

Tawas Area Schools
Regular Board of Education Meeting
May 12, 2025

The regular meeting of the Tawas Area Board of Education was called to order by President Ulman at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 12, 2025 in the boardroom at the administration office.

Mrs. Jenkins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

Present: Edmonds, Bruning, Malewska, Butzin, Jenkins, Ulman
Absent: None
Tardy: Miller

Administrators Present: Danek, Livingston, Hazen, Tiffany, Clouse

Mr. Miller arrived to the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

POSITIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Mrs. Danek said that Mr. Livingston would present the positive highlight. Mr. Livingston gave a brief presentation about Mrs. Kerri Buysens, who was selected as one of SVSU's 2025 Heroes in Education.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

There was no public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Bruning, support by Jenkins to approve the consent agenda items which included the approval of the April 14th regular and closed session meeting minutes, the April 28th special meeting minutes and the payment of bills as follows: the monthly contractual and prepaid expenses for the general fund in the amount of \$1,004,456.54 and the lunch fund expenses in the amount of \$85,156.43. It also included payment of presented bills for the general fund in the amount of \$86,435.62. A letter of retirement was received from middle school teacher Mrs. Melissa LaJoice, who will retire effective June 30, 2025. Letters of resignation were received from Mr. Dustin Falls, varsity football assistant coach, effective immediately, and Mrs. Julie Shellenbarger, cook's helper, effective May 16, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

RECOMMENDATIONS & REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. Danek said we are required to pass resolutions each year if we desire to continue to participate in the schools of choice program. One resolution allows us to participate in Section 105 Schools of Choice, and the other resolution permits us to participate in Section 105C Schools of Choice. Section 105 allows nonresident students who reside within the intermediate school district to attend our district while Section 105C allows nonresident students who reside outside of our ISD in a contiguous intermediate school district to attend our district. Mrs. Jenkins read in the form of a motion, the Resolution to opt into Section 105 Schools of Choice within ISD Boundaries and the Resolution to opt into Section 105C Schools of Choice across ISD boundaries. Support to the motion by Bruning. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek said that Mrs. Clouse is recommending that Ms. Jessica Erickson be hired as an educational assistant at Clara Bolen Elementary. Ms. Erickson has been a long-term sub in the district for the last couple months in this position and was selected as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Bruning, support by Jenkins to hire Ms. Jessica Erickson as an educational assistant. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek said that Mr. Mejeur is recommending Mrs. Katie Stratz be hired as the 7th grade girls' basketball coach. Mrs. Stratz has volunteered with the softball program and is an alumni of Tawas

who played basketball while attending school. She was selected as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Bruning, support by Jenkins to hire Mrs. Katie Stratz as the 7th grade girls' basketball coach. Motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Committee Reports – Mrs. Danek said last month we had our first reading of a change to policies **0131.1** Bylaws and Policies, **5320** Immunization, **5330** Use Of Medications, **5330.01** Epinephrine Auto-Injectors, **5350** Student Health, Well-Being and Suicide Prevention, **8320** Personnel Files, **8500** Food Services, and **8510** Wellness. The committee also reviewed Policy **5517.01** Bullying and Other Aggressive Behavior Toward Students but did not make any changes to the policy. It is the recommendation of the committee that tonight be considered the second reading of these revisions to these policies. Motion by Bruning, support by Butzin to adopt the policy changes as presented. Mr. Butzin asked if the policies that we amend are sent back to NEOLA for approval after the proposed changes are made and Mrs. Danek confirmed that we only make changes approved by NEOLA because any district-specific changes that are made to policy do not have the backing of NEOLA if an issue arises. Mrs. Edmonds also questioned the bullying policy and whether the changes the committee discussed were going to be adopted. Mrs. Danek clarified that although they discussed changing the policy, it was agreed upon that they would not move forward with the changes due to losing NEOLA support for that policy. Motion carried unanimously.

Legislative Report – Mrs. Danek said that there wasn't much to update and she would pass along information as it becomes available.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Danek said the first reading of the 2025-26 Clara Bolen Elementary student handbook was held at last month's meeting. Tonight should be considered the second reading. Motion by Malewska, support by Butzin to adopt the changes to the 2025-26 Clara Bolen Elementary student handbook. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek said the first reading of the 2025-26 Tawas Area Middle School student handbook was held at last month's meeting. Tonight should be considered the second reading. Motion by Malewska, support by Jenkins to adopt the changes to the 2025-26 Tawas Area Middle School student handbook. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek said the first reading of the 2025-26 Tawas Area High School student handbook was held at last month's meeting. Tonight should be considered the second reading. Motion by Malewska, support by Jenkins to adopt the changes to the 2025-26 Tawas Area High School student handbook. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek said the first reading of the 2025-26 athletic student handbook was also held at last month's meeting. Tonight should be considered the second reading. Motion by Bruning, support by Butzin to adopt the athletic student handbook for the 2025-26 school year. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek said that Mr. Don Axline, technology director, is requesting that the Board approve the purchase of an updated paging system for Clara Bolen and Tawas Area Middle/High School. She said the current system is at end of life and is no longer supported and explained that if the system were to have a component failure, replacement components may not be available. Mrs. Danek also clarified that although Clara Bolen's paging system was recently replaced, it was only a replacement and did not include any additional safety features. Included in the board packets were 4 proposals from Rauland SoundCom. Mr. Axline is recommending that the Board approve Proposals 2 and 4. Mrs. Danek explained that Proposal 1 is a complete system, which is not necessarily needed while combining Proposals 2 and 4 would provide the additional safety features and would cost less than Proposal 1. She said that minimally she would like to see the Board approve Proposal 3 to ensure that the system is supported in case something was to go

wrong. The Board discussed how this update would need to go out for bid due to the cost and Mrs. Danek agreed and said that they are asking the Board to approve moving forward with a Proposal so they can put the job out for bid with specifications of the job. Motion by Ulman, support by Butzin to move forward with bids for Proposal 1. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek said that IRESA superintendent, Mr. Jaimie Cain, shared with the local districts the IRESA proposed general fund budget for 2025-26. Local districts are only asked to approve their general fund budget, not special education or vocational education. The fund balance is expected to increase in 2025-26 by \$320,618. Mrs. Jenkins made a motion to approve the Resolution to Support the IRESA general fund budget for the 2025-26 school year. Motion supported by Butzin. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek said a resolution must be read regarding IRESA's biennial election. This year's election will take place on Monday, June 2, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. A district must designate its representative for the electoral body by adopting a resolution not earlier than 21 days prior to the date of the election. This year, May 12th was the earliest date that a board could designate its representative. An alternate member must also be selected in the event the designated member is unable to attend. The resolution must also identify the candidates the constituent board supports for each position to be filled on the intermediate school board as well as direct the representative to vote for the candidates at least on the first ballot taken at the meeting. There are two vacancies that need to be filled at this election and two candidates running. Mr. Butzin volunteered to represent the board at the election and Mrs. Jenkins agreed to be the alternate. Mr. Butzin was directed to cast a vote on the first ballot on behalf of the board for Helen Lounsbury and Tana McKulsky. These are both 6-year terms. Mrs. Jenkins read the Resolution Designating the District's Election Representative (Mr. Butzin and Mrs. Jenkins as alternate) for the June 2nd biennial IRESA election, and to direct Mr. Butzin to cast the vote on the first ballot for Helen Lounsbury and Tama McKulsky, for 6-year terms. Motion supported by Butzin. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek said she is recommending to extend the current signing bonus for newly hired employees through the 2025-26 school year. Mrs. Ulman asked if other area schools were still offering a signing bonus, and Mrs. Danek replied that they all are. Motion by Malewska, support by Butzin to extend the current signing bonus through the 2025-26 school year. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek said that federal funding freezes have delayed construction associated with the school-based health center. AHC remains committed and is seeking alternative grants to sustain the project. All parties have agreed that a fully constructed physical space is essential and they will no longer proceed with a soft launch. Mrs. Danek said that all necessary documents have been approved and will be adjusted as needed based on funding developments. The timeline has slowed from being ready to open this fall to more likely next spring.

Mrs. Danek said Mr. Lichota is requesting approval to purchase a new used truck for the maintenance department. Mr. Lichota has not found the exact vehicle and therefore is asking that he be approved to spend up to \$40,000 on this purchase. A board member asked where the money for this would come from, and Mrs. Danek said it would come from his budget. Motion by Butzin, support by Jenkins to approve the purchase of a truck for an amount not to exceed \$40,000 as requested. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek is recommending that the Board approve a salary adjustment to the middle school assistant principal position to at least reflect the same rate as the high school assistant principal. She stated that the current salaries for those positions could be found in the board packet. Motion by Ulman, support by Malewska to approve a salary adjustment to align the positions of middle and high school assistant principals as recommended. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

INFORMATION & PROPOSALS

Superintendent Report – Mrs. Danek said she was happy to announce the junior class representative who will be attending board meetings next year, as Ms. Kloska will move into the senior role. She said there were 3 applicants, and Ms. Eryn Hayes was chosen. Mrs. Danek also briefly discussed threat assessment legislation that would need to be addressed and said she would be attending a webinar on Wednesday to learn more about this. Lastly, Mrs. Danek said she did receive an overnight request for a golf trip to Elk Rapids to play at Katke and wanted to update the board on that.

Student Representatives – Ms. Whetstone said that there was a lot going on for seniors, with the scholarship breakfast, awards, night, project graduation, and graduation all coming up. Ms. Kloska said prom went well and said the juniors had AP testing going on this week.

Administration – Mr. Livingston said that the Science Olympics team placed 13th in the state and 1st in northern Michigan. They placed in 5 events. He said that at the state choir performances the choir scored an 84 out of 90, earning them a rating of I. The middle school did not officially compete, but also received a rating of I. Mr. Livingston said they would be having an assembly this week called Think Twice, which covers digital sharing and that career day would be taking place on May 16. Mr. Hazen said that in the third quarter the high school had 18 students who still had perfect attendance. He said he was planning something for the students who still have perfect attendance at the end of the year. He also talked about students attending a Think Fast Assembly which was about the dangers of distracted driving. Mr. Hazen said that SRO Deputy Humerickhouse brought in the carts to simulate driving under the influence and said that the Spanish students went to Foreign Language Day at SVSU and had 2 first place finishes and a 3rd place finish. Mrs. Tiffany said MStep testing is done. The 7th grade students raised over \$7,000 for their Mackinaw trip at the walk-a-thon. She said there were 13 middle school students who still had perfect attendance and stated that the DC trip was this week with trips for all grades coming up soon. Mrs. Clouse highlighted the students of the month and said that staff appreciation was last week. She said the 3rd grade students got to go on a field trip to the Maritime Museum in Alpena and the shipwreck tours. She also said she is excited to have Project Red back this year, which is where community members come in and do hands-on science experiments with the kids. Mr. Mejeur said Tawas soccer beat Oscoda 5-0. He also said that on Wednesday he would be taking 15 students to Mio for the Northstar League Scholar Breakfast. Mr. Mejeur also said that the Board would need to revisit the use of GoFan at the June meeting.

MASB Spring Institute Update – Mrs. Jenkins attended the Spring conference and said that she learned a lot. She said the conference was AI centered and she realized that AI is not so scary and can actually be used as a tool to help teachers and can be tailored to different kids with different needs. She said that AI is taking 7-10 hours off the workload of teachers. Mrs. Jenkins also thanked Ms. Whetstone for her service.

From the Board – Mrs. Bruning said Mrs. Grover is doing great things with the choir program. She said she is excited for the career fair as well. Mr. Butzin said he thinks it is great to see the choir do so well too. He asked how prom went, having it downtown and Mrs. Danek said attendance was great and the venue was nice, and Mr. Hazen said he has heard a lot of positive feedback. Mrs. Edmonds thanked those who are retiring and congratulated Ms. Whetstone and wished her luck in the future. Mrs. Malewska said it is such an honor to bring NHS back to the middle school. Mr. Miller thanked everyone for their service and compassion. Mrs. Ulman congratulated Ms. Whetstone.

The Board took a 5-minute recess at 7:57 p.m. and reconvened at 8:15 p.m.

ADVANCE PLANNING

Mrs. Danek scheduled a meeting with the budget committee on June 8, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. to review the budget and to review the use of the GoFan ticketing system.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE HEARING

The Board entered in to a student discipline hearing at 8:17 p.m. The family of the student decided not to have the hearing in closed session, so the Board remained in open session. Mrs. Ulman had the Board introduce themselves and then had the mother of the student and student 2024-2025-#9 introduce themselves.

Mrs. Clouse read the description of incident.

Mrs. Ulman asked the student if what Mrs. Clouse said was true. The student said yes. She then asked the student if he/she knows that it is against the rules to bring a knife to school. The student shook his/her head no. Mrs. Ulman then asked if they had any questions and the mother of the student said they did not have questions.

Mr. Butzin asked the student if he/she likes school. He/she said he/she does. Mr. Butzin told him/her that we like having him/her at our school.

Mrs. Malewska asked the student what his/her favorite thing about school is. The student said he/she liked recess, gym, math, learning and playing with his/her friends. When she asked him/her what he/she has missed about school, the student said he/she misses his/her friends.

The mother of the student said that they are trying their best to keep up with homework but it is a struggle. She said that as a 5-year old the student doesn't understand what a weapon is. She said it was an accident and she doesn't feel that he/she understands how serious the situation was. She said the student is sorry and that they both are very sad about this whole thing. She stated that she hopes this is all a learning curve for the student and other kids.

Mrs. Ulman talked about keeping other kids safe while they are at school. The mother of the student said it takes a community to keep the kids safe.

Mr. Butzin said this is not the only event that has taken place involving this student. It is not a singular incident. He said his/her discipline record shows instances of bullying, indecency and threatening, which we cannot allow kids to do. He said the student seems young to be doing these things.

Mrs. Bruning said she does not think he/she took the knife to school to threaten anyone.

When asked about the legal parameters for a child this young, Mrs. Danek said it was a minimum of a 10-day suspension and there is no maximum. She said they need to consider the age of the student.

Mr. Butzin asked if the student was going to be promoted to first grade next year. Mrs. Clouse said at this point, he/she is. Mr. Butzin then questioned how it is determined whether a kid is promoted or held back because this child has a lot of Unsatisfactory ratings in his/her grades. Mrs. Clouse explained that they do a whole child study and look at more than just grades.

Mrs. Ulman asked what the discipline process looks like for a 5-year old and how they make a child of that age understand the term "weapons."

Mrs. Clouse said normally she would have a conversation with the student and possibly bring the SRO into the conversation to speak to the student.

Motion by Edmonds, support by Butzin that Student 2024-2025-#9 be suspended for 28 days, including 10 days already served, and upon his/her return to school be entered into a behavioral contract. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Ulman said Mrs. Clouse would reach out to the family to discuss next steps.

Motion by Edmonds, support by Jenkins to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.