

Tawas Area Schools
Regular Board of Education Meeting
August 11, 2025

I. Call to Order

Vice President Bruning called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the board room.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. Roll Call

Present: Miller, Jenkins, Edmonds, Butzin, Bruning

Absent: Malewska, Ulman

C. Positive Highlight

Michelle St. Aubin, owner of FunFirst Therapy, accompanied by Angela Giori and Sophie Butcher, presented an overview of the services provided to district students during the past school year. The presentation outlined program objectives, student engagement, and intervention strategies utilized throughout the year.

Ms. Giori, assigned to the elementary school, provided weekly on-site support, serving approximately 11 students over the course of the year. Ms. Butcher reported working with approximately 17 middle school students, in addition to responding to crisis situations and providing immediate intervention as needed.

Mr. Butzin inquired whether parents are involved and notified when their child receives services through FunFirst Therapy. Mrs. Butcher confirmed that parental permission is required, and Mrs. Danek added that consent is always obtained prior to initiating services.

Mr. Miller expressed concerns regarding the cost of the program relative to the number of students served. He also questioned how the service would be impacted once the school-based health center opens on campus. Ms. Giori clarified that FunFirst provides services that differ from traditional clinical therapy typically offered in a health clinic setting. Mr. Miller stated that, to justify the expenditure, he would like to see additional data on program outcomes.

D. Public Comments – Information and Proposals

No public comments were received.

II. Action Items

A. Consent Agenda

Motion by Edmonds, supported by Jenkins, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:

1. **Approval of Minutes** – July 14, 2025 regular meeting minutes approved.
2. **Approval of Payment of Bills** –
 - Monthly contractual and prepaid expenses:
 - General Fund: \$1,265,401.41
 - Sinking Fund: \$0.00
 - Lunch Fund: \$21,575.54
 - Presented monthly bills:
 - General Fund: \$65,394.38

- Sinking Fund: \$0.00
 - Lunch Fund: \$0.00
3. **Receipt of Written Communications** – Approved resignation of custodian Robert Stephenson, effective immediately. Also approved request from Cody Franklin, third-grade teacher, for unpaid medical leave commencing upon the expiration of FMLA leave and extending through the remainder of the 2025-26 school year.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Routine Matters

1. **Recommendations & Reports from Administration**
 - a. **Hire Cook's Helper** – Motion by Jenkins, supported by Edmonds, to hire Mrs. Vickie Landon as a cook's helper. Motion carried unanimously.
 - b. **Hire Coach** – Motion by Jenkins, supported by Edmonds, to hire Mr. Brian Pelton as a junior high football assistant coach. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Old Business

1. **MASB-Endorsed Policy Discussion** – The Board reviewed additional information regarding current NEOLA contract terms, fees, and services, as well as a comparative quote and transition outline from Thrun Law Firm. They discussed the perk of switching to Thrun Policy Services being that they would be more familiar with our policy and able to address issues in a more efficient manner. Mr. Butzin expressed that he finds it to be very beneficial that we have a NEOLA representative who used to work in the district and is always available to answer any questions he may have. Mrs. Danek stated that the entire county has decided to make the switch to Thrun for policy services. Motion by Bruning, supported by Jenkins, to approve the transition to Thrun Law for policy services. A roll call vote was taken. Yes: Miller, Jenkins, Edmonds, Bruning; No: Butzin. Motion passed.
2. **Committee Reports** – None.
3. **Legislative Report** – No update at this time.

D. New Business

1. **SRO Assessment** – After reviewing the assessment conducted by the district and the Iosco County Sheriff's Office to evaluate the effectiveness of the School Resource Officer Program, Mrs. Danek recommended that the Board approve the renewal of the Memorandum Of Understanding for a third year. Mrs. Danek did state that this is the final year of the grant that provided funding for this position so she would be looking for additional funding sources for the future. Worst case scenario, the money would have to be paid from the general fund Motion by Edmonds, supported by Jenkins, to approve renewal of the MOU for the School Resource Officer Program for a third year, continuing placement of Deputy David Wood. Motion carried unanimously.
2. **Renew Fun First Therapy Social Work Support Agreement** – Mrs. Bruning asked whether the administration had observed any behavioral changes among students as a result of the programs offered by FunFirst Therapy. Mr. Livingston stated that the therapy services have helped keep students in school rather than requiring them to be sent elsewhere for intervention. He added that having a "neutral party" available on campus for students to meet with has been beneficial, and that the program supports the development of important life skills.

When asked why services are not offered to high school students, Mrs. Danek explained that this need is addressed through 31N funding for high school mental health services.

Mr. Butzin questioned why the school district is providing mental health services and expressed frustration, stating that he does not believe it is the role of the school to do so. Mrs. Danek responded that many students are not receiving adequate support at home, and the district has made these services available to help students learn and grow.

Mrs. Edmonds asked whether it would be possible to implement a six-month trial period and then re-evaluate the program at that time. Mrs. Danek stated she would share the Board's concerns with FunFirst and explore potential options

Motion by Edmonds, supported by Jenkins, to renew the social work support agreement with Fun First Therapy. A roll call vote was taken. No: Miller, Jenkins, Edmonds, Butzin, Bruning. Motion failed.

3. **Renew Fun First Therapy Social Skills Group Agreement** – Motion by Edmonds, supported by Butzin, to renew the social skills group agreement with Fun First Therapy. A roll call vote was taken. No: Miller, Jenkins, Edmonds, Butzin, Bruning. Motion failed.
4. **Approve Cooperative Agreement with IRESA** – Motion by Edmonds, supported by Butzin, to approve the cooperative agreement with IRESA for Career & Technical Education opportunities. Motion carried unanimously.

III. Information and Proposals

A. **Superintendent Report** – Mrs. Danek reported that the full administrative team recently attended a conference on Mackinac Island with their families. Key topics included artificial intelligence and restorative practices. She noted that the event also provided valuable downtime for the team.

Mrs. Danek shared that Mr. Lichota wanted the Board to know that bus routes have been finalized and will be published in the local newspaper next week. She also reported that the Clara Bolen Elementary parking lot project is underway and is expected to be completed by the end of the week.

An additional track evaluation has been conducted, indicating the track has an estimated two to three years of remaining use before replacement is necessary. Roof evaluations are currently in progress to identify priority areas in need of repair.

The school-based health clinic team will be on campus this week to further assess the space designated for their use. Finally, Mrs. Danek noted that the district audit has been completed, and the audit presentation will be delivered in September.

B. **Student Representatives** – None present.

- Senior Representative: Miss Abby Kloska
- Junior Representative: Miss Eryn Hayes

C. **Administration** – Mr. Livingston reported that, based on feedback from parents and staff, the high school will take a new approach to orientation this year. Orientation will be held on August 13th, with scheduled time windows for different student groups. The event will feature various stations for students to visit, as well as a slideshow presentation with key information.

He shared that sophomore student leaders attended the RYLA camp and returned with numerous ideas for the Student Leadership Society (SLS). Mr. Livingston also attended a leadership conference with Mr. Hazen in June, and plans to incorporate strategies learned at the event—particularly those addressing race-related issues—into high school initiatives. High school enrollment is currently at 362 students, summer school is concluding, and he anticipates filling all remaining vacancies within the next week.

Mrs. Tiffany reported middle school enrollment at 377 students. Science Olympics and sixth-grade choir will now be offered during the regular school day rather than as after-school clubs. The district has purchased the new HMH curriculum, and teachers will receive training on both this program and the new math curriculum. She also welcomed two new teachers, Mrs. Shrout and Mr. Prescott.

Mr. Mejeur announced that sports passes are now available and that the Final Forms platform is fully operational.

Mrs. Clouse reported that kindergarten orientation will take place this week, and the K–4 open house is scheduled for August 20th. The summer boost program is concluding. Elementary enrollment is currently at 404 students, representing a decrease from the previous year.

D. From the Board – Mrs. Jenkins wished everyone good luck with the new year.

IV. Advance Planning

A. Student Achievement Committee Meeting – Monday, September 8, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

V. Closed Session

Motion by Jenkins, supported by Butzin, to enter closed session at 8:27 p.m. to discuss:

A. Student 2024-2025-#2 Request to Return to School

Motion by Member, supported by Member, to return to open session at 8:40 p.m. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Edmonds, supported by Butzin, to allow Student 2024-2025-#2 to return to school, effective immediately, at the start of the 2025-2026 school year on a behavioral contract. A roll call vote was taken. Yes: Miller, Jenkins, Edmonds, Butzin, Bruning.

Motion by Edmonds, supported by Jenkins, to go back into closed session at 8:45 p.m. to discuss the Superintendent's mid-year review. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Butzin, supported by Jenkins, to return to open session at 8:58 p.m. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Bruning stated that the Board discussed the Superintendent's mid-year review in closed session and provided Mrs. Danek with feedback.

VI. Adjournment

Motion by Jenkins, supported by Edmonds, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.