

Tawas Area Schools
Regular Board of Education Meeting
September 8, 2025

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Tawas Area Schools Board of Education was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Ulman.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Bruning.

B. Roll Call

Present: Bruning, Jenkins, Edmonds, Malewska, Miller, Ulman

Absent: None

Tardy: Butzin

C. Positive Highlight

The Board participated in a taste testing in the school cafeteria. Members expressed appreciation to Mrs. Sancrant and her staff for their hard work and shared positive feedback on the food choices provided.

D. Public Comments – Information and Proposals

Mrs. Anna Dalman, High School Spanish Teacher, provided an update on the recent union staff elections. She announced that Mr. Jason Woelke has been elected as Union President and that she will serve as Vice President. Mrs. Dalman also expressed her appreciation for the positive communication that has already taken place between the union and administration.

II. Action Items

A. Consent Agenda

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

1. **Approval of Minutes** –August 11, 2025 regular meeting minutes approved.
2. **Approval of Payment of Bills** –
 - Monthly contractual and prepaid expenses:
 - General Fund: \$1,058,678.68
 - Sinking Fund: \$20,455.00
 - Lunch Fund: \$48,678.50
 - Presented monthly bills:
 - General Fund: \$58,574.57
 - Sinking Fund: \$0.00
 - Lunch Fund: \$0.00
3. **Receipt of Written Communications** – Approved resignations of Rachel Swartz, educational assistant at Clara Bolen Elementary, and Scott Menard, Assistant Varsity Football Coach, both effective immediately. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Routine Matters

1. Recommendations & Reports from Administration

a. Hire Teachers

- Motion by Edmonds, supported by Jenkins, to approve the hiring of Mrs. Cassandra Thoryk as a long-term substitute teacher, with the understanding that she will transition to a fully certified teaching position upon successful completion of the MTTC exam and issuance of her interim certificate. Motion carried unanimously.
- Motion by Bruning, supported by Jenkins, to approve the hiring of Mr. Michael Caldwell as the Secondary Math and Drafting/CTE Teacher. Motion carried unanimously.
- Motion by Malewska, supported by Jenkins, to approve the hiring of Dr. Joanna Frye as a long-term substitute teacher, with the understanding that she will transition to a fully certified teaching position upon issuance of her interim certificate. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Butzin arrived to the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

- Motion by Malewska supported by Butzin, to approve the hiring of Ms. Magon Karns as an Elementary Teacher. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Hire Educational Assistants

- Motion by Bruning, supported by Jenkins, to hire Ms. Chelsea Lange as a Special Education Educational Assistant at Clara Bolen Elementary. Motion carried unanimously.
- Motion by Malewska, supported by Miller, to hire Ms. Dulaney Noeker as a Special Education Educational Assistant at Clara Bolen Elementary. Motion carried unanimously.
- Motion by Jenkins, supported by Butzin, to hire Mr. Patrick Ryan as a Title I Educational Assistant, pending successful completion of the Parapro Assessment. Motion carried unanimously.

c. Hire Cook's Helper

Motion by Bruning, supported by Jenkins, to hire Mrs. Kathleen Butzin as a Cook's Helper. Mr. Butzin abstained from voting. Motion carried.

d. Hire Custodian

Motion by Jenkins, supported by Malewska to hire Mr. Greg Stanley as a custodian. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Old Business

1. Review and Discussion of Revised FunFirst Therapy Agreement

The Board reviewed the revised agreement with FunFirst therapy. Mrs. Edmonds stated upon reviewing the agreement she noticed that the mileage and hourly rate charged by FunFirst were the same, which was one of the chief complaints of the Board members when the agreement was initially presented. Mrs. Edmonds said that this agreement did increase the hours of the service by 2 ½ hours.

Mr. Butzin said that 15% of the student population are special education students, and the number of kids FunFirst works with does not even meet that need.

Mrs. Edmonds stated that she did not appreciate the language regarding snow days that was included in the agreement. She also said that there was some question as to what would happen when the health center is up and running and whether the services of the two would overlap.

Mrs. Danek shared that Alcona Health Center went to their Board and got approval and now they were looking into grant options to fund the construction, to update the Board as to the status of that project.

Mrs. Danek also stated that she has been hearing that IRESA may be able to provide another individual to support students through the 31N funding.

Mr. Butzin shared his concerns about consent forms for these kids.

Mrs. Bruning clarified that legally they are not required to get consent from parents for kids at that age.

After much discussion, there was a motion by Bruning, supported by Jenkins to NOT approve the revised agreement with FunFirst Therapy for the 2025-26 school year. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Committee Reports

a. Student Achievement Committee

Mrs. Danek said that the student achievement committee met prior to the meeting. The committee reviewed recent MSTEP data, discussed areas of concern, and began shaping the purpose and direction of this newly formed group. The focus is on returning to the basics of student achievement, with an emphasis on pre-COVID standards and outcomes. The committee also discussed bringing in staff feedback to gather input on practices that will positively impact student performance. Mrs. Danek stated that she will meet with staff to prioritize the top three strategies to focus on.

3. Legislative Report

Mrs. Danek updated the Board that there has been no progress on the state budget at all.

D. New Business

1. MASB Delegate Certification

Motion by Bruning, supported by Malewska, to certify Amy Jenkins as the delegate and Ami Edmonds as the alternate from Tawas Area Schools. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Onboarding Processes

The Board discussed current onboarding procedures for new employees, potential improvements, and best practices. Mrs. Danek explained that currently new employees must have a physical examination, a drug screening and fingerprinting completed as part of the pre-employment process. The physical and drug screening are optional, but the fingerprinting is required. The total cost to the employee is roughly \$200. She also stated that depending how the Board chooses to proceed, changing this procedure may affect policy, which would require a meeting with the policy committee and two readings. Board members discussed the burden that this creates for new employees and how it is somewhat counteracting the signing bonus that they get. The board discussed the option reimbursing employees for these costs after they had been employed for “x” amount of days.

Motion by Malewska, supported by Jenkins to amend the current pre-employment procedure to include a provision stating that new employees shall be reimbursed for any costs incurred in connection with pre-employment physical examinations, drug screening,

and fingerprinting upon the successful completion of 60 days of employment. Mr. Butzin abstained from voting. Motion failed unanimously.

Motion by Jenkins, supported by Malewska to amend the current pre-employment procedure to include a provision stating that new employees shall be reimbursed for any costs incurred in connection with pre-employment physical examinations, drug screening, and fingerprinting upon the successful completion of 60 days of employment, effective August 1, 2025. Mr. Butzin abstained from voting. Motion carried unanimously.

3. 8th Grade Trip Request

Mrs. Buysens and Mr. del Rio were present to request permission to move forward with the planning of the 8th grade Washington D.C. field trip in May 2026. Mrs. Buysens said that last year's trip was a success and they are excited to offer this trip again. She also stated that they would be using a new travel company this year, Educational Travel Adventures. This new company was able to save them about \$100 per student. They have provided great customer service up to this point.

Mrs. Jenkins said that she had gotten some complaints from parents about the sign up process for this trip. She said parents stated that they had to be at the school on a certain date at 7:25 and if they were unable to be there, they missed their chance to sign their child up. She said she wanted to make sure no students were being alienated and left behind due to circumstances beyond their control.

Mrs. Buysens assured the Board that they make every effort to work with students who are interested in going.

Mrs. Ulman encouraged Mrs. Buysens to have some type of exit survey after the trip so that they could get some feedback from parents and students and also be able to compare this new travel company to the previous company that was used.

Mr. Butzin asked what the chaperone to student ratio was.

Mrs. Buysens said ideally there are 4 students for every 1 adult, but last year they had 7-8 students with 1 adult. She also briefly mentioned that trip insurance is available to purchase when the tickets are purchased.

Motion by Bruning, supported by Jenkins, to allow the 8th grade students to go on a field trip to Washington D.C. in May 2026. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Talent Together Candidate

The Board received an update on the district's first candidate entering the Talent Together program. Mrs. Danek explained that the candidate will complete all TAS pre-employment requirements and will be compensated at 80% of the first-step teacher salary. All initial financial obligations of the district will be fully reimbursed at 100%. Additionally, the mentor teacher will dedicate 50-60 hours of training throughout the process and will receive a stipend of \$7,500 upon completion. Mrs. Danek introduced the candidate to the Board, Mr. Seth Finley and said that his mentor teacher would be Mr. Adam Davis. No action required.

III. Information and Proposals

A. Superintendent Report – Mrs. Danek gave the Board an enrollment update. She said that currently there are 4 students unaccounted for at this time. Enrollment is up about 50 students, compared to last year at this time. She also informed the Board that she had gotten a phone call from Brian Loeffler, who would like to get on the October agenda, to do a presentation regarding hunter's safety classes. The Board was in agreement that they approved of that being on the next agenda. Mrs. Ulman encouraged board members to get community feedback regarding hunter's safety classes to be prepared at the next meeting.

B. Student Representatives –

- Senior Representative: Miss Abby Kloska – Homecoming is coming up this weekend. The theme is “Night on the Nile.” Everyone is excited for spirit week and Homecoming. The football team got a win last week which was also exciting. SLS has their kick-off event before the homecoming game on Friday.
- Junior Representative: Miss Eryn Hayes – Not Present

C. Administration – Mr. Livingston said they have a busy week ahead of them with Homecoming, spirit week, and powder puff football. He also stated that they had gotten back results from the AP tests and out of 52 kids that took AP tests the pass rates were as follows: 63% pre-calculus; 43% calculus; 74% chemistry; 72% AP English; 80% physics. He also talked about M-Step data and said that grades 5-12 outperformed the state average in numerous categories. After school tutoring started this week. Mr. Livingston mentioned that there were 4 exchange students this year as well.

Mr. Hazen said the year has been off to a good start. There have been few discipline issues. The higher numbers have led to curriculum challenges, but the company has been really good about helping accommodate. He also said that he and Mr. Livingston would be attending a MMC Curriculum workshop on September 12th.

Mrs. Tiffany said the M-Step results have been released and it proves that we have a great staff. She said they would be discussing the scores at the next staff meeting and focusing on areas of improvement. She also stated that there had been 50 new enrollments in the middle school, which is exciting.

Mrs. Clouse said enrollment at the elementary school is at 415 currently. She said Clara Bolen has been working through some challenged with behaviors already. The fall fundraiser is coming up soon. On October 6th, the elementary starts their after school tutoring program.

Mr. Mejeur updated the Board regarding the scoreboard, stating that it is back in working order.

D. From the Board – Mrs. Jenkins said we are off to a great start. Mrs. Malewska congratulated the new union president and vice president. She said she is excited about the change in travel companies for the Washington D.C. trip. Mr. Miller thanked everyone for being there and for their hard work. Mr. Butzin said he wants to help teachers in the classroom and does not want people to think he doesn’t understand the struggles they face with social/emotional problems. He just thinks there are different ways to support teachers. He also said that Mrs. Mounts did an unbelievable job on the yearbook and it was one of the best he has seen. Mrs. Ulman said she is excited to work with the new union representatives. She expressed gratitude to Mrs. Sancrant for the taste testing that they were a part of. Mrs. Ulman welcomed the new hires and expressed gratitude to Mrs. Danek for her investment in the district.

IV. Advance Planning

A. Special Board Meeting – Monday, September 22nd at 7:00 p.m.

B. Policy Meeting – Monday, October 13th at 6:00 p.m.

VI. Adjournment

Motion by Edmonds, supported by Jenkins, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.