

**MILAN AREA SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WORKSHOP MEETING  
Wednesday, October 27, 2021**

The workshop 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 7:01 p.m. on October 27, 2021.

**Board Members Present:** Cislo, Faro, Frait, Heikka, Kiger, Landingham

**Board Members Absent:** Moccio

**Staff Present:** Bryan Girbach, Ryan McMahon, Krista Hendrix, Jennifer Barker, Yvette Kashmer

**Guests Present:** Yo Gabba Gabba, Louise Swoffer, Annie Kruse, Andrea Bennink, Renee` Humes, Sue Kesterson, Rachel Hobbs, Lisa Sanders, Alecia Powell, Debbie Allen, Kirk Demars, George Elder, Lesco Brandon

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Public Comments:**

- Annie Kruse congratulated the Boys Tennis Team and asked the Board to consider the purchase of a Practice Wall for the Tennis Teams.
- Andrea Bennink thanked the District for events taking place throughout the District including in-person options for Parent Teacher Conferences. Bennink also talked about relationships between parents and teachers. She voiced concern about the no visitor policy and requested that it be re-evaluated.
- Rachel Hobbs spoke to the Board regarding questions concerning COVID expenditures and administrative raises. Hobbs asked that the Board review the conflict of interest laws and policies for possible concerns.
- Holli Vallade spoke to the Board regarding forms on the District website.
- Lisa Sanders shared that October is the month of dyslexia awareness. Sanders also shared her concerns about special education students and their needs and would like to see library books specifically designed for special needs students. .

Motion by Faro supported by Heikka to approve the consent agenda that includes the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 13, 2021. Motion failed 1-5. No votes by Kiger, Landingham, Cislo, Frait, Heikka

Motion by Heikka supported by Frait to approve the consent agenda that includes the amended minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 13, 2021. Motion Carried 5-1 No vote by Faro

Motion by Faro supported by Heikka to accept the 2021 Annual Audit as presented in Attachment A. All Ayes. Carried 6-0

Motion by Faro supported by Heikka to approve the purchase of one 71 passenger bus from Midwest Transit Equipment as described in Attachment B. All Ayes. Carried 6-0

Motion by Faro supported by Frait to approve the change of date for the November 10, 2021 Regular Meeting as detailed in Attachment C. All Ayes. Carried 6-0

The Board discussed the book “Safe Is Not Enough: Better Schools for LGBTQ Students”

### **Public Comments:**

- Sue Kesterson asked the Board to support visitors in the buildings and spoke about the responsibility of the Special Education Director and his Administrator Assistant to inform the District of the special months.
- Andrea Bennink spoke to the Board about a resource called Axis-The Culture Translator.
- Kirk DeMars spoke to the Board about Christian views being included in our schools, and addressed his views on the book “Safe is Not Enough: Better Schools for LGBTQ Students”. DeMars also spoke regarding his personal and Christian views on LGBTQ and on bullying.
- Holli Vallade asked the Board to lift the no visitor policy. Vallade also spoke about bullying. She also asked the Board not to support any policy that required vaccinations for students or staff.
- Lisa Sanders told her family’s personal story about bullying.

### **Superintendent’s Comments:**

#### **Student-to Student Misconduct Update**

All reported student-to-student misconduct issues are addressed.

- Incidents reported to teachers may be addressed in the classroom. If the teacher feels the severity of the incident requires the involvement of others, the teacher will report the incident to the guidance office or the administration office.
- Incidents reported to the guidance office may be addressed by the guidance counselor or social worker. The guidance office may also refer the incident to the administration office.
- Incidents reported to the administration office are addressed by the building administration.
- For varied reasons, there are times when incidents go unreported. It is not possible for the district to address issues that go unreported.
- Many times there are delays in students reporting student-to-student misconduct issues. This delay can impact our ability to effectively investigate the incident and

issue appropriate consequences. It is critical that these incidents are reported as soon as possible.

- Many times, student-to-student issues that are reported as bullying end up being two directional when they are investigated. This can be very frustrating to a parent who is told by their student that they are being bullied, but the school discovers that the reporting student was also involved in inappropriate behavior.
- More recently, schools have become more involved in out-of-school incidents (in-person and online/social media). Many times, out-of-school incidents need to be referred to the police because they are not a school related issue. Out-of-school incidents can only be addressed by the district if they cause a clear and substantial disruption to the school day.
- All reported student-to-student misconduct issues are addressed. While these incidents may not be handled the way that a parent wants them to be handled, they are addressed. In the end, school staff can only guarantee the actions of one human being on this planet (themselves). School staff can work hard to influence the behavior of others (students). We use relationships, powerful conversations, and progressive discipline to influence the behavior of students. Ultimately, the goal is to get the inappropriate behavior to stop.

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The investigation of student-to-student misconduct includes:

- Separating the students
- Interviewing all students involved
- Interviewing witnesses (both adult and student)
- If appropriate, referring the students to the guidance office or social worker
- Reviewing past behavior reports
- Reviewing video (if available)

In some instances, it is not possible to find corroborating evidence of an incident. In these situations, the investigator has to determine if there is a preponderance of evidence. If there is a preponderance of evidence, then disciplinary action is taken. If there is no corroborating evidence and there is not a preponderance of the evidence, the investigator will take action to make sure that all parties involved understand that in the future there should be no further interaction between the students.

The directive of no interaction allows additional incidents to be addressed in a different manner because the students were told not to interact with each other. Unfortunately, there are times when the reporting student initiates contact with the other student, complicating the situation.

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Milan Area Schools, like many other districts, uses progressive discipline. Progressive discipline is a method of discipline that uses graduated steps for dealing with problems related to a student's conduct or behavior that does not meet clearly defined standards and policies. The ultimate objective of progressive discipline is to help students correct conduct problems and resolve behavior issues at the earliest stage.

Progressive discipline includes:

- Conversations with individual students
- Referral to the Guidance Counselor
- Referral to the Social Worker
- Restorative practices (Restorative practice is a way of working with conflict that puts the focus on repairing the harm that has been done. It is an approach to conflict resolution that includes all of the parties involved.)
- Provide additional adult supervision
- Conversations with parents (phone or in-person)
- Hold re-entry meetings with students and parents
- Provide alternate recess location
- Alter daily schedules to avoid interactions between the students
- Separate students on school transportation
- Lunch detentions
- After school detentions
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspensions
- Referral to the Superintendent
- Referral to the Board of Education
- Expulsion

\* Not all of these options are used at every school or in every situation.

\* These corrective actions are not always followed in order. The severity of an incident can cause an administrator to implement higher levels of corrective action.

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Parent notification following a reported incident of student-to-student misconduct requires the school to abide by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student's education records (including discipline records). The law applies to all schools that receive funds under the U.S. Department of

Education. FERPA prohibits a school from discussing a student's educational records with anyone other than the parent/guardian of the student. **More specifically, FERPA prohibits a school district from telling a parent what discipline someone else's student received.**

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The district also has numerous proactive initiatives in place to help prevent student-to-student misconduct:

- Social Workers in every building available to support peer-to-peer concerns
- Define bullying in an age appropriate manner
- Daily classroom time to build classroom communities/families
- Classroom lessons on bullying and appropriate human interactions
- Classroom lessons on Positive Mindsets (empathy, resilience, optimism, flexibility, and persistence)
- Classroom lessons on Strengths of the Month (belonging, friendship, kindness, courage, hope, curiosity, and confidence)
- Classroom lessons on social emotional learning
- Conversations in health classes
- Circle conversations
- Discussions and lessons on behavior expectations
- Classroom norm setting
- Providing each student with a trusted adult
- Presentations on treating others with dignity and respect
- Mediation sessions (student peer-mediation or adult lead)
- Use of "Buddy Benches" on playgrounds
- Use of OK2Say reporting system
- Observe October as National Bullying Prevention Month
- Trauma Informed professional development for staff

\* This is a compiled list from the district. Not all of these programs are age appropriate for each building. Therefore, each initiative may not be implemented at every school.

### **Students**

- The district wants to remind our students and families that, throughout the 2021-2022 school year, full meal equivalent breakfasts and lunches will be free to all students on scheduled school days. Individual milks and other food items will NOT be free.
- The Milan Boys Tennis team earned the following accolades:
  - Huron League Champions
  - MHSAA Regional Champions
  - Undefeated in the Huron League
  - Seeded at multiple flights at the State Finals
  - Top 10 Ranking

- Lapeer Quad Champions
- Midland Tournament Runner-Up
- Record breaking performances by multiple individuals.

The Big Reds scored 7 points at the state finals. Milan finished 4th in the state amongst public schools, and 11th overall in the tournament which featured 25 teams.

- The Milan Equestrian team made it to the state finals for a 2nd consecutive year. The team placed 8th at the state finals, improving on their finish from last season. Milan's team finished with 56 points. Milan had two individuals place in their respective events. Sydney Bain, and her horse Pudge, finished 2nd in the state in Jumping. Payton Seog, and her horse Titan, finished 7th in the state in Flags. This was a historic season for the Milan Equestrian team, as they were Regional Reserve Champions once again.
- The Milan Varsity Football team ended the regular season with a 7-2 record earning them a spot in the playoffs. The Milan Big Reds will play New Boston Huron at home this Friday at 7:00 PM.
- Allie Millina has been selected to serve as the 11th Grade Student Board Representative. I have an orientation meeting scheduled with Allie for later this week. She will begin attending Board meetings on November 9th.

### **Staff**

- Jeannie Baber's (Transportation Director) father passed away.

### **General**

- Milan COVID data can be viewed by visiting [milanareaschools.org](http://milanareaschools.org) and clicking on the COVID Case Data (24 Hour Notifications & Weekly Dashboard) link.
- Parent teacher conferences took place last Wednesday (10-20-21) and Thursday (10-21-21). Superintendent Girbach visited each of the buildings during conferences and talked with parents, teachers, and administrators. All reports were positive. Parents are glad to have students back in school 5 days a week.

### **Budget**

- Krista Hendrix, the Finance Director, has started the first budget revision process for the 2021-2022 school year. Once the revision is completed, it will be presented to the Board of Education for review and approval.

### **Assistant Superintendent Comments:**

- Assistant Superintendent McMahon updated the Board on the status of the K-12 Social Studies curriculum review. Building representatives have been meeting to explore curriculum options and will be hosting presentations/review sessions with vendors through January with the intent to pilot a program or programs during the second semester for a purchase recommendation before next school year.
- Assistant Superintendent McMahon shared with the Board that he attended the first two of eight days of a Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Curriculum Audit training provided by Wayne RESA. The sessions will continue through February and will provide guidance on curriculum evaluation.

- Assistant Superintendent McMahon shared with the Board that the district's application for the Section 35a(5) Additional Instructional Time and Interventions Grant was awarded in the amount of \$30,504.94. These funds will go towards providing instructional support for early literacy instruction.

**Student Board Member Comments:** None

**Board Member Comments:**

- Board Member Landingham spoke about reviewing the parent visitors policy and also asked the community to not spread false information.
- Board Member Heikka reminded the Policy Committee that comments are due on the Board Operating Procedures. Heikka congratulated the Football, Tennis, Girls Swim, FFA, and Equestrian teams, and wished the Cross Country Team luck. Heikka also addressed the conflict of interest comment by a community member.
- Board Member Kiger shared with the Board that she attended the Town Hall with Representative Walberg. Kiger also announced that the Board will be in Tolan Square for Downtown Trick or Treating on Friday October 29th.
- Board Member Faro stated that LGBTQ conversations are important and the fact that all students need to be supported and feel safe. Faro also read aloud the mask wearing policy to clarify that discipline is allowed for violations. Faro also commended Krista Hendrix and the District Office Staff for the hard work on the audit.
- Board Member Frait congratulated the Tennis, FFA, and Equestrian teams for their accomplishments. Frait would like to see parents back in the buildings. Frait also asked that the Board look into Mrs. Hobbs legal questions about conflicts of interest. She also stated that she would not personally support COVID19 vaccine mandates.

**Time of Adjournment:** 9:08 p.m.