

**MILAN AREA SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING  
Thursday, January 12, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Milan Area Schools Board of Education was called to order in the Milan High School Theater located at 200 Big Red Drive, Milan MI, 48160, by President Cislo at 7:00 p.m. on January 12, 2023.

Board Members Present: Cislo, Rosen-Leacher, Moccio, Heikka, Meray

Board Members Absent: Frait, Faro

Signed in Staff: Bryan Girbach, Ryan McMahon, Yvette Kashmer, Krista Hendrix, Jennifer Barker, Lindsay Kriner

Signed in Guests: Michael McVey, Rachel Hobbs, Andrea Bennink, Sydney Smith, Jayme McElvany, Jacob Bennink, April Nicks, Shannon, Lake Foster, Izzy, Logan Tisdale, Holli Vallade, Josh McElvany, Carolyn Wetzler, George Elder, Trish Parker, Elizabeth Satterly, Annie Kruse, Doug Charles, George Wilkins, Stacy Terassi, Darryl Ansel, Mike Charter, Ashley St. Clair, Eric Rice, Michael Orr, Kurt DeMars, Jessica Leacher, Jill Tewsley, John Leacher, Jodi Overbeek, Pam Ackerman, Larry Biederman, Amy Bissell, Mike Angstadt, Heidi Johnson, Jennifer Bolanos, Laila Jasper, Alecia Powell, Jessica Lubke, Anthony Carvalho, Catherine Pucci, Dallas Aitson, Nicholas Wilson, Yvonne Smiley, Mary Kerkes, Maya Faro, Avery Powell

Pledge of Allegiance

The Oath of Office was ceremoniously performed by President Cislo for our two recently elected Board Members (Betty Rosen-Leacher: re-elected and Sara Meray: newly elected). Betty and Sara will be serving 6 year terms. The official Oath of Office was performed at an earlier date.

In recognition of National School Board Month, Superintendent Girbach recognized the Board for their hard work and tireless efforts to support our students.

Motion by Heikka supported by Moccio to elect Andrew Cilso for President of the Milan Area Schools Board of Education for a one year term. All Ayes. Carried 5-0

Motion by Heikka supported by Moccio to elect Betty Rosen-Leacher for Vice President of the Milan Area Schools Board of Education for a one year term. All Ayes. Carried 5-0

Motion by Moccio supported by Rosen-Leacher to elect Michelle Heikka for Secretary of the Milan Area Schools Board of Education for a one year term. All Ayes. Carried 5-0

Motion by Heikka supported by Moccio to elect Tom Faro for Treasurer of the Milan Area Schools Board of Education for a one year term. All Ayes. Carried 5-0

Motion by Rosen-Leacher supported by Moccio to approve the appointments listed below:  
Washtenaw School Board Association Representative Kirsten Frait  
Legislative Relations Network Representative Kirsten Frait.

All Ayes. Carried 5-0

Public Comment:

- Michael McVey of the Saline Area School Board of Education and the Washtenaw Association of School Boards (WASB) spoke in support of the Board and the WASB.
- Rachel Hobbs asked if the Board had reached out to legal counsel regarding an ACLU letter received by the Board and presented her own research to rebut the statements in the ACLU letter.
- Andrea Bennink asked questions about the criteria used by the book review committee, suggested segregating books based on ratings, and suggested compromises.
- Sydney Smith spoke of Governor Whitmer's focus on education and pointed out that students sign appropriate use forms when issued a chromebook and that the school uses filters to prevent access to obscene material.
- Jaime McElvany read excerpts from books she finds objectionable and Penthouse magazine.
- Jacob Bennink spoke about the upcoming Big Red Board Chat and sought clarification on the status of providing paraprofessionals keys. He also described positive interactions at the High School.
- April Nicks expressed concern regarding certain books available in the library.
- Shannon read excerpts from books she finds objectionable in the library.
- Lake Foster expressed his opinion that the reading of books during board meetings was getting old.
- Izzy admitted she is only 17 years old and read books she finds objectionable in the library.
- Logan Tisdale, of Temperance, quoted the Bible, shared his religious beliefs, and reminded the Board of their duty to avoid stumbling blocks to education.
- Holli Vallade spoke in favor of the Board reading Why Meadow Died and spoke of bullying and discipline policies.
- Ashley St.Clair read an article from author Stephen King regarding book banning.
- Josh McElvany spoke of Jayme McElvany and his concerns regarding her reading materials she finds objectionable.
- Carolyn Wetzler spoke favorably about teachers, staff, and the Board.
- George Elder read books he finds objectionable in the library.
- Trish Parker quoted the Boy Scout oath, expressed concern about certain materials in the library, and the treatment of paraprofessionals.
- Elizabeth Satterly spoke in favor of certain materials in the library, parental choice, and allowing victims to process sexual assault without belittling their experience. She also read quotes from teenagers expressing their thoughts on book banning.
- Annie Kruse congratulated newly elected Board members and sought clarification on the Superintendent's annual evaluation, the Board's handling of conflict of interest issues, and FOIA requests.

Motion by Rosen-Leacher supported by Moccio to approve the minutes of the Special meeting of December 21, 2022. All Ayes. Carried 4-0 Abstention from Meray

Motion by Moccio supported by Rosen-Leacher to approve the minutes of the Special meeting closed session of December 21, 2022. All Ayes. Carried 4-0 Abstention from Meray

Motion by Rosen-Leacher supported by Moccio to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting of December 21, 2022. All Ayes. Carried 4-0 Abstention from Meray

Motion by Rosen-Leacher supported by Moccio to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting closed session of December 21, 2022. All Ayes. Carried 4-0 Abstention from Meray

Motion by Meray supported by Heikka to approve the bills/reimbursement of expenses. All Ayes. Carried 5-0

The Board heard the First Reading of the General Fund Budget Amendment as included in Attachment A

Motion by Heikka supported by Moccio to approve the purchase of two 77 passenger buses from Midwest Transit Equipment as described in Attachment B. All Ayes. Carried 5-0

Motion by Heikka supported by Rosen-Leacher to approve a future book student of “Why Meadow Died” by Andrew Pollack and Max Eden. All Ayes. Carried 5-0

#### Public Comments:

- Jayme McElvany alleged that providing certain materials to minors is a felony, accused the Board of hiding behind educational exceptions in the law, spoke of the ACLU and their attempts to avoid book banning, provided her interpretation of the First Amendment, and indicated that the Board would receive a letter from the St. Thomas Moore Society regarding books in schools.
- Holli Vallade spoke again about the Board’s book study, alleged that concerns regarding books are limited to the books and not teachers, read excerpts from a book allegedly at Paddock Elementary School, and alleged that the book, the Bluest Eye, normalizes pedophilia.
- Annie Kruse alerted the Board that the audio on the live feed was cutting in and out.
  - President Cislo indicated that while the live feed may be an issue, the meeting was recorded and would be posted on YouTube in its entirety.
- Doug Charles read an excerpt from the Bible discussing sex.
- George Wilkins expressed concerns about books in the library and stated that he believes the Bible is different.
- Stacy Terassi read excerpts from books she finds objectionable.
- Rachel Hobbs gave her thoughts on the First Amendment and its relationship to books in the library, indicated that she appreciated the Board’s upcoming book study, stated that she believed that the book Fun Home was donated to the GSA and that the donation was unlawful and should be investigated, asked if the District uses the EBSCO database, and welcomed new Board members.

- Trisha Parker expressed concern with students attending Board meetings for classes.
- Sydney Smith expressed that she was glad the Board is conducting the book study, mentioned the lack of keys for paraprofessionals, addressed certain alleged inaccuracies in public comments, addressed middle aged women reading books, her belief that sex in the Bible is not explicit, and encouraged Board members to grow up and take a stand.
- Darryl Ansel, a former officer in Monroe, expressed concern related to certain books in the library.
- Mike Charter expressed that the Board meetings are a democracy in action.
- Ashley St. Clair expressed concern regarding who is actually exposing children to books they find objectionable, the Board's new policies allowing parental consent, and her belief that kids are now reading these books because they are being read at Board meetings.
- Eric Rice expressed his belief that kids are now checking out certain books because individuals are reading them at Board meetings.
- Michael Orr read excerpts from a book he finds objectionable.
- Kurt DeMars spoke in favor of the Bible.

Student Board Member Comments:

- Faro provided information on upcoming High School events and congratulated DECA students on their recent success.
- Powell provided information on Mama Mia and other upcoming school events.

Superintendent's Comments were heard on the following topics:

- Welcome Back to Students and Staff
- Reminder - No School on Monday, January 16th - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Resignation of Early Childhood Director
- Welcomed Sara Meray and Betty Rosen-Leacher to the Board
- Sex Education Advisory Board Update

Assistant Superintendent Comments were heard on the following topics:

- Reimbursement Grant for Board Trainings
- Title III Grant Amendment for Carry Over Funds

Board Member Comments:

- Cislo reminded Board members to provide their preferred committee assignments, discussed building sponsors from the Board, addressed questions regarding the Superintendent's annual evaluation, reminded the community about the upcoming Big Red Board Chat, provided the Board Policy addressing Board Conflicts of Interest, and provided the Board Policy addressing Community Complaints/Book Challenges.
- Meray thanked the community for the opportunity to serve and thanked the Board for the warm welcome.
- Rosen-Leacher thanked the community for the opportunity to serve and indicated that she and Ms. Meray would attend MASB training related to the Superintendent's evaluation.
  - Mr. Cislo clarified that Ms. Meray would attend the MASB training as soon as possible.

- Heikka read death and rape threats received by Board members against them, their spouses, and their children as a result of the hyperbolic language used to describe them and encouraged the community to come together to solve issues facing the District.
- Moccio spoke of the death and rape threats made against her children and the steps she had to take to notify her employer to keep her fellow teachers and students safe while at work.

Time of Adjournment: 9:23 p.m.