

Agenda of Regular Meeting

The Board of Trustees Van Buren ISD

A Regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Van Buren ISD will be held April 8, 2026, beginning at 4:00 PM in the Van Buren Conference Center
490 S Paw Paw Street
Lawrence, MI 49064.

Items to be discussed, considered, or acted upon are listed below and may be taken in a different order. Unless removed, consent agenda items will be approved in a single action. The public is invited to attend. Individuals needing accommodations, wishing to provide public input, or asking questions regarding any item before the Board are encouraged to contact Superintendent Dave Manson at dmanson@vbisd.org.

I. REGULAR MEETING

- A. Approval of Draft Agenda (**ROLL CALL VOTE**)
- B. Consent Agenda - (**ROLL CALL VOTE**)
 - 1. Minutes

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The **Regular Meeting** of the Van Buren Intermediate School District Board of Education was held in person on **March 11, 2026**, in the Board of Education office and called to order at **4:00 PM** with all Board members present.

Makay moved to approve the March 11, 2026, draft agenda as presented. Supported by Weiss. Roll call vote. Makay – yes, Faul – yes, Engle – yes, Weiss - yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Weiss moved to approve the Consent Agenda (**February, 4, 2026, Minutes, Composite and Summaries**). Supported by Faul. Roll call vote: Faul – yes, Engle – yes, Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Faul moved to approve the Board and Superintendent Travel for February. Supported by Engle. Roll call vote. Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, Faul – yes, Engle – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried

Pre-Approval

Name	Date(s)	Location	Estimated Cost			
			Conference:	Hotel:	Flights:	Sum:
Mary Ann Middaugh	4/9/26 - 4/12/26	NSBA Annual Conference San Antonio, TX	\$715	\$840	\$1,200	\$2,755
Karen Makay			\$715	\$840	\$1,200	\$2,755
John Weiss			\$715	\$840	\$1,200	\$2,755
John Faul			\$715	\$840	\$1,200	\$2,755
Dave Manson			\$715	\$840	\$1,200	\$2,755
Roger Engle	4/9/26 - 4/13/26		\$715	\$840	\$900	\$2,455

Post Approval

Name	Date(s)	Location	Actual Cost
Dave Manson	March 5 & 6, 2026	MAISA Spring General Membership Meeting 133 Evergreen Ave, East Lansing, MI 48823	\$325.00

Board Members’ Updates: Ms. Makay celebrated attending the MASB virtual Winter Institute where she participated in six CBA courses. Mr. Weiss also attended the Winter Institute, where he participated in two CBA courses. Mr. Engle was able to tour two more VBISD campuses and will be scheduling two more tours with Instructional Services and Early Childhood. Ms. Middaugh shared that she attended the virtual presentation with the Bright Futures architects alongside VBISD staff members to learn more about the upcoming new build. Ms. Middaugh, Ms. Makay, Mr. Weiss, and Mr. Engle attended the Educational Hero Awards banquet where all Van Buren County local districts celebrated two professionals with an award and recognition.

Superintendent Updates: Superintendent Manson gave an update on the following:

Mr. Manson shared updates on facility improvements, including occupancy of the new culinary space at VB Tech, planned upgrades to the welding lab, and continued planning for the Bright Futures remodel and addition at the Special Services Center.

Mr. Manson shared a recent Michigan legislation requiring school districts to adopt policies restricting student smartphone use during instructional time beginning in the 2026 to 2027 school year, with limited exceptions for medical, instructional, and emergency purposes.

The Superintendent also reviewed highlights of the Governor's Executive Budget Proposal, including a proposed \$250 increase in the foundation allowance, continued movement toward a weighted funding model, and proposed investments in special education, literacy, student wellness, transportation, and other categorical supports. He noted that the proposal is the beginning of the budget process and will continue to be monitored as it moves through the House and Senate.

The Board received a report regarding a possible Transportation Fuel Storage Proposal. Administration shared information about the district's current fuel usage, the anticipated loss of its current local supplier, and the potential challenges that could result from using alternative fueling locations. Possible on-site fuel tank installation at the transportation facility was discussed as one option to support reliable local access. The report also reviewed potential safety measures, possible leasing arrangements, estimated costs, operational considerations, and the potential for shared use with local partner agencies.

Presentation: Finance and Operations:

The Board received a presentation on school finance and district funding. Administration reviewed VBISD's primary funding sources, including local property tax millage, state grants and operating revenue, federal grants, and payments for services, and explained the structure of the district's three major funds: General Fund, Special Education, and Career Technical Education.

Administration also reviewed recent revenue trends, current state budget conditions, and the Governor's proposed 2026 to 2027 budget which includes a \$250 per pupil foundation increase, continued support for universal breakfast and lunch, and targeted increases for early learning, special education, career technical education, and ISD operations. The presentation noted that while the district's funds remain stable overall, each face unique financial pressures related to grants, programming costs, facilities and equipment needs, and special education reimbursement.

Type	Description	Net Increase (decrease)
GENERAL FUND		
Local Sources	Adjustment to Local Property Tax Revenue	\$80,000
State Sources	NEW 11x Consolidated Feasibility Study NEW 27h Mentoring Grant LOSS of 32P Block Grant NEW 32n OST Grant Continuation of 23H Match Mentoring NEW 107A Adult Ed Decrease 107 Adult Ed	\$75,000 \$48,000 (\$270,000) \$1,012,860 \$167,257 \$75,520 (\$68,000)
Federal Sources	Increase Grow your Own Grant Decrease Project Shine funding Close out of Project Aware	\$720,000 (\$250,000) (\$64,000)
Incoming Transfers and Other Transactions	Business Services to Local Schools Technology Services to Local Schools Mental Health Services to Local Schools	\$400,000 \$238,000 \$118,000
Instruction-Basic Needs	Decrease in GSRP Expenses - Mattawan took back local programing	(\$590,000)
Instruction-Added Needs	EL Funding / Programing - one additional ESL teacher paid with by local funds	\$120,000
Instruction - Adult Cont. Education	Reduction in Adult Education Section 107 Grant WIOA Adult Education Programming	(\$31,000) \$19,000
Support Services-Pupil	Decrease in Project Lean Programming due to funding NEW Section 107A Programming expenses Increase in Mental Health Clinician staffing VBC Youth Initiative Programming	(\$164,000) \$75,000 \$102,000 \$145,000
Support Services - Instructional Staff	Increase GYO Grant (instructional) costs Continuation 23H Grant (Math Consultant) Project Aware reduction in programming	\$550,000 \$120,000 (\$38,000)
Support Services - General Admin	NEW Assistant Superintendent Role Benefit Adjustments (payout for retirements)	\$110,000 \$30,000
Support Services - Business	NEW Shared Business Office Staff paid with local agreements	\$525,000
Support Services - Operations/Main	NEW Rent Agreements with Lawrence and Paw Paw Upgrades to rented space (updated flooring, paint, etc) NEW equipment	\$120,000 \$100,000 \$100,000
Support Services - Transportation	Shift in Transportation Supervisor Assistant Decrease GSRP Transportation out of Function 271 Decrease VBYI Transportation set-a-side	(\$58,000) (\$86,000) (\$95,000)
Supporting Services - Central	NEW 11x Feasibility Study Adjust Technology department staffing/costs	\$75,000 \$110,000
Community Services	LOSS of 32P Block Grant NEW 32n OST Grant	(\$120,000) \$65,000
Facilities Construction and Improvements	Decrease Construction Projects to actual	(\$140,000)
Outgoing Transfers and Other Transactions	Increase GSRP Sub-recipients payments NEW 32n OST Sub-recipient payments NEW 27h Mentor Sub-recipient payments	\$626,000 \$944,000 \$48,000
SPECIAL EDUCATION FUND		
Local Sources	Adjustment to Local Property Tax Revenue	\$205,000
State Sources	Increase in State Aid Special Education Funding (includes \$700k related to PY expenses)	\$400,000
Federal Sources	SE-Flowthrough adjustment to 26 allocation	(\$530,000)

Instruction - Added Needs	Purchased Services / Supply Adjustments	(\$116,000)
Support Services - Pupil	Benefit Adjustments (Health Insurance) Psychologist Staff Adjustments Speech Therapist Staff Adjustments Social Worker Staff Adjustments Orientation Mobility Specialist	\$250,000 \$180,000 (\$380,000) \$230,000 \$100,000
Support Services - Instructional Staff	NEW Assistant Superintendent Role	\$110,000
Support Services - Operations and Maint	Staffing Adjustments Building repairs / maintenance supplies New Equipment	\$120,000 (\$75,000) \$75,000
Facilities Construction and Improvements	Adjustment for actual projects	(\$370,000)
Outgoing Transfers and Other Transactions	Increase in SE Payments to Local Schools (includes \$983k for millage overage in FY 25)	\$612,000
CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION FUND		
Local Sources	Adjustment to Local Property Tax Revenue	\$120,000
Instruction - Added Needs	Additional Staffing and Adjustments- Auto/Health/Business Programs Sale of Decatur Home / FY 25 On-Site Home Reduction of Supplies/Capital Needs from Original	\$175,000 \$250,000 (\$110,000)
Support Services - Pupil	Staffing Adjustments - reduction in secretary position	(\$72,000)
Support Services - Operations/Main	New Equipment adjustment	\$70,000
Support Services - Transportation	Additional vehicles for transportation of pupils (originally in FY 25 budget but did not come in until after 7/1)	\$80,000
Facilities Construction and Improvements	Finalize Culinary Project / Finish Electrical Project / Start of Welding Project Corwin Meadows Extension Land Purchase	\$\$1,250,000 (\$150,000)

The following departments provided updates to the Board and the community:

Special Education: The Board received a Special Education update focused on efforts to reduce the use of seclusion and restraint, improve referral processes for center-based programs, and address preliminary ancillary staffing needs for 2026 to 2027. Administration also presented resolutions to post a Diagnostic Teacher Consultant and School Psychologist position and to approve a joint Medicaid Coordinator position with the Early Childhood Department.

Technology: The Technology Services report highlights current artificial intelligence initiatives and statewide technology collaboration. Administration reported that a secure, on premises large language model is being piloted to support staff with drafting and reviewing critical documentation. He shared plans to develop a chatbot for the Special Education and Early Childhood resource webpage to help staff quickly access policies and procedural guidance. In addition, he shared updates related to internet infrastructure, cybersecurity, cloud services, data systems, and statewide technology collaboration. The report noted continued attention to cybersecurity expectations and insurance related network protection requirements for school districts.

Early Childhood: Early Childhood report highlights preparing 4-year-olds and rising kindergarten students for successful transitions to school. Administration highlighted work to build independence, early literacy and math skills, social emotional growth, and stronger collaboration with families and local districts. The report also shared examples of student

growth in full day ECSE programming, instructional practices in GSRP classrooms, and inclusive supports that are helping children build confidence, communication, and readiness for kindergarten.

Engle made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby affirms that the District is in compliance with the requirements of the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act and all applicable federal and state regulations; and that the Superintendent or designee is authorized and directed to ensure continued compliance with AHERA requirements, including required inspections, surveillance, notifications, recordkeeping, and response actions.

Supported by Faul. Roll call vote. Makay – yes, Faul – yes, Engle – yes, Weiss – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Weiss made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, the Board of Education approve up to 29 hours of professional development to count as hours of pupil instruction for the 2026-2027 school year.

Supported by Makay. Roll call vote. Faul – yes, Engle – yes, Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Makay made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the 2026 Migrant Summer School Pay scale.

Supported by Engle. Roll call vote. Engle – yes, Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, Faul – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Weiss made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, the VBISD Board of Education approves posting a School Psychologist position prior to the spring staffing request cycle, with consideration of a Diagnostic Teacher Consultant if a School Psychologist candidate is not available.

Supported by Makay. Roll call vote. Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, Faul – yes, Engle – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Faul made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, the VBISD Board of Education approves the expansion of the Medicaid Coordinator position from part-time to full-time (1.0 FTE) status under the admin/non-union classification.

Supported by Engle. Roll call vote. Makay – yes, Faul – yes, Engle – yes, Weiss – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Weiss made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, the VBISD Board of Education accepts the base bid from Hall Builders for the installation of cabinets in the amount of \$69,750

Supported by Engle. Roll call vote. Faul⁶ – yes, Engle – yes, Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Makay made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, the VBISD Board of Education authorizes Robert Smith, Director of CTE or Superintendent’s designee, to list the home for the designated amount and sign all related paperwork for the closing of the house once the sale has been completed.

Supported by Weiss. Roll call vote. Engle – yes, Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, Faul – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Faul made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, the VBISD Board of Education approves the general appropriations for the General, Special Education and Career Technical Education Funds of the Van Buren Intermediate School District for the 2025-26 school year are amended as shown on the following attachments.

	REVENUE (Including Other Financing Sources)	EXPENDITURES (Including Other Financing Uses)
General Fund	\$29,876,825	\$29,500,294
Special Education Fund	\$47,700,580	\$49,720,524
Career Technical Education Fund	\$16,697,317	\$19,679,979

Supported by Weiss. Roll call vote. Faul – yes, Engle – yes, Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Engle made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the employment of the staff listed.

<u>New Employee</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Start Date</u>
Emma Beal, Speech & Language Pathologist	\$60,447.00	03/09/2026

Supported by Weiss. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Faul made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accepts the resignations/retirements of the staff listed.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Resignation/Retirement Date</u>
Gretchen Schuman, HI Consultant	Retirement - 06/30/2026
Stephanie Bazan, Special Education Teacher	Retirement - 06/30/2026

Supported by Makay. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Makay made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Faul. Voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 5:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



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John Weiss, Vice President
Van Buren Intermediate School District
Board of Education, Lawrence, Michigan

VAN BUREN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
MARCH 2026

VOUCHERS

Imprest Fund	2,061,511.99
Payroll Fund	4,647,356.57
Purchasing Cards	99,862.22
EduStaff ACH	24,360.19

PAYROLL SUMMARY

General	1,197,014.85
Special Education	2,695,725.88
Vocational Education	754,615.84
Student Activity Fund	-
Total	4,647,356.57

IMPREST VOUCHER SUMMARY

FUND	CHECKS	TRAVEL	PURCHASING	TRFS/SALES	TOTAL
General	1,461,793.51	7,914.97	25,278.56	(7,610.91)	1,487,376.13
Special Education	396,335.68	17,713.42	31,924.95	4,507.86	450,481.91
Vocational Education	203,382.80	2,830.11	42,658.71	3,103.05	251,974.67
Student Activity Fund	-	-	-	-	-
Total	2,061,511.99	28,458.50	99,862.22	-	2,189,832.71

VAN BUREN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
MARCH 2026

BUDGET TO EXPENDITURE COMPARISON 25-26

FUND	BUDGET	ACTUAL & ENCUMBERED EXPENSES	UNENCUMBERED BALANCE	YEAR TO DATE VARIANCE
General	29,500,294	17,387,814	12,112,480	3,508,228
Special Education	49,720,524	29,225,631	20,494,893	5,993,074
Career Tech Education	19,679,979	11,164,955	8,515,024	2,775,030

CASH FLOW SUMMARY

	ENDING BALANCE 02/01/2026	CASH RECEIPTS	CASH DISBURSEMENTS	ENDING BALANCE 02/28/2026
General	3,590,546	3,955,427	3,133,962	4,412,012
Special Education	7,823,118	4,730,847	5,662,681	6,891,284
Career Tech Education	1,922,796	859,247	1,490,579	1,291,464
Student Activity Fund	33,073	90	-	33,163
Total	13,369,533	9,545,611	10,287,222	12,627,922

C. Board/Superintendent Travel (**ROLL CALL VOTE**)

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Board of Education & Superintendent Travel

Pre-Approval

Name	Date(s)	Location	Estimated Cost			Sum:
			Conference:	Hotel:	Flights:	
Roger Engle	4/30/26 - 5/2/26	Lansing MASB Spring Institute	\$625	\$800	N/A	\$1,425
John Faul			\$625	\$800	N/A	\$1,425

Approved, Not Yet Attended

Name	Date(s)	Location	Estimated Cost			
Mary Ann Middaugh	4/9/26 - 4/12/26	NSBA Annual Conference San Antonio, TX	\$715	\$840	\$1,200	\$2,755
Karen Makay			\$715	\$840	\$1,200	\$2,755
John Weiss			\$715	\$840	\$1,200	\$2,755
John Faul			\$715	\$840	\$1,200	\$2,755
Dave Manson			\$715	\$840	\$1,200	\$2,755
Roger Engle	4/9/26 - 4/13/26		\$715	\$840	\$900	\$2,455

Post Approval

Name	Date(s)	Location	Actual Cost

Upcoming Events and Key Dates Spring 2026

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Board Attendance</i>
4/16	5p-6p	VB Tech Advisory Committee Appreciation Dinner	VB Tech	Voluntary ▾
4/22	TBD	Maple Creek DNR Salmon Release	Black River, Paw Paw	Voluntary ▾
4/24	TBD	BGLC Prom	Conference Center	Voluntary ▾
4/30	5p-7p	Community Baby Shower	Conference Center	Voluntary ▾
5/4-5/6	All Day	VB Tech Ag Awareness Days	Fairgrounds	Voluntary ▾
5/5	All Day	VB Tech STEM Showcase	VB Tech	Voluntary ▾
5/8-5/12	All Day	VB Tech Career Camp	VB Tech	Voluntary ▾
5/9	All Day	VBISD Hosting CBA Classes	Conference Center	Voluntary ▾
5/12	All Day	VB Tech Mock Disaster	VB Tech	Voluntary ▾
5/14	3:30p-5:00p	Retirement Celebration	Conference Center	Voluntary ▾
5/20	12:30p	BGLC Graduation	Conference Center	Requested ▾
5/21	1:00p	Maple Creek Talent Show	Maple Creek	Voluntary ▾
5/27	2:30p-6:00p	CTE - 50 Year Celebration ₁₄	VB Tech	Voluntary ▾

				Please Select ▾
				Please Select ▾
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				Please Select ▾

- E. Public Comments
- II. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**
- A. Board Updates
- B. Superintendent Update

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MEMO



DATE: APRIL 8, 2026
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: DAVID D. MANSON
RE: SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE

Educational Hero Awards: (Governance & Board Relations, Community Relations, Staff Relations)

Educational Hero Awards, sponsored by the Van Buren County Association of School Boards, were held at the VBISD Conference Center on March 10, 2026. The theme for this year was “Honoring Those Who Create Lasting Waves. At this ceremony along with the eleven districts in Van Buren County, several VBISD staff members were honored.

Sarita Collins, a longtime VBISD staff member with the Multilingual and Migrant Program, was honored for passion for empowering families and her ability to help them see possibilities they may never have imagined.

Antoinette Vaughn, was another VBISD Educational Hero award recipient. Ms. Toni is a program assistant who works at the Bert Goens Learning Center with students with severe and multiple disabilities and is known for her unwavering belief that every child can succeed.

Pictured below is Sarita and Toni with the VBISD Board.



In addition to those selected by the VBISD, three other VBISD staff members were honored by other member districts.

Erin Rumery, a VBISD School Social Worker assigned to Mattawan Middle School, was honored for her expertise in leading special education plans, for her compassion and dedication, and for leading a Beekeeping club.

Gina Valela, a VBISD Mental Health Clinician was honored by Covert Public Schools for her coordination of needed training and systems to support students struggling with trauma and mental health issues.

Alma Robles, a longtime employee of the VBISD Summer Migrant Program, as well as an elementary teacher with Lawrence Public Schools, was honored for always putting students first and going above and beyond to attend to their needs.

Pictured below is Erin, Gina, and Alma with their spouses and family members.



****Local District Feedback Survey:** (Community Relations, Staff Relations, Instructional Leadership)

The VBISD is a service agency designed to provide shared, cost-effective programs and specialized services and programs to support member districts. With the goal of continuous improvement, the VBISD administrative team sought feedback about the 87 programs and services directed at supporting member districts.

During the months of January and February, 2026, the VBISD Feedback Survey was sent to a total of 72 administrators across Van Buren County, including all superintendents and principals. Thirty-six administrators responded (50%), nine of which shared their name. The respondents represented the following districts: Covert, Bangor, Bloomingdale, Gobles, Lawton, Mattawan, Michigan Online School and Paw Paw.

Respondents were asked to rate each district-facing VBISD program and service using a scale of 1 to 4 stars with 4 stars indicating high value and 1 indicating low value.

Respondents were also asked to leave blank a rating for programs and services for which they had no experience. A prompt for comments after each section was also provided.

On average, VBISD programs were rated 3.34 with a range of 2.53 to 3.89. A rating of 3.34 on a 1 to 4 scale reflects strong overall performance that is well above average. While there are still opportunities for growth and refinement, this score suggests a positive impact relative to the evaluation standards.

****Legislation, Advocacy & Finance:** (Governance & Board Relations, Community Relations Business & Finance, Instructional Leadership)

House Bills 4583–4584 - Funding for Michigan school districts continues to rely heavily on local millages, making the timing and structure of school finance elections especially important. This proposed legislation would require that school funding votes occur only during November elections. While this change is intended to streamline the process, it represents a significant shift from the current flexibility districts have to seek voter approval at multiple points throughout the year.

School leaders have expressed concerns that limiting elections to November could delay critical funding for building projects, infrastructure improvements, and other time-sensitive needs. Reduced flexibility may also hinder a district's ability to respond quickly to emerging financial pressures or opportunities, potentially impacting long-term planning and operational efficiency.

Supporters of the legislation argue that consolidating elections would reduce administrative costs and increase voter turnout, leading to more consistent community participation in school funding decisions. As this proposal continues to be debated, its potential impact on district financial planning remains an important consideration.

House Bill 5697 is getting a considerable amount of attention as it names specific instructional methodology, LETRS (Language Essentials for Teacher of Reading and Spelling, from Lexia Learning), and would require training for a broad range of educators beginning phased implementation during the 2026-2027 school year.

Recently a substitute bill was adopted in committee that would move back full implementation two years, and would also narrow the scope of educators required to receive the training.

Should this bill be passed, the VBISD Instructional Services Department will partner with member districts to provide for the needed training and implementation support

Finally, legislative experts anticipate that the Michigan House and Senate will release their proposed education budgets shortly after the spring break period concludes on April 14, 2026. Given the current uncertainty, there is significant anticipation surrounding the release of this information.

C. Department Updates

1. Presentation - Marketing *Brittany Millan Torres*

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Brittany Millan Torres

April, 2026



VBISD Marketing & Communications

Building Visibility, Trust, and Impact

for everyone

when making decisions

in helping people

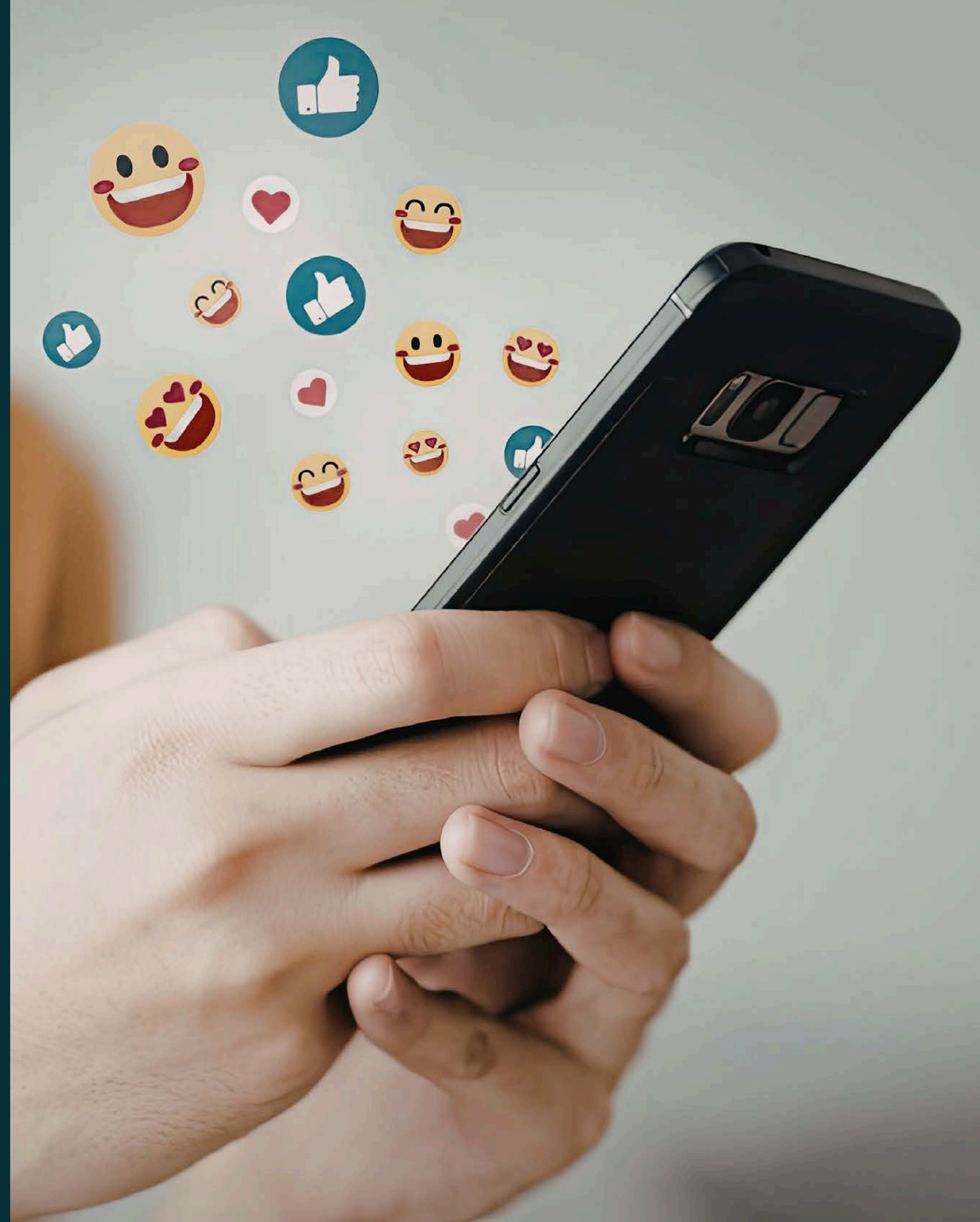
in the services we provide

Effective marketing helps schools do more than inform- it builds partnerships, increases engagement, and creates a lasting impact in our communities

My Role & Purpose

- Marketing Coordinator
- Mission
- Focus

Marketing ensures that the excellence happening inside VBISD is seen, understood, and valued by our community.



Why Marketing Matters

- Builds trust and transparency with our community
- Showcases programs that many people don't fully understand
- Strengthens public perception of VBISD
- Supports funding, grants, and voter confidence
- Highlights the impact of programs (Project SHINE & Family Links)
- Helps to recruit and retain professionals



Big Picture: What I manage



Digital Presence
(Social Media, Website, Video)



Communication
(Newsletter, Press Releases)



Branding & Design
(Print materials, Graphics, Rebrand)



Strategic Planning
(MRF, SM Series & Scheduling)

Social Media Growth & Strategy

- Platforms: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn
- Facebook growth: 0 to 850 followers in one year
- Focus on high-quality, professional content
- Strategic storytelling vs. high volume posting
 - Faces of VBISD
 - Did You Know series
 - Events
 - Information

Social media is often the first impression of VBISD. A strong presence builds credibility, keeps the public informed, and showcases our work to families, partners, and the broader community.



Professional Videography

- **Completed videos:**
 - Transportation Recruitment
 - Special Education Recruitment
 - Early Childhood Recruitment + program highlights
 - VBT Programs/Mock Disaster
- Supported Van Buren Tech (CTE Month video + mentoring marketing specialist)
- Ads running in local movie theaters for 6 months
 - Transportation Recruitment



Press Releases & Public Relations

1. Develop and distribute press releases

2. Highlight student success, programs, and partnerships

3. Work with local media outlets

Press coverage expands our reach beyond our own platforms and positions VBISD as a leader in education within the broader community.

Website Development & Accessibility

- Ongoing website improvements and updates
- Focus on accuracy, consistency, and usability
- ADA accessibility compliance (screen readers, navigation, readability)



Print & Promotional Materials

1. Professional brochures:

- a. CTC
- b. Migrant Program

2. Promotional materials

- a. Adult Education ESL
- b. Early Childhood
- c. BGLC
- d. Instructional Services
- e. VBT

Professional print materials strengthen credibility, support recruitment, and ensure consistent messaging across programs.

Brand Alignment & Rebrand Initiative

- Marketing & Communications Handbook
 - Align messaging across departments
 - Ensure consistency in fonts, colors, and logos
- Exploring a unified VBISD brand and logo system
 - Align all departments under one cohesive identity
 - Eliminate confusion from multiple logos



Looking Ahead

- Expand video/photo production
- Grow social media presence
- Continue improving the website
- Strengthen brand consistency across all departments
- Increase community awareness

Marketing is not a one-time effort; it's a long-term investment in VBISD's reputation and success.

STAY CONNECTED

Facebook

Youtube

Instagram

Smore

LinkedIn

Marketing Request Form



THANK YOU!

Feedback. Questions. Comments.

MEMO

DATE: APRIL 8, 2026
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: ROBERT SMITH, DIRECTOR
RE: CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION BOARD UPDATE

VB TECH JOB FAIR (Leadership; Communication Skills; Resourcefulness, Creativity, & Innovativeness; Professional Preparation; Planner & Organizer; Community Relations)

On February 4, 2026, Van Buren Tech hosted their annual Job Fair, giving students the opportunity to connect with employers and learn about a wide range of career pathways. Several businesses shared information about summer job opportunities, while others offered insight into long-term career options and industry expectations. This event allowed students to network, ask questions, and take meaningful steps toward their future careers.



OFF SITE CONSTRUCTION TRADES (Leadership; Communication Skills; Professional Preparation; Planner & Organizer; Faculty & Staff Personnel; Student Personnel; Community Relations; Student Achievement)

Off-site Construction Trades students continue to make strong progress on the house they are building off-site at the Corwin Meadows subdivision. Electricians recently worked alongside students to install outlets, switches, and lighting as they prepare for the final electrical inspection. A big thank you to Lamplighter Electrical Contractors Inc. for their continued support and hands-on guidance with our students. Students have also nearly completed installing the flooring, marking another major step toward finishing the home. This project aligns with the core goal of the Construction Trades program: completing a 1,300-square-foot house every 2 years while providing students with meaningful, hands-on learning experiences alongside industry professionals. The home remains on track for completion by May.



2026 NTHS INDUCTION CEREMONY (Leadership; Communication Skills; Professional Preparation; Planner & Organizer; Student Personnel; Community Relations; Student Achievement)

On February 18, close to 130 outstanding students from Van Buren Tech were inducted into Van Buren Tech's National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) Chapter. Since 1984, NTHS has recognized student achievement in Career & Technical Education as a national non-profit student organization supporting the next generation of skilled workers and leaders. Through career development, leadership development, service, and recognition opportunities, members gain access to scholarships, resources, and professional connections. NTHS honors students for their academic and technical achievement and their demonstration of the society's seven attributes: Skill, Scholarship, Leadership, Honesty, Responsibility, Service, and Citizenship.

Congratulations to this year's Van Buren Tech inductees.



CULINARY PROGRAM (Leadership; Communication Skills; Faculty & Staff Personnel; Student Personnel; Community Relations; Fiscal Management; Student Achievement)

Van Buren Tech's Culinary Arts & Catering Management students headed into the Michigan ProStart Competition the first week of March, and this year's preparation looked a little different than in the past. With a major lab renovation recently completed, students adjusted their training space while their kitchen

was being completely transformed. Students stayed focused and made the most of every opportunity to remain “competition-ready.” Today, they finally set up in their beautifully renovated, state-of-the-art kitchen.

The Michigan ProStart Competition brings together students from across the state to showcase their skills in Culinary, Management, and other industry events. First-place Culinary and Management teams advance to the ProStart National Invitational in Baltimore, Maryland.

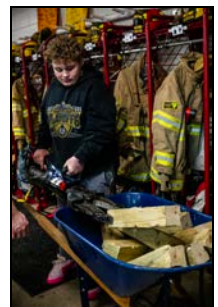
Thank you to Chef Alexander Gandia and Van Buren Tech alum Chef Josh Vochaska for working alongside our instructors to mentor students and share their industry expertise.

Van Buren Tech’s Culinary Arts & Catering Management students earned 4th place in Knife Skills, 4th place in Culinary, and 5th place in Tabletop Design at the ProStart Competition hosted by the



8th GRADE VISITS (Leadership; Communication Skills; Resourcefulness, Creativity, & Innovativeness; Planner & Organizer; Student Personnel; Community Relations)

On Tuesday, March 10th through Thursday, March 12th, Van Buren Tech hosted over 1,400 8th grade students from schools in Van Buren, Cassopolis, and Berrien Counties for their Annual “8th Grade Invasion” event. During their visit, students were exposed to a variety of hands-on activities and got to experience what life is like as a VB Tech Student. Structured like an exploratory vacation, students were given mock passports and could earn stamps by visiting and learning about each of VB Tech’s CTE programs. Students who obtained 5 or more stamps during their 1 hour visit were entered into a drawing for some college “swag” donated by our college partners, along with a Grand Prize at the end of the event. Overall, the event was extremely successful and productive. Feedback from students and parents was very positive, as well as feedback from staff participating from local school districts.



ENGINEERING DESIGN (Leadership; Communication Skills; Resourcefulness, Creativity, & Innovativeness; Professional Preparation; Planner & Organizer; Community Relations)

Van Buren Tech is proud to recognize both an instructor and student from our Engineering & Architectural Design (EAD) program for outstanding achievements with SOLIDWORKS.

Mason Weenink, a second-year senior from Mattawan Consolidated Schools in the Engineering Design program, has been named a SOLIDWORKS Champion, placing him among just over 400 users out of more than 8 million worldwide.


Mason earned this recognition by passing the Certified SOLIDWORKS Professional (CSWP) exam with high scores, being active in a SOLIDWORKS User Group, and being invited to apply before completing a competitive application process. As a Champion, he will gain access to advanced tools, test new features, and receive free admission to the annual global conference.

EAD Instructor Josh Bridges has also been selected to serve on the SOLIDWORKS Champions Advisory Board; a group of about a dozen leaders Nationwide, who help guide the direction and goals of the global Champions program. Josh was nominated and chosen unanimously and will meet monthly with the board, while also bringing new connections and opportunities back to his students.

Achievements like these highlight the program's strength, where students are building real-world skills and earning industry credentials that open doors to both college and careers after high



Memorandum

Date:	April 8, 2026	
To:	VBISD Board of Education	
From:	Melissa Corona <i>Director of Instructional Services</i>	
Subject:	Instructional Services Update	

Mission Statement:

Intentionally collaborate to use best practices to support the whole child and build capacity in students and staff in Van Buren County.

**Grow Your Own Highlights

Our first cohort of Grow Your Own candidates that are working to complete their Bachelor's Degree are currently completing their internship this semester. They will be graduating this spring. Once they graduate and pass their certification tests, they will be fully certified and ready to fill open positions.

We also have 44 candidates completing their pre-internships this semester. They will be completing their full-internship in the fall 2026 semester, and then they will have one more semester of courses during the spring 2027 semester. Those candidates will be finishing their degree next spring.

We are very excited for these individuals to be able to have this opportunity to complete their degree.

**Project SHINE Highlight

Project SHINE recently wrapped up our ECSE pilot lessons in Mattawan, where classrooms enthusiastically engaged in hands-on nutrition and movement activities. A highlight for our youngest learners is the opportunity to explore fruits and vegetables through smelling, touching, kissing, and tasting—helping build comfort and curiosity with new foods. We just began ECSE programming in Covert this week and are excited to build similar engagement with new students and staff.



At Maple Creek, students are experiencing hands-on learning and movement integrated into each lesson. Their excellent behavior, participation, and enthusiasm have allowed our team to expand and enrich lessons, creating deeper learning opportunities and stronger connections to healthy habits. This work is strengthened through collaboration with the building social worker.



Project SHINE's work at the CTC continues to highlight real-world applications of healthy living. Students are actively learning about nutrition through growing and harvesting fresh produce—planting potatoes, harvesting bok choy for noodle soup, and growing basil to make pesto used as a spread for chicken wraps—building both food skills and confidence in the kitchen. Lessons incorporate physical activity as well, with students enjoying pickleball at a local park—bringing together movement, skill-building, and fun.



At BGLC, *Fun Food Fridays* are creating excitement around trying new foods. Each session features an exploration station, a spinning wheel with a tasting station, and a sticker station to celebrate participation. Color-themed experiences have included orange, red, and green, helping students build familiarity and confidence with a

variety of fruits and vegetables.

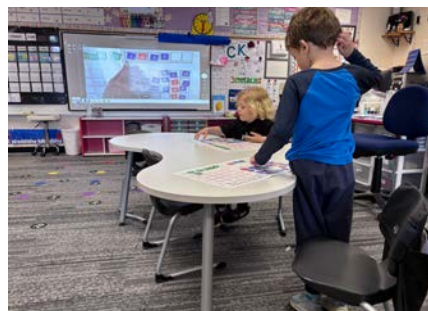


Literacy Coaching Highlights

On Friday, March 22nd, members of VBISD's instructional Services Department, attended MDE's Dyslexia Summit Watch Party at WMU. Attending alongside them were multiple members of VBISD's Ancillary Staff, all assigned to Paw Paw: Stephanie Barr, School Psychologist; Anna Fawley, Diagnostic Teacher Consultant; Madeline Mann, School Psychologist. Dr Kim St. Martin, Director of MiMTSS, was present and generously added her expertise to the day. What a fabulous opportunity to learn with our partners at WMU! (pic below)



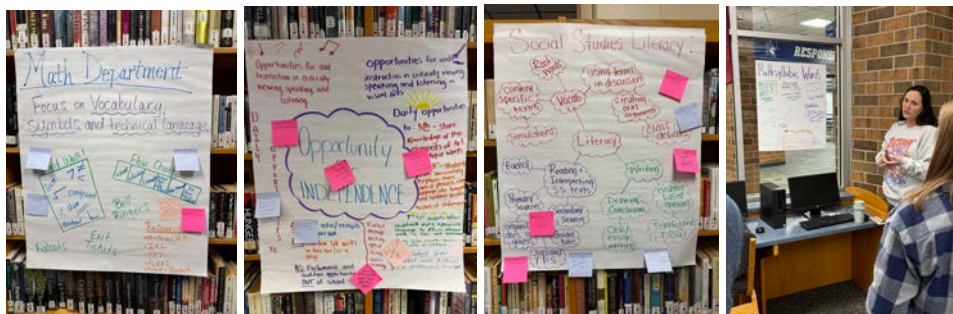
As more districts have implemented new tier 1 curricular resources, we have spent time in classrooms observing and providing feedback regarding the essential components of lessons. Students are spending more time reading, spelling and writing across their day. Below are a few pictures of kindergarten students at Davis Elementary practicing manipulating sounds and letter symbols in words during UFLI word chains.



Collaboration with Laura Kronk, VBISD MLL Coach. Coaches utilized a co-coaching model to help lesson-plan and deliver instruction through both a literacy and language-acquisition lens, while supporting the implementation of a new Tier 1 curricular resource at Covert Elementary.

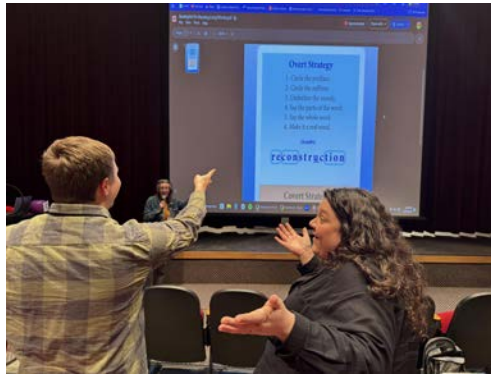


Instructional Services is supporting more Literacy work at the Secondary level across the county.

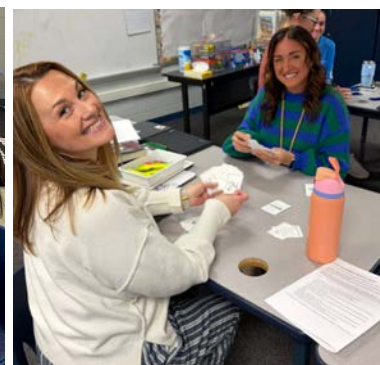


Geanice Miller, Literacy Coach/Consultant, and Tamara Webster, Curriculum Director at Lawton Community Schools, co-facilitated professional learning for Lawton's Middle and High School Teachers on March 6th. Teachers reviewed their department's literacy plan that will be implemented as they close out this school year and prepare to restart the work in the fall. Each department created a visual representation of their plan and wrote an elevator speech to share with colleagues. As staff circulated the room, they were able to view plans, hear details about the plan while listening to the elevator speech, and then provide feedback to each other about the focused literacy work being implemented. Commitment to improving literacy outcomes for ALL of their students was evident throughout the morning! (pics above)

Literacy Coach/Consultant Geanice Miller shared effective instructional strategies around decoding multisyllabic words to the Bloomingdale MS/HS Staff. When too much cognitive energy is spent on the basic task of decoding, children have less capacity for complex tasks like grasping meaning and vocabulary in text so it is critical that these strategies are incorporated into daily classroom routines. (pic below)

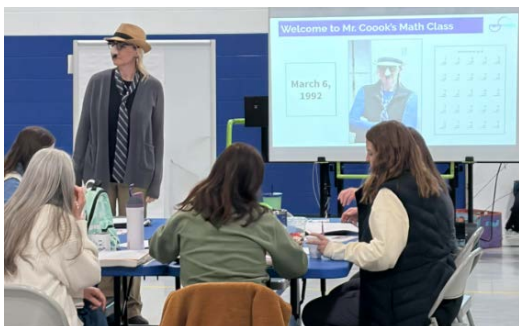


Math Coaching Highlights



Gobles (March 11) and Mattawan (March 16) teachers connected Math Recovery’s Structuring Numbers learning trajectories to their Bridges program and practiced a couple of games that support Number Structuring, Sequencing, and Fact Fluency.

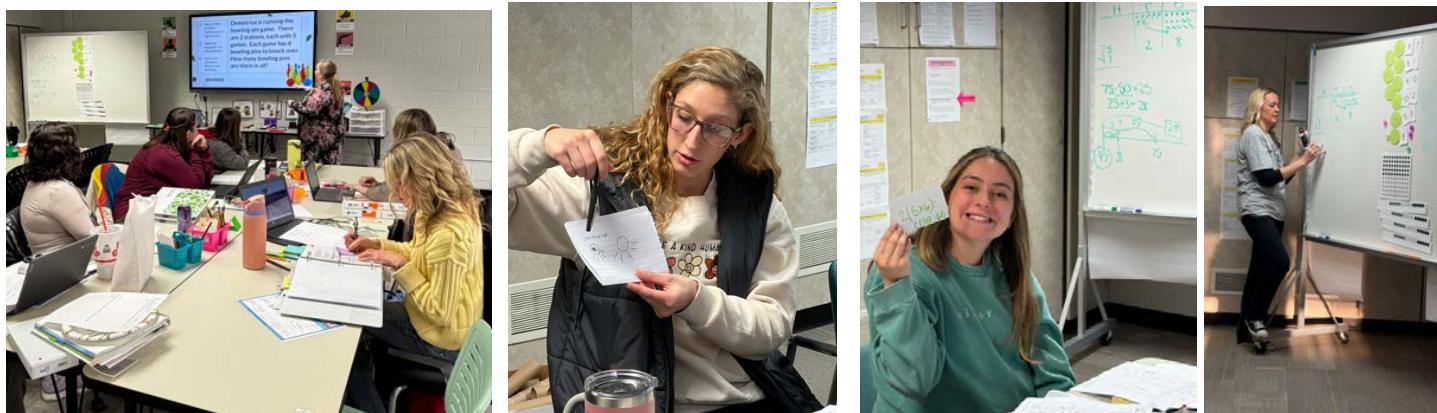
Bloomington/Pullman (March 5) teachers also had a chance to learn some new math games to support Number Structuring, Sequencing, and Fact Fluency.



Lawton teachers were visited by Mr. Cook on March 6, whose non-example of multiplication focused math instruction provided some great talking points in contrast to the Essential Instructional Practices. Amanda, (Mrs. Cook) then followed up with a better aligned lesson from third grade’s Number Corner using a Number

String designed to provide the opportunity for students to invent the “adding a group” strategy for multiplying by 6s.

In addition to leading the above PDs, our math coaches continue to facilitate monthly PLCs in districts and meet with admin teams. They also had the opportunity to get into a few classrooms to model a math lesson. Using each district's curricular tools, teachers are able to collaborate on which lesson they would like to see modeled. Then Julie and Amanda not only model the lesson, but are able to show in the moment decision making in action. Modeling or co-teaching is a great opportunity to try on some messy learning with teachers to help build their confidence and efficiency facilitating content!



The math coaching team hosted their final co-planning session of the year on March 24, focusing on upcoming content mastery, lesson design, and M-STEP preparation. Amanda demonstrated the "numberless word problem" strategy using a Pokémon card scenario; by strategically removing numerical data, teachers learned how to prevent students from "number-plucking" and instead prioritize conceptual understanding. Julie utilized a carnival-themed task to model how to activate prior knowledge and effectively scribe diverse student strategies. To wrap up, the group leveraged resources from the MAISA's Early Math Task Force to analyze the sophistication of student thinking and determine precise next instructional steps.

****Adult Ed Multilingual Highlights**

One of our teachers was published in the academic journal MiTESOL at the end of February. The article is titled [*From Classroom to Credential*](#). In it he shares the accomplishments and efforts of our students and our team and his joy in working for the VBISD.

We also celebrate the nomination and selection to the award for this year's Adult Education *Peer Empowerment Award*. This award celebrates adult learners who uplift their peers, foster collaboration, and contribute to a positive and inclusive learning environment. The learner has been invited to the Michigan Adult Education and Training Conference Awards at the Radisson Hotel at the beginning of May.

We are also proud of the number of learners interested and enrolling to earn their GED. We currently have 11 Multilingual Learners enrolled in the GED programs at Bangor Career Academy and Paw Paw Adult Education. One of these learners just passed their final GED assessment this month and will receive their diploma this year at our Celebration of Learning in June.

We have started post testing and learners are making measurable skill gains. One learner has been in our program since the 2023-2024 school year and tested as proficient. They will be graduating from our program this year. Another learner told me, "I felt for sure that I would not show any growth because I learn slowly, but look...I gained a level! Thank you for this program!"

Currently we have 75 learners enrolled in our program and word continues to spread about the good work we are doing. Our program continues to thrive.

Mental Health Clinician Highlights

The mental health clinician (MHC) team continues to be very busy servicing the students and families of Van Buren County with evidenced based strategies and true care.

This month the 8th Whole Child Summit was held with the focus being on family engagement. This was a joint effort within the Instructional Services Department with support from the Youth Initiative Coordinator, Erin Kucharski, and Director of Instructional Services, Melissa Corona, along with the mental health clinician supervisor. The Youth Advisory Panel participated in the summit as well offering insight and feedback to adults sitting at their tables during interactive scenarios.

The Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) is getting ready to begin recruitment for the 26/27 school year. Interviews within districts will begin shortly after the return from spring break.

Several team members from the MHC team are collaborating with Van Buren's IT team using AI to support the documentation within the HIPAA compliant behavioral health record platform, BHWorks. We are to work the "bugs" out so it can be used by the wider team. A huge thank you to our IT specialists writing programming that has the potential to lighten the load of the mental health clinicians.

Out of School Time

The amount of Out-of-School programming that is being offered across the county has greatly expanded. As a result of the 32n grant that we received in December, our department is working with 8 districts plus the VBISD

Summer Migrant Department to support either before-school programming, after-school programming, or summer school programming.

South Haven Center for the Arts, Luc's Light, and His Place continue to offer out-of-school time programming for students across Van Buren County, providing opportunities for creativity, connection, and skill-building.

Additional opportunities include career-focused after-school programming at Van Buren Tech from April 14th–May 19th, as well as a new round of cooking classes at South Haven High School.

MEMO

DATE: APRIL 8, 2026
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: BRITANI OLDS, ADMINISTRATOR FOR HUMAN RESOURCES
RE: HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE - (Leadership, Communication Skills, Resourcefulness, Creativity, and Innovativeness, Professional Preparation, Decision Maker, Planner and Organizer.)

****March Into Spring Event & Wellness Program**



On Saturday, March 14th, we hosted our second annual March Into Spring Celebration! A fun event where employees and their families came together to enjoy games, face painting, crafts, dancing, and snacks! We are incredibly grateful to everyone who attended and especially our dedicated volunteers who made the event possible. Their hard work and enthusiasm are truly appreciated. A big shout out to Katie Boyer, who was the lead in making this event happen!



****2026 SWMSBO Mid-Winter Conference**

Kara Duffy, Chelsea Walker and I had the opportunity to attend the SWMSBO Mid-Winter Conference at Kalamazoo Valley Community College on Wednesday, March 4. I also had the opportunity to present for one of the sessions on HR Basics geared towards new Business Managers and new HR professionals in the education sector. I wasn't sure that there would be a huge need for this type of information, but I quickly realized there was with it being a pretty packed room with a lot of engaging conversation.

This is always a great day for each of us to attend different sessions related to our work and is another great opportunity to stay up to date with what is happening in our field!

****Mentoring Project**

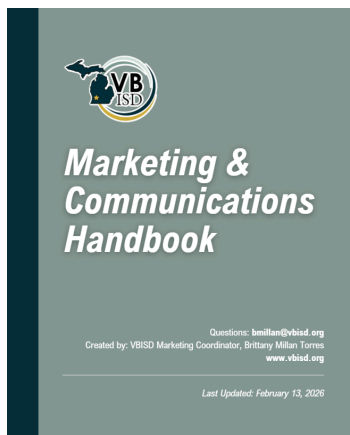
Mentoring is a major focus area and project for this school year. Having an established mentoring program in place plays a key role in employee retention, and Karla Vandenburg and I are partnering to strengthen this initiative.

Our first step involved organizing focus groups with employees who are current or recent mentees, mentors and supervisors back in November. During these sessions, we asked targeted questions that will help us clearly define roles, outline responsibilities, and identify the tools and resources that will be most helpful and meaningful for all participants in the mentoring process.

From those initial focus groups, Karla and I have been working on developing key templates, processes and guidelines for the mentoring program. We had the opportunity the week of March 23rd to pull the same focus groups back together to share some of the material we have been working on. Our main goal is that whatever is developed is useful for those that are being mentored, those mentoring as well as for supervisors. Overall the feedback was extremely positive. We will continue to take the feedback and suggestions from these focus groups and work to finalize the start of the mentoring program.

Our goal continues to be to have the updated mentoring program fully developed, refined, and ready to launch before the start of next school year.

Marketing



Brittany Millan Torress continues to work hard on identifying and solving the initial marketing challenges and needs. She has developed a VBISD Marketing & Communications Handbook to help support consistency, clarity, and alignment across all of the departments. In this handbook it outlines the brand guidelines, do's and don'ts for social media pages and websites, etc. This is a living document that she will continue to add to and update as needed.

Memorandum	
Date:	April 8, 2026
To:	VBISD Board of Education
From:	Angie Gutiérrez <i>Administrator of Multilingual and Migrant Services</i>
Subject:	Multilingual/Migrant Services Update



Sarita Collins: Educational Hero Award Recipient

It was a privilege to recognize an individual whose life’s work has truly changed the trajectory of countless students and families—Sarita Collins. For nearly five decades, Sarita has devoted her career to ensuring that migrant and multilingual students receive the education, opportunities, and support they deserve. What began in 1975 as a summer position with Project NOMAD grew into a lifelong calling grounded in equity, compassion, and an unwavering belief in the power of education. Throughout her career, Sarita has served as a teacher, coordinator, advocate, interpreter, and mentor. But titles only tell part of the story. What truly defines her work is the way she meets students and families where they are—sometimes quite literally. From teaching ESL classes in migrant camps to visiting families in their homes, Sarita has consistently gone above and beyond to support students navigating language barriers, school transitions, and the path to graduation and beyond. She has empowered families to become active partners in their children’s education—guiding them through complex systems, interpreting during critical

meetings, and helping them see possibilities they may have never imagined. Sarita has organized college visits, supported families through the FAFSA process, and worked tirelessly to ensure that migrant students never lose access to educational opportunities, even as they move across states. For Sarita Collins, this work has never simply been a job—it has always been a calling. Her empathy, cultural understanding, and relentless advocacy have opened doors for generations of students. Because of her, students who once felt invisible have been seen, supported, and empowered to succeed. Sarita is celebrated not only as a tireless advocate, but also as someone who continually challenges school districts—and all educators—to do better for every child.



VBISD Parent Meeting Promotes Wellness, Literacy, Technology, and Meaningful Family Input

On March 26, the Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD) Migrant/Multilingual Department hosted a districtwide parent meeting focused on family mental wellness. Multilingual families gathered for an evening of learning, connection, and practical strategies.

The event began with a shared pizza and salad dinner, creating space for families to connect. Jesus Lule from LEO spoke to the families about new initiatives to support their children’s education. Parents then rotated through four interactive stations. Daisy Manriquez Ortiz, LLMSW (VBISD/Hartford Middle School), shared strategies to support mental health and reduce stress. Sarita Collins provided literacy strategies and gave each student the opportunity to select a new book. Theresa Gleason, Migrant Teacher/ML Coordinator for Bloomingdale Public Schools, guided families in using translation apps, demonstrated AI tools, and offered support with PowerSchool. Angie Gutierrez facilitated a feedback session, gathering input on migrant programming, district communication, and summer programming opportunities.

While caregivers participated, Maria Hernandez, Saul Romero, Lori Frisinger, and Katya Davila led engaging activities for children, creating a welcoming, family-friendly environment.



****Project Nomad Summer School Updates:**

We are in the process of hiring all of our summer staff. We hope to have everything finalized by the middle of April.



Important Dates:

June 11th: Move materials from the ISD to Lawrence Elementary

June 17th: All summer school staff report to the VBISD Conference Center for our kick-off to summer school PD.

June 18th: Instructional staff reports to the conference center for professional development

June 19th: Classroom Set-up

June 22nd: First Day with Students

July 3rd: No School

July 26th, 27th, and 28th: Camp Meetings with our partners from Detroit

July 27th-29th: Summer Fun Days at Lawrence Public Schools

August 5th: Last day of school for students

August 5th/6th: Moving day from Lawrence to the ISD



****VBISD Multilingual Department – Program Evaluation Work Sessions**

This spring, the Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD) Multilingual Department is supporting local districts in completing the required annual evaluation of their multilingual learners, which must be submitted as part of the Section 41 report due October 15. While the final submission occurs in the fall, spring is a critical time for districts to review data and make program adjustments, particularly as high school scheduling and staffing decisions are finalized.

For the 2025–2026 program year, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has directed districts to focus their evaluation on English Learner access to comprehensive high school programs (Title III Monitoring Indicator 18). In response, VBISD is serving as a regional host site and has invited districts to participate in facilitated work sessions designed to support this process.

Although participation is optional, districts are strongly encouraged to send a small team to begin the evaluation work. These sessions provide dedicated time for teams to review data, analyze current practices, and begin planning next steps aligned to MDE guidance. Districts may also choose to complete the work independently using the provided resources.

During the sessions, district teams will:

- Review key data related to multilingual learners, including demographic, perception, school process, and student learning data
- Examine high school scheduling and enrollment practices to identify potential barriers or areas of success
- Conduct a root cause analysis (e.g., using the MDE 5-Whys protocol)
- Identify 1–2 priority areas for improvement
- Begin development of a personalized action plan to increase equitable access to comprehensive high school opportunities

Districts are encouraged to bring a representative high school team, which may include a principal or designee, counselor, ESL teacher(s), EL coordinator, and a central office representative responsible for continuous improvement. Teams

should also bring relevant data such as multilingual learner participation in advanced coursework, career and technical programs, extracurricular activities, attendance trends, graduation progress, and assessment data, along with perception data from students, families, and staff.

Work sessions will be held at the VBISD Multilingual Department Conference Room at Lawrence Elementary on April 17 and April 24, with both morning and afternoon options available.



iSOSY PLC Work in Michigan

We continue to actively engage in professional learning communities (PLCs) through the iSOSY Consortium to strengthen services for out-of-school youth (OSY) and secondary migratory students at risk of dropping out. This multi-state initiative, supported by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Migrant Education, focuses on building capacity and improving outcomes for mobile farmworker youth through collaboration, shared resources, and targeted professional learning.

Through our participation in PLCs, we engage in ongoing learning and collaboration to implement research-based strategies aligned to the unique needs of OSY populations.

Key focus areas of our PLC work include:

- Building a deeper understanding of OSY populations, including barriers related to mobility, language acquisition, and interrupted formal education
- Implementing effective instructional strategies for multilingual learners, including one-on-one and small group models
- Supporting students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE)
- Promoting growth mindset and goal-setting strategies
- Expanding access to career pathways, HSED completion, and postsecondary opportunities

We utilize practical tools and resources such as Short, Targeted, and Timely (STAT) lessons, instructional planning materials, and student goal-setting frameworks to support this work.

Through our PLC involvement, we have seen:

- Increased staff capacity to effectively serve OSY and at-risk secondary students
- Stronger alignment of instructional practices across districts and regions
- Improved use of data and goal-setting to support student progress
- Enhanced collaboration with other states to share effective practices

Michigan Goal for 2025–2026:

- Ensure at least 50 students complete a minimum of one STAT lesson, including both a pre- and post-assessment to measure growth

In May, I will be traveling to Indianapolis to represent Michigan at the iSOSY convening, alongside Michelle Headley. This opportunity will allow us to collaborate with other states, share Michigan’s work, and bring back additional strategies and resources to strengthen our local programming.

Our continued involvement in iSOSY PLCs allows us to strengthen programming and ensure migratory youth have access to flexible, responsive educational opportunities that support graduation, career readiness, and long-term success.



VBISD Staff Participates in IDRC Consortium Training to Strengthen Support for Migrant Students

The Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD) Multilingual/Migrant

Department continues to invest in building staff capacity to better serve migratory students and families. Recently, four VBISD staff members participated in the Beginning Services Training for Recruiters and Service Providers, a multi-day professional learning opportunity offered through the Interstate Migrant Education Resource Center (IDRC) Consortium.

This structured five-session course, totaling approximately 10–12 hours, is designed for recruiters and non-certified staff who often serve as the primary point of contact for migrant families—particularly in areas where access to traditional school-based services may be limited. The training emphasizes the critical role

these staff members play in providing instructional support outside of the classroom.

Participants engaged in learning aligned to several key outcomes, including:

- Supporting students in core academic subjects using standards-based approaches
- Understanding and applying Common Core standards to guide instruction
- Working effectively with students across multiple grade levels simultaneously
- Assisting families in preparing young children for kindergarten readiness
- Supporting high school students and families with postsecondary planning
- Utilizing language development strategies to strengthen speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills
- Adapting lesson plans to meet diverse student needs
- Accessing and implementing free instructional resources and online tools for students and families

VBISD staff joined approximately 35 participants, offered March 23–27, to expand access to the training.

Through participation in this IDRC Consortium training, VBISD continues to strengthen internal capacity and ensure that all staff—regardless of role—are equipped to provide high-quality, responsive support to migratory students. This work reflects VBISD’s ongoing commitment to equity and access, helping ensure that students and families receive the academic and language support needed for success across all stages of their educational journey.



****Regional ESL Teacher Visit to Covert Highlights Collaboration and Newcomer Support**

On Friday, March 13, ESL educators from across the region participated in a collaborative site visit to Covert Public Schools to observe programming and share best practices for supporting multilingual learners. The visit brought together teachers from Van Buren County, Benton Harbor Public Schools, and Watervliet Public Schools, creating a valuable opportunity for cross-district learning and connection.

The morning began with classroom observations at both the middle and high school levels, including newcomer English Language Development (ELD) courses serving students at proficiency levels 1.0–2.0. Participants observed instructional strategies in action and gained insight into how Covert structures support newly arrived multilingual students.

A highlight of the visit was a presentation led by Gina Valela, who provided an in-depth look at Covert’s approach to supporting newcomers. Gina did an outstanding job demonstrating how newcomer groups are organized and supported within the district. Her work sparked meaningful discussion among participants, particularly around how to effectively engage students when staff may not share the same language. The session also focused on Covert’s strong partnership between the multilingual team and mental health clinicians. Gina and the Covert team provided practical insight into how they collaborate across roles to ensure students receive both academic and social-emotional support.

Throughout the visit, participants also explored instructional programs and materials used within the building, including:

- UFLI for older students
- Story Champs
- Imagine Learning (grades 3–5)
- ELLII
- Lexia
- Saddleback resources
- Step Up to Writing
- Direct Instruction Spoken English

The day concluded with a question-and-answer session, allowing educators to reflect on what they observed and consider how these strategies could be applied within their own districts.

This visit highlighted the importance of collaboration, shared learning, and innovation in supporting multilingual learners—particularly newcomers. Participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to observe Covert’s model and emphasized the value of continuing to share effective practices across districts to better serve students and families.

A special thank you to Beth Martinez (VBISD ESL Teacher serving Covert), Heather Scheuer (Covert ESL Teacher), and Jalen VanHoeven (Covert ESL Teacher), who planned and facilitated this day.



III. ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of Fuel Tank Lease (Roll Call Vote)

65

MEMO



DATE: MARCH 11, 2026

TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION

FROM: KATY HOLVERSTOTT, TERRY LECHENET & DAVE JOHNSON

RE: TRANSPORTATION FUEL STORAGE & DELIVERY PROPOSAL, **UPDATED MARCH 17, 2026**

Background

The VBISD Transportation Program consumes approximately **300 gallons per day**, and 60,000 gallons of fuel per school year, including both diesel and unleaded gasoline. Our current local supplier in Lawrence, Crystal Flash, has indicated that it does not intend to upgrade or maintain its existing equipment and plans to permanently cease operations once its tanks fail. Based on the current condition of the equipment, operations are expected to continue only through June 2026.

While securing another fuel provider is an option, the most practical alternatives at this time are the Marathon station in Decatur or the Speedway station in Mattawan. Either option would require additional travel for refueling, resulting in increased staff time, higher fuel consumption, and reduced operational efficiency. **In addition, this option would only provide the cheapest fuel without needed additives for the winter.**

Another option is to gain access to the tanks the Village of Lawrence plans to install. Unfortunately, the VBISD cannot control for when they would be available or whether they will be placed so that buses could pull in and out. In addition, this option would result in additional costs in terms of time, tracking and accounting.

Wetlining, which involves having a fuel company fill buses directly was considered, but it would cost \$0.30 per gallon more, and would incur additional costs associated with time, tracking and accounting.

To ensure reliable and convenient local access to fuel, it is recommended that VBISD install three on-site fuel tanks: one 1,000-gallon tank for unleaded gasoline and two 1,000-gallon tanks for diesel fuel. **Based on our rate of usage, this would require weekly fill-ups.** The proposed location is on the east side of the transportation building, adjacent to the bus parking lot, to allow for safe and efficient access.

It is noted that this is a common practice and many neighboring districts and ISDs have fuel tanks. Photos of tanks taken from across the county are included at the end of this report. See Addendum A.

Safety & Security

Access to the tank area would continue to be controlled through existing security measures, including a secured gate, site lighting, and surveillance cameras. To ensure full coverage of the expanded footprint, additional electrical service, lighting, and camera equipment may be installed as needed.

Access to the fuel tanks themselves would be restricted through individualized security codes and monitored using an online fuel management system. The tanks would be double-walled, puncture-resistant, and designed to withstand Michigan weather conditions. An emergency power shut-off system would also be installed to allow for immediate disconnection in the event of an emergency.

Community Benefit

To support regional fuel demand and strengthen community partnerships, the VBISD could consider offering fuel access to nearby schools and community organizations, including Lawrence Public Schools and the Van Buren/Cass District Health Department, for their fleet operations.

Purchasing Options

There are two primary options for adding fuel tanks to the VBISD. The first involves purchasing the tanks outright and entering into a separate fuel supply contract. While this approach offers greater control over the equipment and flexibility to change fuel providers as needed, the liabilities and responsibilities associated with ownership have been determined to outweigh these advantages.

Therefore, it is recommended that the VBISD pursue a fuel supply agreement in which the tanks are installed and leased by the provider, contingent upon fuel purchase. This approach reduces ownership liability and risk while ensuring operational reliability.

Costs

Below is a breakdown of estimated costs with a brief description.

Monthly Lease:	\$695 per month, \$1,000 freight and delivery
Fleet Spartan System:	\$155 per month, \$250 installation
Cloud and Administration:	\$55 per month

Fuel Filler Area: \$210,000 (updated on 3/17/26)

The Fleet Spartan System is the fuel management system designed for distributors and fleet managers to track, secure, and automate fuel deliveries.

The Cloud and Administration covers the costs of software-based, real-time monitoring, reporting, and management of on-site fuel inventory. It is noted that updated technology will save time and create accounting efficiency.

The Fuel Filler Area would include a reinforced eight-inch thick concrete bed and the costs listed above include materials, excavation, labor and installation of posts and electrical for the pumps, lighting, security cameras and card system to operate the pumps.

Addendum A: Photos of Fuel Tanks in Districts Across Van Buren County

Bangor



Bloomingtondale



Decatur



Gobles



Hartford



Lawton



Paw Paw



MEMO

DATE: APRIL 7, 2026
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: KATY HOLVERSTOTT, TERRY LECHENET, DAVID JOHNSON
RE: **APPROVAL FOR FUEL TANK LEASE**

BACKGROUND:

The company that provides fuel to the VBISD Transportation Program is planning to permanently cease operations. Several alternative options have been explored and are detailed in the board report titled, [Fuel Tank Board Report](#), that was shared on March 11, 2026, and updated with additional information on March 17, 2026.

To summarize, the most efficient and cost effective method is the purchase or lease of fuel tanks to be installed onsite in the bus parking lot. To avoid liability, responsibilities, and risks associated with owning and maintaining fuel tanks, it is recommended that the VBISD pursue a fuel supply agreement in which the tanks are installed, maintained and leased by the fuel provider, contingent upon fuel purchase. Below is a breakdown of estimated costs.

Monthly Lease:	\$695 per month, \$1,000 freight & delivery
Fuel Management System:	\$155 per month, \$250 installation
Administration Software:	\$55 per month
*Fuel Filler Area:	\$210,000

*The Fuel Filler Area includes materials, excavation, labor and installation of a reinforced concrete tank bed, posts, fence, and additional electrical for the pumps, lighting, and security cameras.

RECOMMENDATION:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the lease and installation of fuel tanks, fuel management system, administration software, and the installation of a fuel filler area, as described above.

B. Approval of Owner/Construction Manager Agreement and General
Conditions (**Roll Call Vote**)

72

Date: April 8, 2026

To: VBISD Board of Education

From: Dave Manson, Superintendent

Subject: **Approval of Owner/Construction Manager Agreement and General Conditions**

Background:

As part of the Bright Futures project, the Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD) continues to collaborate with Owen-Ames-Kimball (OAK) on the renovation and expansion. The updated Owner/Construction Manager Agreement and General Conditions documents have been reviewed by Thrun Law Firm and are now presented for Board approval.

Resolution:

RESOLVED, that the VBISD Board of Education approves and authorizes the Superintendent, or his designee, to sign, execute, and enter into all necessary documents and the attached agreements as presented.

C. Approval of Additional Special Education Professional Staff (**Roll Call
Vote**)

74

MEMO

DATE: APRIL 8, 2026
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: SUSAN REYNOLDS & MONICA MANSFIELD
**RE: APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL SPECIAL EDUCATION
PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

To meet increased needs across Van Buren County, additional Special Education professional staff services are requested for the 2026-2027 school year as listed below in days per week. It is noted that some of these providers will serve in both the Early Childhood and Special Education Departments.

- Occupational Therapist: 5 days (SE & EC)
- Special Education Teacher Maple Creek Education Center: 5 days
- School Psychologist/Diagnostic Teacher Consultant: Up to 5 days
- School Social Worker: Up to 5 days
- Speech & Language Pathologist: 3 days
- Physical Therapist: 0.5 days
- School Psychologist Interns Up to 10 days

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the increase of professional staff service for 2026-2027 school year as listed above.

D. Approval of Architectural and Engineering Services for Welding Lab Remodel (Roll Call Vote)

Date: April 8, 2026

To: VBISD Board of Education

From: Dave Manson, Superintendent

Subject: Approval of Architectural and Engineering Services for Welding Lab Remodel

Background:

As part of the Welding Lab Remodel project, the Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD) has been collaborating with GMB Architects and GDK Construction on the planning, design, and development of the project. Based on the scope and scale of the proposed work, GMB Architects has submitted a proposal to provide professional architectural and engineering services in the amount of \$128,325. The total estimated project cost is currently \$1,770,000.

Resolution:

RESOLVED, that the VBISD Board of Education hereby approves the professional services agreement with GMB Architects for architectural and engineering services related to the Welding Lab Remodel, in an amount not to exceed \$128,325, and authorizes administration to execute all necessary documents to proceed with the Design Development Phase.

MEMO

DATE: APRIL 8, 2026
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: REBECCA DEPAS, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS
RE: APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL FULL-TIME CUSTODIAL POSITION

The Business Office is proposing the approval of a custodial support staff position to support a new service agreement with the Van Buren County Health Department. Under this agreement, VBISD will provide custodial services at the Health Department facility four days per week, ensuring a clean, safe, and well-maintained environment that supports public health operations. The remaining day of the workweek will be funded by VBISD and utilized as a floating custodial resource to assist across district buildings as needed, enhancing operational efficiency and maintaining consistent facility standards district-wide.

Recommend the following resolution be passed:

RESOLVED, the VBISD Board of Education approves the addition of one custodial support staff position effective April 8, 2026.

- F. Approval of New Staff Employment (**Voice Vote**)
- G. Approval of Contract Non-Renewal (**Roll Call Vote**)

80

MEMO

DATE: APRIL 8, 2026
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: DAVID MANSON, SUPERINTENDENT
RE: **NON-RENEWAL OF NON-TEACHING PSM CONTRACT**

Van Buren Intermediate School District, Van Buren County, Michigan (the "District").

A regular meeting of the Board of Education (the "Board") of the District was held in Conference Center, in the District, on the 8th day of April, 2026, at 4 o'clock in the p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Mary Ann Middaugh, President.

Present: Members _____

Absent: Members _____

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member _____ and supported by Member _____:

WHEREAS,

1. The employment status of David Arter, a probationary non-teaching PSM employed in the District, was brought to the Board in conjunction with an administrative recommendation dated _____, 2026, and an accompanying letter from the Superintendent, recommending that the probationary staff member's contract and his employment with the District be nonrenewed based on performance deficiencies; and

2. The probationary staff member received written notice of the administrative recommendation to discontinue his services and nonrenew his employment contract, along with a notice that the probationary staff member could appear before this Board of Education and/or submit written information for the Board's consideration; and

3. [If applicable] The probationary staff member

appeared before the Board and received an opportunity to respond to the administrative recommendation

submitted a written response to the administrative recommendations.

4. The submitted information was reviewed and considered by the Board.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The services of probationary staff member David Arter are determined to not have been effective.

2. The Board adopts the reasoning and conclusions of its administration that the services of probationary staff member David Arter have not been effective, and incorporates by reference the administrative recommendations, as well as the relevant evaluation(s) and related documents addressing the probationary staff member's performance.

3. The services of probationary staff member David Arter are to be discontinued and his employment contract with the District is nonrenewed effective on the last obligation day of the current school year, which is June 9, 2026, pursuant to Article II, Section 3 of the Michigan Teachers' Tenure Act, MCL 38.83.

4. The Superintendent is authorized and directed to notify the probationary staff member in writing that his services as a non-teaching PSM have been determined to not be effective and that his employment with the District is discontinued as of June 9, 2026. Said notice shall include a copy of this Resolution as well as a statement of the probationary teacher's right to appeal to the State Tenure Commission the timeliness or legal effect of this determination within twenty (20) days of its receipt by the probationary staff member.

5. All resolutions and parts of resolutions insofar as they conflict with the provisions of this resolution are rescinded.

Ayes: Members

Nays: Members

Motion declared adopted.

John Weiss, Secretary
Board of Education

The undersigned duly qualified and acting Secretary of the Board of Education of Van Buren Intermediate School District certifies that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the Board at a regular meeting held on April 8, 2026 the original of which resolution is a part of the Board's minutes and further certifies that notice of the meeting was given to the public under the Open Meetings Act, 1976 PA 267, as amended.

John Weiss, Secretary
Board of Education

H. Approval of Staff Resignations and Retirements (**Voice Vote**)

84

MEMO

DATE: APRIL 8, 2026
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: BRITANI OLDS, ADMINISTRATOR FOR HUMAN RESOURCES
RE: STAFF RETIREMENTS/RESIGNATIONS

BACKGROUND

Following is a list of retirements and resignations. Copies of letters are attached.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Resignation/Retirement Date</u>
Craig Jeffers, CTE Administrator	Resignation - 04-06-2026
Olivia Adams, BGLC Special Education Teacher	Resignation - 06-09-2026
Kathleen Kroll, Diagnostic Teacher Consultant	Retirement - 06-09-2026
Dana Shepherd, CTC Special Education Teacher	Retirement - 07-01-2026

RECOMMENDATION

Resolved that the Board of Education accept the resignations and retirements of the staff listed above.

Attachments

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Adjournment

1. Motion to Adjourn Meeting (**VOICE VOTE**)

This meeting is a meeting of the Board of Education in public for the purpose of conducting the School District's business and is not to be considered a public community meeting. There is a time for public participation during the meeting as indicated on the agenda."

It is the policy of the Van Buren Intermediate School District that no discriminatory practices based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, height, weight, marital status, disability, genetic information or any other status covered by federal, state, or local law be allowed during any program, activity, service, or in employment. Inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies should be directed to Barbara Matthews, Director of Finance & Operations or Dave Manson, Director of Special Education, 490 S. Paw Paw Street, Lawrence, MI 49064, 269-674-8091.