

Tawas Area Schools
Regular Board of Education Meeting
March 10, 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, March 10, 2025 in the boardroom at the administration office.

Mrs. Bruning led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

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

Administrators Present: Danek, Livingston, Hazen, Clouse

POSITIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Mrs. Danek said tonight's positive highlight will be presented by Mr. Livingston and features the Top Ten of the Class of 2025.

Mr. Livingston introduced the Top Ten students of the class of 2025. Each student shared their favorite school memory as well as their favorite class. They also shared what their future plans include. The board thanked them for attending, congratulated them on their accomplishments and wished them well in their future endeavors.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

Mrs. Ulman asked if there were any public comments on agenda or non-agenda items. There were none.

Motion by Bruning, support by Jenkins to make an amendment to the agenda. There would be an additional request for leave and these requests for leave would be moved to item 2.(a.)(9). Motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Jenkins, support by Butzin to approve the consent agenda items which included the approval of the February 10th regular and closed session minutes, the February 24th special meeting minutes and the payment of bills as follows: the monthly contractual and prepaid expenses for the general fund in the amount of \$1,051,415.85 and the lunch fund expenses in the amount of \$80,278.54. It also included payment of presented bills for the general fund in the amount of \$131,970.34. Letters of resignation were accepted from Delisa Roulo, educational assistant in the media center, effective immediately, and from Jacqueline Adams, Title I educational assistant at Clara Bolen Elementary, effective March 21, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

RECOMMENDATIONS & REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. Danek said she is recommending the hiring of Mrs. Carrie Huitema as the payroll/benefits coordinator for Tawas Area Schools. Mrs. Huitema has an extensive background in payroll, benefits administration, and human resources management and was previously employed in this position for over 20 years. She was chosen as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Bruning, support by Butzin to hire Carrie Huitema as the Payroll/Benefits Coordinator for Tawas Area Schools. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek said that Mr. Livingston is recommending that Mrs. Tracy Misekow be hired to fill the media center educational assistant vacancy in the middle school. Mrs. Misekow has an associate of arts degree from Delta College and has subbed in the district for years, including subbing in

this position. She was chosen as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Bruning, support by Jenkins to hire Tracy Misekow. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek stated that this is the time of year that recommendations are made regarding probation and tenure for our teachers. She indicated that the building principals have been actively working on evaluating their staffs. The process is designed to be a continual improvement process which involves multiple classroom visits, communications and a minimum of two formal observations before a final evaluation can be administered. Since it is a more thorough and involved process, evaluations won't be complete until late spring. However, administration has completed the required observations and visitations giving them the information needed to make recommendations for the 2025-26 school year.

Motion by Bruning, support by Jenkins to approve the probationary periods as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Bruning, support by Jenkins to recognize tenure for Ms. Patricia Ellisor and Mr. Adam Davis under the Michigan Teacher Tenure Act effective June 30, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek said that Mr. Robert Stephenson is requesting an extension on his unpaid medical leave. In April of 2024, Mr. Stephenson was granted a one-year unpaid leave. This request will soon expire and Mr. Stephenson is scheduled to have another surgery, which has not yet been scheduled, with an expected recovery time of 3-5 days in the hospital followed by 2-4 weeks of home rehabilitation. Mrs. Malewska asked how this position has been covered for the past year and if granting this request prohibits the department from hiring someone to fill this position. Mrs. Danek said the position has been being covered by substitutes in the interim. Motion by Malewska, support by Butzin to extend the unpaid medical leave of Mr. Robert Stephenson for 90 days, beginning April 1, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek said that we have another request for unpaid medical leave from bus driver, Mr. David Ferguson. Mr. Ferguson was scheduled for surgery on March 5, 2025 and has an anticipated recovery period of 4-6 weeks. Motion by Bruning, support by Jenkins to grant Mrs. David Ferguson unpaid medical leave for up to 90 days, beginning March 5, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Committee Reports – Mrs. Danek said the Health Center Committee met on February 17th and again on February 24th to review the consent forms and the interagency agreement. Questions that came out of that meeting, as well as revisions to the document, were submitted to Carley at Alcona Health Clinic for review. Mrs. Danek said that she expects updated documents from Carley by the end of this week. The committee will then do an informal review of the document before it is presented to the Board for approval. Mr. Butzin asked about mental health services. Mrs. Danek said that mental health services were to be included in the behavioral health position.

Legislative Report – Mrs. Danek said she is following a package of bills regarding changes to teacher certification. This includes a bill allowing additional subject area endorsements to be added to a teaching certificate if the certificate holder passed that subject area on the MTTC test, a bill requiring that college and university teacher preparation programs ensure that the mathematics and science programs are developed with the consultation of a professor or content expert, and a bill which would allow local school districts, ISDs, and public school academies to use a local teaching certificate. She said she is following these bills which are now before the full House for consideration.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Danek said that Mr. Axline is recommending that the Board approve a bid from Inacomp TSG in the amount of \$154,820 for network switching and access points. She said that copies of the 3 bids received were included in the board packets as well as details of these bids and the E-

Rate Bid Assessment Worksheet that was used to compare bids. Mrs. Danek reminded the Board that this project qualifies as an E-Rate product and approximately 80-85% of the cost will be reimbursed through E-Rate funds. Mrs. Ulman asked what this all means. Mrs. Danek said it is essentially an upgrade to Wi-Fi and the switches before they become obsolete. Motion Malewska, support by Butzin to accept the E-Rate bid in the amount of \$154,820 from Inacomp TSG. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Ulman said that closed session would be moved to the end of the meeting.

INFORMATION & PROPOSALS

Superintendent Report – Mrs. Danek gave an update on the glass block project. She said that McMath took most of the responsibility for the problems with the glass block, but not all responsibility. Initially, Hendrix was not willing to cover any of the cost, but Mrs. Danek found an email where Hendrix stated that McMath and Hendrix were both equally responsible for the issues with the glass block. When confronted with this and told that McMath was covering half of the project, Hendrix said to “send them the bill.” Danek said the district would spend about \$4,000 and McMath and Hendrix would cover the remainder of the cost. Work on this is set to begin this week and will not cause a disruption to learning. Mrs. Danek stated that when the new gym floor was installed they were told it would need to be refurbished every year for the first two years and then the third year this process could be skipped. However, Mr. Lichota has noticed some chipping in the floor and is having someone come in to do an assessment of the floor to determine if the floor should actually be refurbished this year. Lastly, Mrs. Danek shared that there is a potential of bringing a JROTC program to the area, which is exciting. She met with other schools in the ISD to discuss this opportunity.

Student Representatives – Ms. Kloska talked briefly about attending the MASC/MAHS state finals. She said she had a great time and learned a lot from the experience.

Administration –Mrs. Clouse highlighted the students of the month. She said literacy night is this Wednesday. The shoebox parade will take place on the Monday before Spring Break and STEAM night is quickly approaching. Mr. Mejeur said that Trace Reay finished 7th at the State Wrestling Finals. For winter sports, there were 1,937 students that attended home games. He also stated that Spring sports started today. Mr. Hazen stated that they are still recognizing students with the “Caught Being Awesome” award and rewarding them with a coupon to a local establishment. On Friday, staff participated in a half day of professional development. Math and ELA teachers reviewed potential new curriculum for those departments. The school improvement team met on February 26, 2025 and discussed revising the “Be Brave” acronym and rolling that out in the fall. Mr. Livingston reviewed the student numbers from the recent count day and said that the field audit of the high school went well. He said that the high school Science Olympics team qualified for States in 5 individual events, and the middle school Science Olympics team qualified for the State finals as a team. Mr. Livingston also highlighted Charlene Liang, whose artwork won an award from MEEMIC. Charlene also won a drawing tablet and a \$500 donation to the school. The middle school and high school choir both qualified for States. The Top 10 of the Class of 2025 were treated to breakfast last week. He also talked about the character education initiatives that are ongoing in the middle and high school

From the Board – Mrs. Jenkins congratulated the choir and Trace Reay on their accomplishments. She also congratulated the teachers who were granted tenure and the new hires. Mrs. Jenkins stated that the book fair was taking place this week at Clara Bolen. Mrs. Bruning said it was nice to see a variety in future occupations among the Top 10 students. Mr. Miller said he appreciates everyone who put together the positive highlight and thanked everyone involved. Mr. Butzin had nothing to add, other than “Go Braves.” Mrs. Malewska thanked Mrs. Danek for calling out Hendrix and saving the district some money. She congratulated Trace Reay and the Science Olympics teams as well as the band and choir, and said she was excited to see Charlene Liang win the MEEMIC award. Mrs. Ulman asked when the last time the math curriculum was updated and how the current curriculum compares to the new curriculums that are being considered. Mr. Hazen

said he would get that information to her because he was unsure at that time. Mrs. Ulman also asked how many students are required for the JROTC program to start up. Mrs. Danek said that a minimum of 50 students is required over all of the participating districts in the ISD. She congratulated the probationary and tenured teachers. Mrs. Ulman then read a statement that she had prepared regarding the issues that have recently been brought up on social media. The statement is below:

“We have two important topics that are being displayed on social media.

Regarding the first one, the Tawas area school district has a dress code policy which is evaluated every year. We have two policy readings at which time we take public comments because we value the feedback of our community. We do our very best to find a common ground of what is acceptable to foster the best learning environment for our students. Having a strict dress code promotes professionalism, encourages equality, encourages responsibility and enhances focus on skills and talents. We do our best to enforce our policy consistently and fairly. Being fair and consistent is essential to building trust and respect. It ensures that everyone is treated with equality and in turn that will foster a sense of integrity and accountability in any environment. In an effort to help stay consistent the district will do our best to define gray areas and listen to feedback to support any issues that may not have already been addressed.

Secondly, I would like to address social media and board member communication. Every board member has been assigned a personal email that is tied to the district and each email address is posted on the tawas.net website. The best way to contact us individually is through our email. We do not have a Tawas Area Board of Education social media platform. Board policies, budgets, contracts, and evaluations are all done in the boardroom. That being said, we are all entitled to our own personal social media privileges. The board respects everyone's right to their first amendment and freedom of speech. However, a personal social media interaction is not a reflection of Tawas Board of Ed. It is not our voice or a reflection of our vision as a district. Recent controversial comments that have come to light regarding interactions of Mr. Butzin and a parent are not a voice of the Tawas Area board of education and it is not the vision that we work towards. These statements were his personal comments and not intended to be the thoughts of the board. We as a board will do our best to help clearly define what is meant to be personal comments. The best way to know our district policies, procedures, budgets, contracts and evaluations is through our board spokesperson (the board president) or the superintendent.

Thank you to everyone for your patience and understanding while we worked through this trying time. We appreciate your continued support. our priority remains fostering a respectful, supportive environment for students, families and staff. “

ADVANCE PLANNING

Mrs. Danek said that herself and Mrs. Harvey would be meeting with Phil Mikulski, our NEOLA representative, to review new and updated policies. A meeting with the policy committee would need to be scheduled prior to the April board meeting to review these policies before presenting them to the board. The meeting was scheduled for April 7, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

Mrs. Danek also scheduled a meeting with the curriculum committee on April 7, 2025 at 5:30.

At 7:50 p.m., the Board took a 5-minute recess before entering into a closed session for a negotiation discussion.

Motion by Jenkins, support by Bruning to enter closed session at 7:57 p.m. for a discussion regarding negotiations. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to return to open session by Jenkins, support by Butzin at 8:14 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Ulman, support by Butzin to increase administration and non-certified pay scales by 3%. Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Jenkins, support by Butzin to adjourn at 8:16 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.