

ATHENS AREA SCHOOLS
Board of Education
East Leroy, Michigan 49051
July 20, 2026

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
High School Media Center
7:00 P.M.

Athens High School
300 E. Holcomb Street, Athens
TELEPHONE: (269) 729-5427

1. Call to order by President Rachel Hunt presiding at 7:00 PM.

- A. Membership count to determine quorum presence:

Present: Harvey: ☒ Hunt: ☒ Knowles: ☒ Loew: absent
Penick: ☒ Setlak: ☒

A quorum is present.

2. Approval of Agenda.

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the agenda as presented.
Motion by Knowles. Second by Penick. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed

3. Public Comments.

Kelly Hulce asked if there was a microphone, stating people couldn't hear.

4. Presentations/Discussions.

A. MASB Delegates - Superintendent Beaudoin advised the Board that they have the option of appointing Board Members to serve as delegates for MASB. This will be discussed and acted upon, if desired, at a later date.

B. MASB Kacie Kefgen- Kacie Kefgen from MASB did a presentation on the upcoming Superintendent Search. Kacie presented the steps and timeline for the search.

C. Open Board Seat Update- Update from Superintendent Beaudoin regarding the vacant Board Seat. Currently, we have one candidate on the ballot for this seat. The CISD may appoint this person early if they are the only candidate after the deadline for filing.

5. Routine Matters.

- A. Presentation of minutes of Prior Minutes:

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the June 15, 2026, Budget Hearing as presented. Motion by Setlak.
Second by Harvey Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed.

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the June 15, 2026, Regular Meeting as presented.
Motion by Pencik. Second by Setlak. Ayes: 5, Nays 0; Motion passed.

B. Presentation of Financial Reports

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education receive and place on file for audit the financial reports for the district for the period through June 30, 2026. Motion by Harvey. Second Knowles. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed.

6. Reports.

- A. Board President - report attached
- B. Superintendent- report attached

7. Action Items

A. Designation of Paying Agents, Etc.

MOTION: Move that the Paying, Depositing, and Withdrawing Agents for Athens Area Schools' funds be selected using the guidelines specified in Athens Area Schools Investment NEOLA Policy #6144, which was adopted and signed February 16, 2004. Further, all Payroll Fund checks will be signed by the Treasurer of the Board or the Business Manager, serving as an alternate. All Hot Lunch, Activity Fund, Capital Projects and Debt Retirement checks will be signed by the Superintendent or the Business Manager, serving as an alternates. All General Fund checks, which Athletics is a part of, will be signed by the Superintendent or Business Manager, serving as an alternate. Investment instruments will be signed by the Superintendent and/or the Business Manager, and the Board Treasurer, as occasions demand. Motion by Setlak. Second by Penick. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed.

B. 2026-27 Depositories - Southern Michigan Bank and Trust and MILAF

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve Southern Michigan Bank and Trust and MILAF as depositories for the 2026-27 school year as recommended. Motion by Penick. Second by Knowles. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed.

C. Bond Authority

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent with the Treasurer of the Board serving as an alternate, to sign the Bond Authority Purchase Contract and accept the interest rate for the note. Motion by Setlak. Second by Penick. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed.

D. Purchase Orders

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent and the Business Manager, to sign purchase orders for General/Athletic Fund, Hot Lunch, Activity, Debt Retirement, Sinking Fund and Capital Projects. Motion by Harvey. Second by Knowles. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed

E. Determination of Regular Board of Education Meetings

MOTION: Move that the Athens Area Schools Board of Education set the third Monday of each month to be the regular business meeting days, meetings will be held in the Athens High School Media Center, unless otherwise posted. Motion by Penick. Second by Setlak Ayes: 5 Nays: 0; Motion passed.

F. Determination of Board of Education Compensation

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education compensation be \$0.00 per meeting with an annual maximum of \$0.00. Motion by Penick. Second by Setlak Ayes: 5 Nays: 0; Motion passed.

G. Determination of Legal Counsel

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education of Athens Area Schools retain the firm of Thrun Law Firm, P.C. of East Lansing, Michigan as legal counsel. Motion by Knowles. Second by Harvey. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed.

H. Delegation of Duties by Officers

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education appoint the Superintendent to do all of the following: all legal advertising required by law or as directed by the Board, assist the counties in conducting annual and special elections and prepare reports required by the State Board of Education. Motion by Harvey. Second by Setlak. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed.

I. New Hires

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the hiring of Amanda Olson as the Jr/Sr High School Science Teacher. Motion by Penick. Second by Setlak. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed.

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the hiring of Monica Hudson as Jr/Sr High School Band Director and East Leroy Elementary Music Teacher. Motion by Setlak. Second by Harvey. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the hiring of Savanna Pavc as the High School Math Teacher. Motion by Knowles. Supported by Penick. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the hiring of Toni Adams as a Bus Driver for Athens Area Schools. Motion by Setlak. Second by Knowles. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed.

J. Appointment of Interim Superintendent

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education appoint Tonia Vorce as the Interim Superintendent, authorize Thrun Law Firm to draw up the contract with the costing as presented and authorize the Board President and Secretary to sign the contract. Motion by Harvey. Second by Penick. Ayes: 4, Nays: 1; Motion passed.

Motion by Harvey. Second by Penick. Ayes: 4, Nays: 1; Motion passed.

K. Update Administrative Salary Schedule

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the updated Administrative Salary Schedule as presented. Motion by Knowles. Second by Penick. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed

L. Administrative Contract, Athletic Director

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the Athletic Director Contract. Motion by Penick. Second by Harvey. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed.

8. Public Comment

- Kelly Hulce: The MEA is interested in Kacie Kfgen for the Superintendent's search. If Tonia's duties are cut half time as Business Manager how is she going to get stuff done? The Board just approved the Superintendent and Business Manager to sign checks, how will this happen if Tonia is both? Kelly let the Board know she had emailed them her resignation, she is resigning.
- Kelly Manson: She has heard rumors about changing school times and bus routes, is this happening? Kipp let her know this is in negotiations with the union.
- Allison Gesink: Wasn't happy with how her resignation was acknowledged. Thanked the families she has served during her time at Athens.
- Judi Henckle: Frustrated with the statement that Rachel read during her report. Feels community is upset about being in the dark. Asked for more information to be provided
- Lucy Lamson: Can the town hall meeting be elsewhere besides Athens Library? What is the definition of a town hall meeting? She has not had to submit questions ahead of time for town hall meetings she has participated in, she does not agree with this format.
- Lori Doubleday: Read a letter recognizing Kipp for his accomplishments and service at Athens.

9. Board Comment

- Hilary Setlak: Thanks Mrs. Gesink for being her son's teacher. Thanked Kipp for his service as superintendent.

10. Adjournment.

MOTION: Move the meeting be adjourned.

Motion by Knowles. Second by Penick. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0; Motion passed.

Time of adjournment: 8:16 PM

Minutes signed by: Jerri Lewis, Acting/Secretary of the Board of Education

Minutes prepared by: _____

Approved for publication by the Board of Education on: 8/17/26

Superintends Report:

Strategic Plan follow up: Following the Board of Education's formal adoption of our District Strategic Plan, we are ready to transition into the next critical phase: establishing our comprehensive Data Review process.

To move our student data in a meaningful direction, we cannot look at numbers in isolation. We must focus on what drives them. This next stage is built on a fundamental truth: to impact student outcomes, we must have both intentional instruction and rigorous documentation of that instruction in place. One cannot successfully exist without the other.

To bring this vision to life, we are approaching the plan from the instructional side, specifically focusing on planning, preparation, and classroom execution.

If we want to see genuine student growth, our daily classroom practices must be aligned, deliberate, and measurable. This is where our planning time becomes our most valuable asset.

We cannot document effective instruction if it isn't planned intentionally. Conversely, we cannot refine our intentional instruction without the clear documentation of what is working. They are entirely interdependent. (See Attached)

Safety Plan: Mark has been working on the upgrade. Please note this will come to the BoE for the August meeting for approval. I have included in the packet the purposed safety adjustments for buildings. I do want to focus on a couple of specific items in the document.

Recent school tragedies and evolving legal standards have fundamentally changed the expectations placed on public schools and their employees. In Michigan, it is no longer sufficient for a district to simply adopt comprehensive safety policies; those policies must be consistently implemented and enforced by every employee, every day. Courts are increasingly examining not only whether a policy existed, but whether staff members at every level faithfully followed established

procedures. When they do not, both the district and individual employees may face significant civil, and in some circumstances criminal, liability.

Incidents such as Sandy Hook Elementary, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Robb Elementary in Uvalde, and Oxford High School have demonstrated that seemingly routine deviations from established procedures, whether failing to control building access, leaving doors unsecured, permitting unauthorized movement through hallways, inadequately assessing threats, or neglecting to follow visitor management protocols, can have catastrophic consequences. These events have also established a clear legal expectation that school personnel exercise reasonable care by following the very safety measures their districts have adopted.

The Oxford High School tragedy, in particular, has had a profound impact on schools in Michigan. The subsequent criminal conviction of the student along with the convictions of the student's parents, underscored those failures to follow established procedures may no longer be viewed as simple errors in judgment. Rather, when actions or omissions demonstrate a reckless disregard for student safety, they may rise to the level of gross negligence, exposing individuals to personal liability and potentially eliminating the governmental immunity that has historically protected public employees.

Michigan law generally provides governmental immunity to school districts and their employees acting within the scope of their duties. However, that protection is not absolute. When an employee's conduct constitutes gross negligence or when actions create or substantially increase a known risk of harm, courts may permit claims to proceed against both the district and the individuals involved. Likewise, if a district develops a pattern of ignoring its own written policies through inconsistent training, lax enforcement, or accepted informal practices, plaintiffs may argue that the district's actual customs, not its written policies, represent the true standard of care, significantly increasing legal exposure. Though administrators avoided criminal prosecution, the tragedy drastically altered the operational landscape for Michigan schools. It triggered massive shifts toward stricter threat-assessment protocols, explicit policies regarding searching student property, and heightened legislative pressure to reform governmental immunity laws so schools can be held more accountable in future crises.

For these reasons, every employee has an individual responsibility to faithfully execute district policies and procedures. Security protocols cannot be selectively

applied based on familiarity, convenience, or assumptions that "nothing has ever happened before." Every visitor must be properly screened, every exterior door secured, every classroom appropriately supervised, and every established safety procedure followed without exception. Consistent compliance not only protects students and staff but also preserves the legal protections afforded to public employees. In today's legal environment, policy alone is no longer the standard; demonstrated adherence to policy in daily practice is what protects children, employees, and the district itself.

I have attached the Professional development request and approved by the state for the upcoming school year.

I have attached the Perks at Work document for the public. Chain of concern, draft only for the BoE's review. Finally, Staff Handbook update. I will provide job descriptions for the teachers, counselors, secretaries and para pros along with duties where appropriate. This is in keeping with policy and with the BoE's desire to move the district forward by a better understanding of the interplay of responsibilities and individual duties that make this possible. Moreover, the building issue provided to the BoE this past week.

Recommendation to hire.

Amanda Olson middle/high school science

Savana Pave math

Gavin Jex boys basketball

Toni Adams bus driver

Monica Hudson Band/music

Resignation:

Allison Gesink