

**MILAN AREA SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday May 7, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Milan Area Schools Board of Education was called to order in the Milan Area Schools District Board Room located at 100 Big Red Drive, Milan MI, 48160, by President Cislo at 7:00 p.m. on May 7, 2025.

Board Members Present: Cislo, Faro, Gutierrez, Burdette, Meray, Prior

Board Members Absent: Heikka

Signed in Staff: Bryan Girbach, Ryan McMahon, Margaret Durkee

Signed in Guests: Sarah Norton, Chris West, Amina West, Imara West, Molly West

Pledge of Allegiance

Motion by Faro supported by Gutierrez to thank the Educators of Milan Area Schools as recorded in Attachment A. All Ayes. Carried 6-0

Public Comment: None

Motion by Prior supported by Gutierrez to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 23, 2025. All Ayes. Carried 6-0

Motion by Faro supported by Burdette to approve the bills/reimbursement of expenses. All Ayes. Carried 6-0

Motion by Meray supported by Faro to approve the “Resolution to Consider Designation of Electoral Representative for the June 2, 2025 Biennial Election” as outlined in Attachment B. All Ayes. Carried 6-0

Motion by Faro supported by Burdette to approve Christopher West as a Milan High School science teacher effective for the 2025-2026 school year. All Ayes. Carried 6-0

Motion by Prior supported by Gutierrez to approve the FCI Graduates (as listed in Attachment C) contingent upon their completion of all graduation requirements. All Ayes. Carried 6-0

The Board heard the First Reading of the 2025-2026 WISD Budget Resolution as included in Attachments D1, D2, D3, and D4

Public Comment: None

Student Board Member Comments: None

Assistant Superintendent Comments were heard on the following topics:

- Paddock Principal Hiring Update
- Assistant Superintendent Hiring Update
- Class Composite Project Update

Superintendent Comments were heard on the following topics:

- MHS Chamber Choir Congratulations
- Community Foundation of Monroe County and Greater Milan Area Community Fund Scholarship Breakfast - Congratulations to the Scholarship Winners
- 2025-2026 Y5's and Kindergarten Registration Reminder
- Prom Update and Well Wishes
- Band Concert Announcement
- MHS Senior Honors Night Announcement
- Choir Concert Announcement
- Graduation Announcement
- 8th Grade Recognition night Announcement
- Thank You to All MAS Educators
- Thank You to Local Businesses for Supporting our Teacher Appreciation Week
- Big Red Board Chat Announcement
- State Budgets and MAS Preliminary Budget

Board Member Comments:

- Faro thanked teachers and staff for their continued impact on students, especially during Staff Appreciation Week. He asked that meetings with the MEA be scheduled soon to address upcoming contract negotiations and the Fall 2025 calendar. He noted the district has received only 55% of state payments so far and that federal grants are still pending. He explained that some budget models suggest a per-pupil increase, while others show potential cuts, and noted that one-time funds to offset retirement costs have ended. He urged careful review of the upcoming amendment and clarified that sinking fund dollars won't arrive until October 2025 and March 2026, so they won't appear in the current amendment but may be considered in the next cycle.
- Prior expressed gratitude to all educators and encouraged the public to thank those who've made a difference. She thanked the community for approving the sinking fund and acknowledged that many other districts across the state were not as fortunate. She promoted the FFA greenhouse, and encouraged community support for both the FFA and local businesses that support schools. She praised FFA's contributions to Earth Day and local beautification efforts and said she looked forward to many upcoming student events.
- Burdette thanked all staff for their dedication, not just during appreciation week, but year-round. He gave special recognition to Nancy Gill and the Milan High School Sunshine Club for organizing staff meals and gifts. He shared how proud he was to attend the chamber choir's performance at the state festival in Leslie and the GMACF Scholarship Breakfast. With a senior in the district, he said he's looking forward to several upcoming events such as concerts, senior honors night, and graduation. He expressed deep appreciation for the support his children have received from Milan educators over the years.
- Gutierrez thanked the families, students, directors, and volunteers involved in the *Wizard of Oz* production. She praised the dual-cast performances and the positive impact the show had on students, including her own child. She recognized Sara and Julz Meray and CJ Brooks for their work on the production. Ms. Gutierrez also attended the GMACF Scholarship Breakfast and celebrated board scholarship recipients Wesley and Zachary. She expressed gratitude for district staff across all buildings and encouraged the community to contact legislators about the delayed state budget, noting how it hinders effective planning at the local level.
- Meray added her deep thanks to all district staff and shared her pride in Milan's leadership and innovation, especially after visiting other districts through her role with REMC. She

noted that despite Milan's small size, it is on par with districts across the state. She reflected on a recent education town hall hosted by WASB and WISD and urged others to review the funding risk summary shared by Ms. Gutierrez. Quoting Senator Irwin, she emphasized the importance of not letting criticism overshadow the many successes of public education. She celebrated Milan's continuous improvement and commitment to the arts, congratulating choir students on their division one rating. She also thanked the community for supporting the musical and shared stories of its emotional impact on students. Ms. Meray expressed gratitude for the opportunity to volunteer with the theater and praised Milan for valuing creative expression across disciplines.

- Cislo also praised the *Wizard of Oz* production and thanked Ms. Meray and staff involved. He reminded the public about the Big Red Board Chat and noted that board members Heikka, Prior, and Gutierrez would attend. He thanked staff for regular updates, especially from Ms. Powell, Ms. Bookout, and Ms. Schwartz. He shared that the district communication committee is finalizing a recommendation aligned with the strategic plan and Mr. McMahon's presentation which will be brought to the board soon. Mr. Cislo acknowledged student accomplishments and thanked all district educators. He emphasized his appreciation for the dedication of all district educators, acknowledging how Milan's strong leadership pipeline—exemplified by Mr. Girbach and Mr. McMahon—shows the commitment of those who choose to grow within the district. He emphasized that Milan is in good hands, and that the board always rises to the occasion by relying on strong, detailed work from our experienced staff. He praised the quality of budget data provided and said the board won't shy away from making hard decisions. He again thanked the community for passing the sinking fund and noted many similar efforts failed in other districts. While it provides breathing room, he cautioned that there will be challenges ahead for the board to address.
- Prior added her reflections from a recent trip abroad, where public education isn't guaranteed. She met someone who only completed second grade due to cost and noted how fortunate U.S. students are to have access. She echoed Ms. Meray, urging families to focus on positives in their child's school experience and look for ways to build on them. She emphasized the importance of continuous improvement.

Time of Adjournment: 7:59 p.m.