Rescission Deadline: (a) the Legislature removes, substantively amends, or otherwise eliminates the privilege-waiver requirement such that acceptance of 31aa Funding would not require waiver of attorney-client privilege or any other applicable privilege; or (b) a court of competent jurisdiction rules that the privilege-waiver requirement is unlawful, unenforceable, or otherwise not applicable to the District. If neither (a) nor (b) occurs by the Rescission Deadline, the Superintendent of Schools, or designee, shall notify MDE, in the form and manner required by MDE and no later than the Rescission Deadline, that the District's opt in is rescinded.

3. If the privilege-waiver requirement remains in effect and enforceable as of the Rescission Deadline, the Superintendent of Schools, or designee, shall have no authority or obligation to accept 31aa Funding.

4. Nothing in this Resolution shall be construed as a waiver of attorney-client privilege or any other applicable privilege.

5. The District's participation in the opt-in or rescission process shall not be construed as a waiver of the Board's or District's right to challenge the legality or enforceability of any condition imposed by MCL 388.1631aa or related administrative guidance.

6. If, after the Rescission Deadline, the privilege-waiver requirement is removed, amended, or invalidated, the Board may take further action as it deems appropriate to pursue 31aa Funding consistent with applicable law.

7. This Resolution does not apply to any "mass casualty event" occurring prior to the Opt-In Deadline.

8. All resolutions and parts of resolutions insofar as they conflict with the provisions of this Resolution be and the same are hereby rescinded.

Ayes: Members

Nays: Members

Resolution declared adopted.

Secretary, Board of Education

The undersigned, duly qualified and acting Secretary of the Board of Education of Van Buren ISD, Michigan, hereby certifies that the foregoing constitutes a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the Board at the Meeting, the original of which is part of the Board's minutes. The undersigned further certifies that notice of the Meeting was given to the public pursuant to the provisions of the "Open Meetings Act" (Act 267, Public Acts of Michigan, 1976, as amended).

Secretary, Board of Education

MDF/keh

III.C. Approval of 27L Compensation (ROLL CALL VOTE)

DATE: December 3, 2025
TO: Board of Education
FROM: David D. Manson, Superintendent

SUBJECT: Approval of 27L Compensation

Background:

Under the new **388.1627I Educator Compensation Program**, VBISD is expected to receive **\$32,412**.

This allocation must be used to *“increase compensation for educators in the district or intermediate district”* and *“shall be in addition to any existing compensation negotiated in a collective bargaining agreement.”*

If VBISD distributes this allocation only to educators represented by our professional and support staff associations, each eligible employee would receive **\$70.46**.

Instead of limiting the allocation to these groups, I am recommending that the Board approve a resolution authorizing a **one-time bonus payment of \$75 to all regular VBISD employees (excluding contract or temporary staff)**, thereby including GSRP staff, secretaries, IT personnel, and all non-union employees. Increasing the payment to \$75 and expanding eligibility to all employee groups will increase the total cost to VBISD by approximately **\$12,588**, while still meeting the requirements of **388.1627I**.

Resolution:

Resolved,

That the VBISD Board of Education approves a **one-time bonus payment of \$75 to all regular VBISD employees (excluding contract or temporary staff) hired on or before December 3, 2025**, which satisfies the requirements of the **388.1627I Educator Compensation Program** and reflects the Board’s intent to recognize the contributions of all staff.

III.D. Approval of Employment of New Staff (VOICE VOTE)

MEMO

DATE: DECEMBER 3, 2025
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: BRITANI OLDS, HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATOR
RE: **APPROVAL OF EMPLOYMENT OF NEW STAFF**

BACKGROUND

Following is a list of new staff, their position, salary and start date. Copies of resumes are attached.

<u>New Employee</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Start Date</u>
Daniel Stout, Assistant Supervisor, Transportation	\$60,500.00	11/17/2025
Michele Arms, GSRP Lead Teacher	\$47,352.00	12/17/2025
Corey Aukerman, School Social Worker	\$54,629.00	12/08/2025

**Salary may be prorated based on start date*

RECOMMENDATION

Resolved that the Board of Education approve the employment of the staff listed above.

III.E. Approval of Staff Resignations and Retirements (VOICE VOTE)

MEMO

DATE: DECEMBER 3, 2025
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: BRITANI OLDS, ADMINISTRATOR FOR HUMAN RESOURCES
RE: **STAFF RETIREMENTS/RESIGNATIONS**

BACKGROUND

Following is a list of retirements and resignations. Copies of letters are attached.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Resignation/Retirement Date</u>
Jessica Roy, Mental Health Clinician	Resignation - 11/07/2025
Lauren Dayton, School Social Worker	Resignation - 11/11/2025
Brian Simmerman, Adaptive PE Teacher	Resignation - 11/25/2025
Katherine Ott, Instructor Business Management	Resignation - 01/16/2026

RECOMMENDATION

Resolved that the Board of Education accept the resignations of the staff listed above.

Attachments

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

IV.A. Adjournment

IV.A.1. Motion to Adjourn Meeting (**VOICE VOTE**)