

ATHENS AREA SCHOOLS  
Board of Education  
East Leroy, Michigan 49051  
September 15, 2025

REGULAR MEETING  
High School Media Center  
7:00 P.M.

Athens High School  
300 E. Holcomb Street, Athens  
Telephone: (269) 729-5427

1. Call to order, President Knowles presiding at 7:00 pm.  
Members Present: Harvey: ✓ Hunt: ✓ Knowles: ✓ McClure: ✓ Loew: ✓ Penick: ✓ Setlak: ✓  
A quorum is present. There were 18 guests in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. Approval of Agenda:  
MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the agenda as presented. .  
Motion by Penick, Second: Harvey; Ayes: 7, Nays: 0; Motion Passed.
3. Public Comments:  
\* Kacie Brunner shared the Athens Senior Center is outgrowing the Greenfield House in Athens. She requests that the community has access to the Middle School Complex for activities such as this. She also encouraged the school to consider partnering with a group of Athens businesses and organizations to calibrate efforts concerning the Mill Pond Project. She also thanks the board for all we do for our district.
4. Presentations / Discussions:
  - A. New Hires – reported by Superintendent Beaudoin  
Recommendations to hire Sarah Lindsay as a Paraprofessional at the Elementary, and Erich Kupferschmidt as a 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at the Middle School.
  - B. Administrative Contracts – reported by Superintendent Beaudoin  
Employment Contracts for Melanie Kline, the Food Service Director, and Jill McCombs, the Executive Assistant in the Business Office, were included in the BoE packet. Both positions are for the period Sept. 11, 2025 through June 30, 2026; the contract will be reviewed each year on or before March 31<sup>st</sup>. Per the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) these positions are not eligible for membership in the union contract.
  - C. School Safety – presented by School Resource Officer (SRO) Mark Mellinger  
Officer Mellinger has been working with Superintendent Beaudoin regarding enhanced safety practices at both buildings, as well as replacing outdated practices. Previous SRO Rugg has passed on several safety ideas. Some areas of concern include district-wide safety training, safety plan updates, to include Athens Fire Department with training, events and activities, vaping issues, new programs Fast 20 and Fast 50 rewarding students for ‘tips’, and a new program similar to DARE starting at the Elementary School. He is doing regular walkthroughs with building supervisors to better evaluate facility needs and to ensure alignment with current safety expectations. He has been working with Facilities Manager Darrell Vorce to ensure that night lock systems are in place. Officer Mellinger also stated that repeat offenders will be followed up with legal action.
  - D. School Improvement (Test Scores) – reported by Superintendent Beaudoin  
The vision of our improvement plan includes MS/HS Principal William Heffner (intervention background), EL Principal Amy Hughes (Math intervention), and Katie Gilding from the CISD, as well as a comprehensive evaluation of resources and needs. We have a good plan in place and will work on modifications in the next phase.
  - E. Board Retreat and Board Norms – retreat was held August 23, 2025 at the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi in Fulton, MI. All board members attended, and it was valuable time well spent. MASB Consultant Frank Pytlowang did a good job leading the BoE in discussions. It is the desire of the BoE to incorporate Board

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Retreats into our schedules, on a Saturday afternoon, semiannual or quarterly, possibly beginning in January. We can decide topics to discuss, bundle training topics, or MASB has a list of topics. Sample Board Norms were included in the BoE packet.

G. Middle School Boilers – reported by Superintendent Beaudoin

Designer Shawn from Tower Pinkster has provided his recommendation and proposal for the boiler-room improvements/boilers at the Middle School Complex and High School. The BoE needs to review and evaluate, then consider authorization for Tower Pinkster to move forward. Any rebates will be handled by Tower Pinkster.

H. Use of Middle School Complex – reported by Superintendent Beaudoin

We have passed numerous inspections, and the complex is ready for occupancy of the old Multipurpose room. It would be advantageous to start using these rooms. If the BoE approves, there is more than enough public/community interest in using the facility as early as October.

5. Routine Matters:

A. Presentation of minutes of prior meeting

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the August 18, 2025 Regular Meeting as presented.

Motion by McClure, Second: Penick; Ayes: 7, Nays: 0; Motion Passed.

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the August 18, 2025 Closed Session as presented.

Motion by Setlak, Second: Harvey; Ayes: 7, Nays: 0; Motion Passed.

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the August 23, 2025 Board Retreat as presented.

Motion by Hunt, Second: Setlak; Ayes: 7, Nays: 0; Motion Passed.

Thanks and appreciation were expressed by President Knowles and Trustee Hunt regarding these minutes.

B. Presentation of the financial reports

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education receive and place on file for audit the financial reports for the district for the period through August 31, 2025.

Motion by Harvey, Second: Hunt; Ayes: 7, Nays: 0; Motion Passed.

6. Reports:

A. Board President – Mr. John Knowles

Reported that MASB Consultant Frank Pytlowang enjoys working with our BoE and will accommodate anything we wish to do in the future.

B. Superintendent – Mr. Kipp Beaudoin

See attached report. Highlights/additional information – the district remains financially stable. We've strategically delayed major purchases and moved available funds into interest-yielding accounts with liquidity as needed. The State budget has not yet been finalized and is causing much anxiety regarding a possible delay in state aid funding (the first disbursement may likely be pushed into November). We are pursuing information on a line of credit to support cash flow in the event of a delay. Our General Funds are fine through October; however, we need back-up plans until the State approves the School Aid Budget.

Vice President McClure expressed appreciation to Business Manager Tonia Vorce and Superintendent Beaudoin for their diligence and hard work on these matters.

C. Elementary Principal – Ms. Amy Hughes

See attached report. Highlights/additional information – our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade has the highest scoring in Calhoun County! We continue looking at what students need, and ways to support them at a greater level. There was concern about holding the Open House a week after school started; however, there was a 70% turnout of students and parents. Ms. Hughes expressed appreciation for having community and board of education members attend.

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D. High School Principal – Mr. William Heffner

See attached report. Highlights/additional information – shared that our platforms are not communicating and resources are conflicting. There was a delay in online course scheduling which led to 12-13 students starting the school year late – he spent 24 hours with Customer Service to rectify this problem. He has researched new providers and found that Michigan Virtual is fantastic to work with and offers courses we want. He will vet the process with BM Tonia Vorce regarding K-12 per person and per class pricing.

Trustee Setlak shared that we are happy to have his enthusiasm!

E. Athletic Director – Superintendent Beaudoin reported in Mrs. Kathy Parlin's absence.

See attached report. Highlights/additional information – there is a vacancy for a MS Wrestling coach; the track schedule has been revamped which will allow a more streamlined championship series and more competition within the league; Will Carleton School District is applying for full membership into the SCAA (however it is unlikely this will be approved as they don't have the necessary facilities); and the new ice maker is almost ready which will be housed in the indoor concession stand.

F. Special Education, Assessment and Compliance Officer – Mr. Walter Dubbeld

See attached report. Highlights/additional information – he referenced the state testing results from last spring; we want to be proud of our students and staff. To achieve this, we have some work to do – making some curriculum changes and providing continuous professional development opportunities for our staff.

Mr. Dubbeld reiterated the importance for teachers to document what they are teaching for the Constitution Day coming up Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>. He also reviewed the online PD classes that teachers are required to take; as well as additional CISD online class recommendations. Our revamped district website should be in operation by October.

There was no Transportation Department report this month.

7. Action Items:

A. New Hires

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the hiring of Erich Kupferschmidt as a Teacher at Athens Middle School.

Motion by Setlak, Second: Penick; Ayes: 7, Nays: 0; Motion Passed.

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the hiring of Sarah Lindsay as a Paraprofessional at East Leroy Elementary.

Motion by Harvey, Second: Hunt; Ayes: 7, Nays: 0; Motion Passed.

B. Administrative Contracts

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the contract for Melanie Kline, Food Service Director.

Motion by Setlak, Second: Loew; Ayes: 7, Nays: 0; Motion Passed.

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education approve the contract for Jill McCombs, Executive Assistant in the Business Office .

Motion by McClure, Second: Hunt; Ayes: 7, Nays: 0; Motion Passed.

C. Middle School Boilers

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent to have Tower Pinkster design a replacement request and obtain costing from Frederick Construction.

Motion by Harvey, Second: Setlak; Ayes: 7, Nays: 0; Motion Passed.

Public Comment prior to Closed Session:

\* 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher Kevin Culp attended the PD after school today, he shared his frustration regarding loss of students – since 2014 the district has lost one third of their students; he also expressed loss of trust in the community; he questioned if there is an exit interview when families leave the district, and if parents and teachers are receiving the same information all the time from top down; he expressed the need for uniformity and staff being on the 'same page' regarding information.

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Vice President McClure read a prepared statement from the BoE in response to a concern brought up during the August 18, 2025 BoE meeting from the public (specifically a high school employee). Refer to the attached addendum for the complete statement.

D. Closed Session

MOTION: Move that the Board of Education go into closed session under Section 8(a) of the Open Meetings Act to discuss the Superintendents Mid-Year Evaluation.

Motion by Harvey, Second: Setlak;

Roll Call Vote: Harvey: Yes, Hunt: Yes, Knowles: Yes, Loew: Yes, McClure: Yes, Penick: Yes, Setlak: Yes.

Ayes: 7, Nays: 0; Motion Passed.

At 7:56 pm all guests exited the meeting room, and BoE took a break prior to going in to closed session at 8:04 pm.

The Board President returned the meeting to Open Session at 8:44 pm. There were no guests in attendance.

8. Public Comment: none

9. Board Comments: none

10. Adjournment

MOTION: Move the meeting be adjourned.

Motion by Penick, Second: Setlak; Ayes: 7, Nays: 0; Motion Passed.

Time of adjournment: 8:59 pm.

Minutes signed by: Teri S. Loew, Acting/Secretary of the Board of Education

Minutes prepared by: Teri S. Loew, Board of Education Secretary

Approved for publication by the Board: October 20, 2025.