

Meeting
Wednesday, October 29, 2025 4:00 PM Eastern

Van Buren Conference Center
490 S Paw Paw Street
Lawrence, MI 49064

I. REGULAR MEETING

I.A. Approval of Draft Agenda (**ROLL CALL VOTE**)

I.B. Consent Agenda - (**ROLL CALL VOTE**)

I.B.1. Minutes

The **Regular Meeting** of the Van Buren Intermediate School District Board of Education was held in person on **October 1, 2025**, in the Board of Education office and called to order at **4:01 PM** with Ms. Makay, Mr. Kent, Mr. Weiss, and Ms. Middaugh present. Mr. Faul was absent.

When the draft agenda was presented, Superintendent Manson requested to remove a resolution to gather more information for the Board and replaced it with another.

Weiss moved to approve the October 1, 2025, draft agenda as presented. Supported by Makay. Roll call vote. Makay – yes, Kent – yes, Weiss - yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Makay moved to approve the Consent Agenda (*September 10, 2025, Minutes, Composite and Summaries*). Supported by Weiss. Roll call vote: Kent – yes, Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Makay moved to approve the Board and Superintendent Travel for September 2025: Supported by Kent. Roll call vote: Kent – yes, Weiss – yes, Makay – yes, and Middaugh – yes. Motion carried.

Pre-Approval

NAME	DATES	LOCATION	ESTIMATED COST

Approved, Not Yet Attended

NAME	DATES	LOCATION	ESTIMATED COST
MaryAnn Middaugh	October 23 – 25, 2025	MASB Annual Leadership Conference 2025 Grand Traverse Resort, Acme, MI	\$1,400
Kenny Kent	October 22 – 26, 2025		\$1,200
John Faul	October 22 – 26, 2025		\$1,000
Karen Makay	October 22 – 26, 2025		\$2,000
John Weiss	October 22 – 25, 2025		\$1,800
Dave Manson	October 23 – 25, 2025		\$2,000

Post Approval

NAME	DATES	LOCATION	ACTUAL COST
Dave Manson	September 17-19, 2025	MASA Annual Fall Conference 2025 Grand Traverse Resort, Acme, MI	\$1,056

Board Members’ Updates:

Ms. Makay shared her experience of attending a MASB online CBA course hosted by Wayne CASBA titled “Ethics in Action”. This course offered a valuable look at the gray areas of ethical decision-making for board members. Through real-life scenarios and group discussions, she explored situations where good intentions can blur the line between right and wrong. It was a great opportunity to reflect on our Board’s own practices and gain a clearer understanding of what ethical board conduct truly means.

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

District Highlights: *VBISD programs are thriving with several positive developments.*

Instructional Services successfully relocated to a new space on Cedar Street in Paw Paw, and the Multilingual and Migrant Program moved into new offices at Lawrence Elementary, both providing improved facilities and support for local districts. Lots of praise given for David Johnson, maintenance supervisor, for the tremendous support he's provided with these moves.

Professional Learning: MASA Fall Conference: *The MASA Fall Conference brought together Michigan's district leaders for three days of learning, collaboration, and updates on key legislative and financial issues. VBISD was honored with the Winter 2026 MASA Impact Award, recognizing its leadership and commitment to education. We look forward to providing additional winter supplies to our students and families.*

Assistant Superintendent Role: *The first few months of the new assistant superintendent role have been focused on hiring and transitioning the new special education director. Moving forward, this role will be the primary support for the Special Education, Early Childhood, Instructional Services, and the Migrant/Multilingual departments and lead district improvement efforts, such as strategic planning, district/building improvement, and cross-department initiatives to increase collaboration, effectiveness and efficiency.*

Financial Update: *Both the state and federal budgets are delayed, raising concerns about funding interruptions. A potential federal shutdown could impact programs like Head Start, though significant effects are unlikely unless the shutdown lasts beyond November.*

With great pride, VBISD's Instructional Services Team educated the Board and the learning community about the invaluable services their team provides to our area.

The presentation "Coaching Matters" explores the importance and impact of instructional coaching in education, emphasizing how effective coaching contributes to improved teaching and learning outcomes. It begins by identifying the key participants involved in the coaching process, such as teachers, coaches, and administrators, and highlights their distinct roles in fostering professional growth. The study employs a structured method of data collection through coded video observations, evaluating coaching practices on a five-point scale ranging from *Exemplary (5)* to *Deficient (1)*. This systematic approach allows for the assessment of coaching quality and the identification of behaviors that most effectively support teacher development. The findings reveal varying levels of coaching effectiveness, suggesting

that well-implemented, data-informed coaching can significantly enhance instructional practices. The presentation concludes with recommendations for moving forward, advocating for ongoing professional development, refinement of coaching strategies, and the use of evidence-based tools to sustain high-quality coaching across educational settings. It aligns with the goals of the Literacy Essentials initiative, underscoring that consistent, reflective, and well-supported coaching truly matters in improving literacy and overall instructional quality.

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

Instructional Services: *The Instructional Services Department began the school year with a strong focus on professional development, student wellness, and community partnerships. Staff led events such as the New Teacher Academy, Para-educator Training, and an AI in Action workshop, while providing tailored support to districts. Project SHINE is evolving into a new pilot, Taste. Move. Learn. – You Can Do It!, to promote inclusive wellness education. Literacy and math coaches supported teachers through professional learning, classroom coaching, and collaboration sessions. Adult Education’s ESL program saw high enrollment and expanded into new sites in Paw Paw and Bangor. The Mental Health Clinician team added staff and interns, handled over 240 referrals, and continued services through 31N funding following the end of the Project AWARE grant. The Youth Advisory Panel and Youth Collaborative relaunched with a focus on wellness and anti-bullying, and the upcoming Whole Child Summit will help educators strengthen student resilience. The Van Buren Youth Initiative also grew, offering free afterschool programs and launching a new iPad Lending Library to enhance creative learning opportunities across the county.*

VB Tech/CTC: *Van Buren Tech highlights key accomplishments as the new school year begins. The department completed its 2024-25 Annual CTE Report to showcase progress and guide future planning. Staff hosted the first CTE Elevate Professional Development Day, featuring keynote speaker Ted Kroll, who emphasized growth mindset and student engagement. Van Buren Tech also partnered with the Van Buren Youth Initiative to offer free after-school career exploration programs for middle and high school students. A Regional Improvement Plan was created to address state benchmarks in reading and math by integrating literacy and math strategies into CTE instruction. Enrollment for 2025-26 is steady at 883 students. The report also recognized instructor Katherine Ott, recipient of the Honor Credit Union Teacher Award for supporting student well-being. Program highlights include EMT students beginning with a hands-on emergency simulation, Allied Health students learning about military medical careers, and Business students analyzing the economic impact of 9/11 to connect global events with business concepts*

Human Resources: *Several exciting initiatives focused on onboarding, communication, and staff engagement. A successful new hire orientation was held on August 14 with 49 employees who joined between April and August. The session introduced staff to the various departments within the ISD, included tours of Van Buren Tech and the Bert Goens Learning Center, and provided opportunities for connection and learning. Feedback from attendees was very positive, emphasizing appreciation for the comprehensive overview and welcoming environment.*

In the area of marketing and communication, a new monthly VBISD newsletter was launched, showing strong engagement with an average reading time of nine minutes. Social media presence has grown significantly, with Facebook followers increasing from zero to 531 in seven months, reflecting the success of efforts to keep content active and relevant. Marketing Specialist Brittany Millan has also been promoting job openings more strategically, using data to guide future recruitment campaigns. To support hiring in transportation, a one-minute video highlighting that department will play before every movie at the Loma Theatre in Coloma and the Michigan Theatre in South Haven from October 2025 through February 2026, aiming to raise awareness and attract potential applicants

Multilingual Migrant Services: *A season of growth, collaboration, and student support! Two new educators joined the team: Sarah Wagner, who will serve as a multilingual teacher in Decatur Public Schools, and Lori Frisinger, who will provide ESL services in Lawton Community Schools. Both bring strong experience and enthusiasm for working with diverse learners. The department also celebrated community partnerships, such as the installation of new soccer goals at Shannon and Imlay City migrant camps, made possible through church and community donations, which brought joy and fairness to recreational activities. Additionally, the Migrant Education Program hosted an outreach event at the Watervliet camp to help families with school enrollment, distribute supplies, and connect them with community resources, strengthening relationships among schools, families, and service organizations.*

Recruitment efforts remained strong, with a Region Two Identification and Recruitment sweep that identified 50 new eligible migrant students in just two days. The department continued progress on a three-phase initiative to improve evaluation practices for multilingual learners suspected of having disabilities, expanding training and developing a county-wide evaluation protocol to ensure equitable assessment. Summer learning programs concluded successfully with celebrations recognizing student achievement and positive behavior, along with events to honor staff dedication. Project NOMAD achieved excellent performance results, with recruiters ensuring that every eligible migrant student in the service area was identified and served, helping secure ongoing funding and expanding educational opportunities for migrant families across multiple districts

Kent made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED that the VBISD Board of Education hereby approves the conceptual budget and site plan for the Bright Futures project as presented. A subsequent resolution will be brought before the Board following the competitive bidding process to consider final approval of the construction contract.

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

Weiss made the motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the VBISD Board of Education hereby approves the rescheduling of its regular meeting from November 5, 2025, to October 29, 2025.

Supported by Kent. Roll call vote. Kent – 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 employment of the staff listed.

<u>New Employee</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Start Date</u>
Kelly Hoffman, Speech & Language Pathologist - Part Time	\$34,846.93	09/16/2025
Suana Dosett, GSRP Lead Teacher	\$43,585.00	10/01/2025
Christopher Bernick, Maple Creek Principal	\$103,285.00	10/06/2025

Supported by Kent. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Weiss 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>
Heidi Diaz, Regional Supervisor	09/12/2025 - Resignation

Supported by Makay. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Weiss made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Kent. Voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 5:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



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

I.B.2. Composites, Payroll and Imprest Summaries

VAN BUREN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
OCTOBER 2025

VOUCHERS

Imprest Fund	1,275,145.60
Payroll Fund	4,691,555.83
Purchasing Cards	143,338.69
EduStaff ACH	24,383.91

PAYROLL SUMMARY

General	1,200,019.84
Special Education	2,742,905.89
Vocational Education	748,630.10
Student Activity Fund	-
Total	4,691,555.83

IMPREST VOUCHER SUMMARY

FUND	CHECKS	TRAVEL	PURCHASING	TRFS/SALES	TOTAL
General	316,645.21	13,646.24	67,522.20	(15,390.63)	382,423.02
Special Education	773,695.38	15,296.74	29,485.82	8,702.69	827,180.63
Vocational Education	184,805.01	2,351.99	46,287.73	6,687.94	240,132.67
Student Activity Fund	-	-	42.94	-	42.94
Total	1,275,145.60	31,294.97	143,338.69	0.00	1,449,779.26

VAN BUREN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
OCTOBER 2025

BUDGET TO EXPENDITURE COMPARISON 25-26

FUND	BUDGET	ACTUAL & ENCUMBERED EXPENSES	UNENCUMERED BALANCE	YEAR TO DATE VARIANCE
General	26,221,227	6,307,563	19,913,664	1,340,295
Special Education	43,256,264	9,774,885	33,481,379	2,841,525
Career Tech Education	17,411,809	4,184,446	13,227,363	893,998

CASH FLOW SUMMARY

	ENDING BALANCE 09/01/2025	CASH RECEIPTS	CASH DISBURSEMENTS	ENDING BALANCE 09/30/2025
General	6,250,282	737,195	2,491,043	4,496,434
Special Education	18,672,539	83,804	2,901,607	15,854,736
Career Tech Education	8,715,366	2,097,077	3,718,840	7,093,602
Student Activity Fund	33,051	-	-	33,051
Total	33,671,239	2,918,075	9,111,490	27,477,823

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



Board of Education & Superintendent Travel *Pre-Approval*

Name	Date(s)	Location	Estimated Cost
Dave Manson	November 3-4, 2025	Delamar Traverse City, 615 East Front Street, Traverse City, MI 49686	\$800

Approved, Not Yet Attended

Name	Date(s)	Location	Estimated Cost
MaryAnn Middaugh	October 23 – 25, 2025	MASB Annual Leadership Conference 2025 Grand Traverse Resort, Acme, MI	\$1,400
Kenny Kent	October 22 – 26, 2025		\$1,200
John Faul	October 24 – 26, 2025		\$1,000
Karen Makay	October 22 – 26, 2025		\$2,000
John Weiss	October 22 – 25, 2025		\$1,800
Dave Manson	October 23 – 25, 2025		\$2,000

Post Approval

Name	Date(s)	Location	Actual Cost

Upcoming Events and Key Dates Fall & Winter 2025

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Board Attendance</i>
10/23 - 10/26		MASB Annual Leadership Conference	Grand Traverse Resort	Requested ▾
10/28	12:30 - 1:30 pm	Kingsping Drumming	BGLC	Voluntary ▾
10/29	4 pm	VBISD School Board Meeting	Conference Center	Requested ▾
10/31	12 - 1 pm	Trunk or Treat (11:45 am arrival)	BGLC	Voluntary ▾
11/11	11:45 AM	MASA Impact Award Delivery	Conference Center	Requested ▾
11/18	10:45 am	Thanksgiving Lunch	BGLC	Voluntary ▾
11/26 - 11/28		VBISD Thanksgiving Break	VBISD	Informational Only ▾
12/3	4 pm	VBISD School Board Meeting	Conference Center	Requested ▾
12/8 - 12/12		VB Tech 10th Grade Visits	VB Tech	Informational Only ▾
12/10	12:30 pm	Winter Program and Bazaar	BGLC	Voluntary ▾
12/12	TBD	VBISD Holiday Breakfast	Conference Center	Requested ▾
12/15	4:30 pm - 6:30 pm	VB Tech 10th Grade Visit Open House	VB Tech	Voluntary ▾

I.E. Public Comments

II. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

II.A. Board Updates

II.B. Superintendent Update

MEMO



DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2025
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE
RE: MONTHLY UPDATE

Strategic Planning: (Governance & Board Relations, Community Relations, Staff Relations, Business & Finance, Instructional Leadership)

One of the first steps in developing a district strategic plan is to identify the values of its membership. Towards this goal, a values survey was sent to all staff members. Of the 737 full and part-time staff members, 136 completed the survey. Of the 26 values presented, the top five include, in order of priority:

1. Compassion - Showing kindness, caring and willingness to help others
2. Respect - Valuing people, opinions and diversity
3. Quality - Maintaining high standards
4. Trust - Building and maintaining confidence
5. Communication - Clear, honest, and open exchange of ideas

The lowest rated priorities were the following:

24. Results-orientated - Focusing on measurable outcomes
25. Innovative - Embracing new ideas, technologies and approaches
26. Governance - Adherence to strong decision-making frameworks

This information will also be gathered from key stakeholders and be used to inform the vision, mission and goals.

****MASA Impact Award:** (Community Relations, Staff Relations, Business & Finance, Instructional Leadership)



Michigan Association of
Superintendents & Administrators

As mentioned in my previous board report, VBISD was selected to receive the MASA Impact Award. After collaborating with MASA, we decided to use this recognition to benefit approximately 300 multilingual and migrant families across the county. The MASA team will be delivering winter weather totes (filled with items such as hats,

gloves, and jackets) at 11:45 a.m. on November 11 at the VBISD Conference Center. Special thanks to Angie Gutierrez and Ashlee Ferguson for their coordination of this honor.

****Recent Budgetary News:** (Governance & Board Relations, Community Relations, Staff Relations, Business & Finance, Instructional Leadership)

Project Shine - After several starts and stops, VBISD received confirmation that we have been awarded \$425,000 to appropriately sunset the Project Shine program during the 2025–26 school year. These funds will support continuation of key Project Shine initiatives while expanding services to VBISD’s special education centers, specifically the Bert Goens Learning Center, the Community-Based Transition Center, and the Maple Creek Education Center. Staff and students are enthusiastic about the opportunities this cross-department collaboration creates. In addition, Project Shine will focus on building community partnerships designed to promote long-term sustainability beyond federal funding.

Early Childhood 32p Block Grant Funding - The recently approved state budget did not include funding for the 32p Block Grant, which supports VBISD’s Great Start Collaborative and Home Visiting programs, both of which have provided essential services to children and families for over 20 years. The loss of this funding directly affects approximately ten VBISD employees.

VBISD has committed to maintaining these programs through the remainder of the current school year while we continue to advocate for restoration of 32p funding and explore long-term solutions. Statewide, organizations such as the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) and the Early Childhood Administrator Network (ECAN) are actively working with legislators to pursue supplemental funding and other potential pathways for sustaining early childhood system work.

While we remain hopeful for a positive outcome, decisions about the programs’ future beyond the 2025–26 school year will depend on legislative action and available resources.

31aa Grant Funding - In past years, VBISD and our local districts have received Section 31aa funding to support school safety and student mental health efforts. This year’s funding is again available, but new conditions have been added. To receive the funds, districts must agree to certain requirements if a “mass casualty event” occurs, including allowing a state investigation, waiving attorney-client and investigator-client privileges, and fully cooperating with the investigator. The waiver is broad and has no time limits, meaning it could apply to both past and future communications.

These new conditions raise important concerns. Accepting the funding could make previously confidential communications public and may limit the board's ability to meet in closed session under the Open Meetings Act. It also creates potential legal risks and could affect how safety and mental health issues are discussed and documented moving forward.


Because of these implications, boards are being encouraged to carefully consider the benefits of the funding alongside the long-term risks to confidentiality and legal protections. We'll continue to monitor state guidance and share updates as more information becomes available.

II.C. Department Updates

II.C.1. Presentation - Lobbyists Services

II.C.2. Instructional Services

Memorandum

Date:	October 29, 2025	
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.

We are excited to have our new administrative assistant, Julie Knight. Julie has hit the ground running and is learning many new skills. She brings a wealth of knowledge and skills, and she fits right into our team.

****Project SHINE Highlight**

More changes for Project SHINE!! Project SHINE has officially settled into our new space at Cedar Street as we begin our final year of funding.

The Michigan Fitness Foundation (MFF) had the ability to offer additional funds to organizations that had already been partners and received funding in the past. We were able to apply for additional funds to support “properly sunsetting” the programming that Project SHINE has started across Van Buren County. We have been informed that we did, in fact, receive additional funding from MFF allowing us to thoughtfully “sunset with impact” by focusing on sustainability and capacity-building.

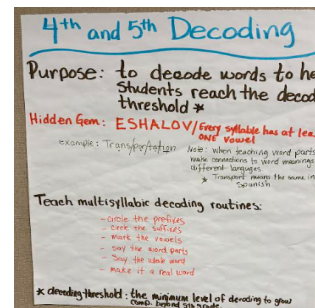
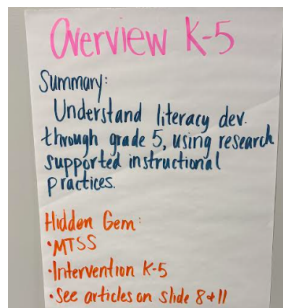
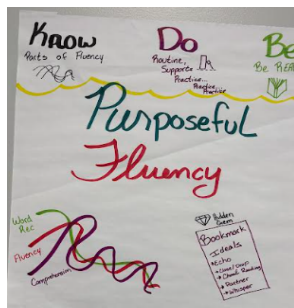
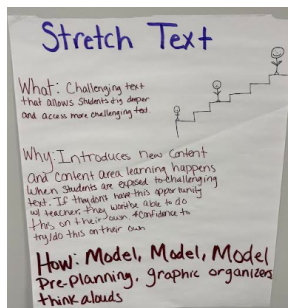
This month, we began developing sustainable facilitator guides for the Story Stroll and Student/School Farmers Market initiatives to ensure these programs can continue beyond the life of the grant. We also launched a survey for elementary principals to gauge interest in leading 5th Grade Wellness Leadership Teams, with early responses showing strong enthusiasm.

Project SHINE will continue to provide direct education to the Center-Based Special Education programs within VBISD. Our team has been meeting with each of the building principals to understand the student and building needs better. We are making progress toward the goal of improved food options and getting a hydroponic system up and running at Maple Creek. The team will also participate in the BGLC Fall Celebration Week later this month to support health snack options.

Literacy Coaching Highlight

October provided an opportunity for our literacy coaches to both *provide* professional learning for literacy leaders in our local districts and also *participate* in professional learning with literacy coaches from across the state.

On October 8th, representatives from nine of our eleven local districts and Wood School came together for an Early Literacy Network Meeting that included whole group and small group time to collaborate, along with individual time to reflect on the content. The main focus of the agenda was an opportunity to learn about, and review, [resources](#) for the revised 4th and 5th Grade Essential Literacy Practices. Participants were put into small groups to complete a scavenger hunt that would support evaluating the resources. Each small group then created a poster (see pictures below) of their discoveries and takeaways in order to share with the whole group. There was great discussion and conversations around how best to take this learning back to each local district.



On October 14th, all five early literacy coaches headed to WMU for the ISD/RESA Early Literacy Coaching Network Meeting, with facilitation by MAISA. Attendance at these meetings allows VBISD's Literacy Coaches to network with others in the region (see picture of all Region 7 attendees) as well as help meet one of the 35a(4) grant assurances. The agenda for the day had two main focuses: Assessment Literacy and Coaching Cycle Data Collection. Both of these topics will be at the forefront of learning this school year.



We are already looking forward to our next Early Literacy Network Meeting at the end of January and our next statewide coaching meeting on December 9th.

Math Coaching Highlight

It's been a busy and exciting October so far for our math consultants! They've been out in districts leading curriculum-specific professional learning, leading PLC meetings, and providing small-group and one-on-one coaching to help teachers strengthen math instruction.

From modeling lessons to unpacking standards and digging into student data, our consultants are helping teachers bring math to life in classrooms across the county. They've also participated in professional development focused on working with adult learners, ensuring our teacher learning mirrors the same engaging, collaborative approach we want for students.

The math team continues to build confidence, curiosity, and collaboration—one equation (and classroom) at a time!



**Adult Ed ESL

Our Adult Ed ESL programming is off to a great start this year. We have 62 learners across all 3 of our sites. We have had many learners return, while increasing our number of learners.

We are continuing to meet our learners where they are at with their English skills by expanding the way we deliver instruction. At one of our sites the teacher is adding in small group instruction in order to provide very focused instruction that is skill-based.

Our Success Coach is working to develop relationships with local industries in order to help our learners gain more secure and higher paying employment.

Bangor: Mon & Tues 7:00-9:00

Cover: Mon & Weds: 6:30-8:30
Paw Paw: Tues & Thurs: 5:00-7:00

Mental Health Clinicians

October is Mental Health Awareness Month, and October 10 marked World Mental Health Day—a time to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and encourage open conversations about mental well-being. Supporting the mental health of our students remains a top priority across Van Buren County schools.

We continue to work closely with building leaders to emphasize the importance of teaching social-emotional skills consistently and embedding them throughout the entire school day. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is not an add-on; it is a foundational component of student success. When students’ emotional and social needs are supported, they are better able to engage, learn, and thrive academically.

Our focus this year includes providing additional professional learning to help districts implement SEL programs at all levels—not just in elementary schools. SEL must be the foundation of all learning and an integral part of a strong multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). We cannot focus solely on Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions for student behavior; Tier 1 universal supports must be prioritized to ensure that every student has access to a safe, supportive, and emotionally healthy learning environment.

Van Buren Youth Initiative

Expanding Arts Access with Partnership

Last spring, VBYI partnered with Aubrey Rodgers of Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC), who designs programming for KVCC’s summer camps serving middle and high school students, among other things. Using Michigan Arts and Culture Council (MACC) grant funds, we were able to bring Aubrey’s programming to Van Buren County at both Luc’s Light and the South Haven Center for the Arts (SHCA).

Aubrey has continued monthly programming with SHCA and has begun mentoring other teaching artists from KVCC who are now leading her curriculum at His Place in Hartford, and soon, at Luc’s Light beginning in November. This collaboration is building sustainability and a pipeline of emerging artists who are bringing creative, high-quality experiences to Van Buren County youth.



Hands-On Learning: Auto Program Support

VBVI's afterschool Auto Program received a generous donation from Walmart, allowing us to purchase additional supplies for the auto tool kits for each student. Upon completing the class, students will take home their kits to begin their own tool collections, supporting both skill development and career readiness.



Environmental Education: Wings & Wild Spaces

VBVI's program, Wings & Wild Space, hosted at VB Tech, will welcome a guest speaker from the Audubon Society on October 21st. Russ Schipper will engage students with mounted birds, feathers, songs, and nests. This hands-on experience is open to all middle and high school students, even those not currently enrolled in the class, to help broaden access to environmental learning opportunities.



Engaging Future Educators and Leaders

Erin Kucharski represented Van Buren ISD at Southwestern Michigan College’s Career Development Futures Fair, engaging hundreds of college students about the ISD and its impact across the county. Erin highlighted that the ISD employs not only educators, but also business professionals, tradespeople, bus drivers, and youth mentors, showcasing the diverse range of careers available.

To help students envision working with youth, Erin led a “Roll the Dice” activity, where participants answered scenario-based questions that placed them in the role of a VBYI program leader or mentor. The activity sparked meaningful conversations and inspired students to consider careers in education and youth development.



II.C.3. Special Education

MEMO

DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2025
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: MONICA MANSFIELD
RE: SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE



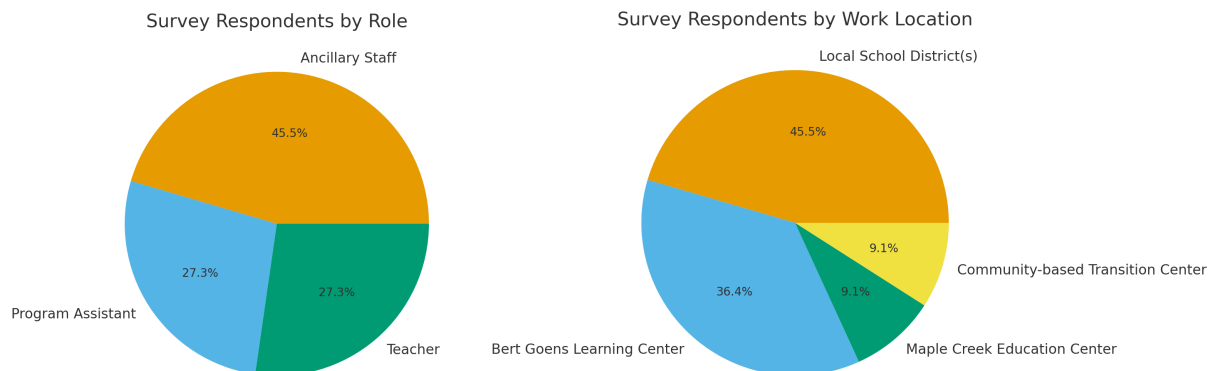
SE Department Professional Learning (PL)

Leadership, Level of Professional Awareness, Professional Standards & Ethics, Communication Skills, Resourcefulness, Planner & Organizer, Supervisor, Faculty & Staff Personnel, Student Achievement

During the Opening Day Resource Fair, Special Education Department staff were invited to complete a survey to share their preferences and interests for future professional learning topics. The collected responses were summarized and shared with the Professional Learning (PL) Committee. This committee, made up of volunteer representatives from each program and region, collaborates to design meaningful learning opportunities aligned with the department's overarching goal of Improving Student Outcomes.

Below is a summary of the survey results.

Review Opening Day Professional Learning Survey (102 responses)



Format Preferences

- Virtual: 41
- Some In-Person, Some Virtual: 37
- In-Person: 17
- No Preference: 7

Highly Requested Topics:

- About 1 in 3 respondents gave generic responses like “workshops” (20) or “presentations” (9).

- **Behavior / Interventions** → 13
(behavior, behavior management, ASD behavior, trauma-informed, de-escalation, etc.)
- **Collaboration / Teamwork** → 9
(collaborative groups, working with peers/districts, time with team)
- **IEP / Compliance / Evaluation** (included legal/law) → 9
(IEP, IEP development, special education processes, evaluation tools, legal updates, behavior & law)
- **AAC / Communication Supports** → 5
(AAC, digitally making resources, literacy & language with AAC, etc.)
- **Other Topics:** AI, ELL, DHH, transition planning, assistive tech, classroom management

The agenda for the October 24th Professional Learning Day provides teams with an opportunity to engage in person around these key focus areas: **Collaboration and Teamwork, Behavior Interventions** and **IEP, Compliance, and Evaluation**. These sessions are designed to strengthen collective practices and support consistency across programs and regions.

Agenda

8:00 AM to 8:30 AM	 Individual Team Welcome & Connection <i>Program/Regional Supervisors</i>	
8:30 AM to 9:00 AM (0.5 SCECH / SW CE)	 Department and Special Education Updates <i>Monica Mansfield and Laura Thornburg</i>	
9:00 AM to 10:00 AM (1.0 SCECH / SW CE)	 Effective Communication and Collaboration <i>Special Education Mediation Services</i>	
10:00 AM to 10:15 AM	Break	
10:15 AM to 10:30 AM (0.25 SCECH / SW CE)	 Tips for Team Organization <i>Jen Korinek</i>	
10:30 AM - 11:00 AM (0.5 SCECH / SW CE)	 Team Time <i>Program/Regional Supervisors</i>	
11:00 AM to 12:00 PM	Lunch	
Afternoon Schedule	Professional Support Members	Program Assistants/Support Staff
12:00 - 12:30 PM (0.5 SCECH / SW CE)	 Special Education Resource Review <i>Laura Thornburg</i>	 Beyond the Behavior:

12:30 - 12:45 PM (0.25 SCECH / SW CE)	Meet the Parent Advisory Committee Teryn Hetrick	Tools & Tips for Effective Support Jen Korinek and Megan Scott
12:45 - 1:15 PM (0.5 SCECH / SW CE)	Team Time Program/Regional Supervisors	
1:15 - 1:30 PM	Break	
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM (1.0 SCECH / SW CE)	Survey Q & A Monica Mansfield, Laura Thornburg, and Karla Vandenberg	Beyond the Behavior: Tools & Tips for Effective Support Jen Korinek and Megan Scott
2:30 PM - 3:00 PM (0.5 SCECH / SW CE)	Team Time Program/Regional Supervisors	

New Leadership

Leadership, Level of Professional Awareness, Decision Maker, Planner & Organizer, Evaluator, Faculty & Staff Personnel, Student Achievement



Dr. Christopher Bernick, started at Maple Creek on October 6, 2025 and will serve as the new Principal. Dr. Bernick brings extensive experience in special education and a strong commitment to fostering positive, student-centered environments. He served nine years as a special education teacher at Lighthouse Education Center in Berrien County and most recently as the Director of Special Education for Benton Harbor Area Schools. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Emotional Impairment and Language, Literacy, and Literature; a Master of Arts in Literacy Studies; and a Doctorate of Education. He has already begun making connections with students and is eager to get to know students, families, and staff better to continue building on the strengths that make Maple Creek so special.

Staffing Update

Leadership, Level of Professional Awareness, Decision Maker, Planner & Organizer, Evaluator, Faculty & Staff Personnel, Student Achievement

A few positions remain vacant. Below is a summary.

- **Special Education Administration:** There is an opening for a Special Education Supervisor for Bangor/Covert. While the search for a replacement occurs, support is being provided by Monica Mansfield and Katy Holverstott.
- **Local District Assigned Service Providers:** School Social Worker in Hartford; Bridge Interventionist in Mattawan; Maple Creek Education Center Program Assistant; Educational Interpreter for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; and On-site Program Assistant for Virtual Speech Services

Professional Support Services Team

Leadership, Level of Professional Awareness, Resourcefulness, Planner & Organizer, Supervisor, Policy Implementer, Crisis Manager, Faculty & Staff Personnel, Community Relations, Student Achievement

The Professional Support Services team continues to grow and provide responsive and high quality training and services to meet the needs of special educators across Van Buren County. The most recent highlights include:

The Special Education Teacher Collaborative

Representation from districts across the county and VBISD programs, gathered for the third event in the series this month. The talent and potential in this group gives so much hope for all students in our county.

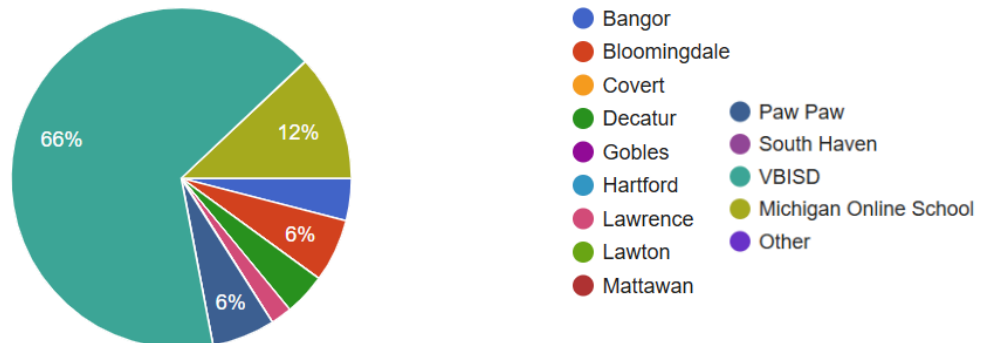


Understanding the Role of a District Representative in Special Education

During this virtual session, attendees explored the responsibilities and best practices of serving as a District Representative in special education meetings. Many service providers and administrators from Van Buren County attended this event!

District

50 responses



Just for Fun

On Thursday, October 16, 2025, the Bert Goens Learning Center celebrated Michigan's Annual Apple Crunch Day with an Apple Dessert Contest! There were definitely no bad apples in this bunch! A special thank you to Sally Boothby for organizing this special event, to Brittany Millan for capturing the amazing photos and to the judges Terry Lechnet, Ashley Ferguson and Monica Mansfield. The Michigan Apple Crunch is an annual event hosted by MSU Extension and the Michigan Farm to Institution Network to promote National Farm to School Month and celebrate the iconic Michigan Apple.



II.C.4. Technology Services

MEMO

DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2025
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: DAMIAN KOOB
RE: TECHNOLOGY SERVICES BOARD REPORT

PowerSchool Shared Services (Leadership, Professional Awareness, Communication Skills, Professional Preparation, Community Relations)

The start of the school year is a very stressful time for folks that have to manage the student data within their districts or buildings, but we do our best to help assist and ease this stress. Our PowerSchool Division, led by Lukas Enciso, has been making great strides in assisting our local Districts. Lisa Thorne, Dawn Everett, Pam Manning, and Paul George have been working tirelessly with our PowerSchool Shared Services Districts to train administrative and office staff on best practices for managing/entering their data and how to make the start of the school year much less stressful. This great team of individuals has also been holding virtual sessions for office staff to connect and answer any questions they may have.

I have received many great compliments from our local Districts, as well as compliments from many Districts not in our County regarding our customer service and knowledge of PowerSchool. We are excited to assist and provide this very important service for our Districts. I greatly appreciate the Board's support with this group.

CrowdStrike Fal.Con National Cybersecurity Conference (Leadership, Professional Standards and Ethics, Communication Skills, Planner and Organizer, Professional Preparation)



On September 15th, I ventured to Las Vegas, NV for the 11th annual CrowdStrike Fal.Con Cybersecurity conference. This was an amazing conference with the sole purpose of taking every aspect of data/network security into consideration. The conference started out with CrowdStrike's President and Founder, George Kurtz outlining his vision for the future of cybersecurity and the solutions they have developed and acquired to assist in their efforts to make organizations such as ours more secure.

Aside from the three keynotes, I attended the following sessions:

- Chaos to Control: The Rise of the Agentic SOC
- Accelerate Security Investigations with Falcon for IT
- Analyzing Generative AI's Impact on Ransomware Evolution
- CrowdStrike From the Inside: Meet the Incident Response Team
- Adversary Tradecraft: AI vs. AI: Machine Intelligence Meets Human Insight
- Hunting the Edge: Preempting a Domain Controller Takeover
- Governance Risk and Compliance Team Insight

- AI as a Weapon: Hunting the Adversary of the Future
- Latest Roadmap to Endpoint Security
- Defending Academia: How University CxOs are Revolutionizing Campus Security
- AI Powered Attacks: The New Threat Frontier
- Coordinating Cyber Crisis Response: The First 48 Hours
- Modern Ransomware: Evolution and Advanced Containment



The information in the sessions was fantastic and at a level that was geared for high-level engagement...which was very cool! I came away with some great ideas for increasing our cybersecurity posture and look forward implementing them with little impact to our users. I greatly appreciate the Board and Mr. Manson’s commitment to our professional development and opportunity to attend this conference. Thank you!

Microsoft AI Tour Conference (Leadership, Professional Standards and Ethics, Communication Skills, Planner and Organizer, Professional Preparation)



On September 5th, I was able to attend the 3rd annual Microsoft AI Tour in Chicago. This full day event was filled with great sessions surrounding everything AI.

I think the best phrase I heard all day and reiterated throughout the sessions was that AI is not going to take the “humanity” out of the world. I feel this is a very powerful phrase that helps folks understand that AI is a tool and resource, rather than a human replacement solution.

One of the great sessions that I attended was titled: **Power of Possible: AI in Education.** The focus of this session was around the adoption and partnership of Chicago Public Schools, the City Colleges of Chicago, and the University of Chicago to create a common vision for their staff and students to navigate and use transformative AI tools. The conversation of collaboration between these organizations created a roadmap to help the students in these institutions to create purpose-built learning avenues. Such a great conversation to be heard. 😊

Once again, thank you to the Board and Mr. Manson for allowing me to attend these great conferences that impacts our organization and local Districts.



II.C.5. Early Childhood



DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2025

TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION

FROM: SUSAN REYNOLDS, DIRECTOR OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

RE: EARLY CHILDHOOD UPDATE

Early Childhood Department Focus Areas

1. Increase inclusive opportunities with appropriate supports
 2. Reduce barriers for families
 3. Promote collaboration & efficiencies across the department
 4. Strengthen community engagement with an equity focus
-

***Why does Van Buren ISD Invest in Early Childhood?**

Leadership, Level of Professional Awareness, Professional Standards & Ethics, Creativity & Innovativeness, Professional Preparation, Decision Maker, Planner & Organizer, Supervisor, Policy Implementer, Community Relations, Fiscal Management, Student Achievement

VBISD Early Childhood represents how thoughtful investment translates into real impact. From home visiting to inclusive preschool, from family engagement to early intervention, this department embodies the VBISD Board of Education's vision that every child, no matter where they live or what they face, deserves a strong start. The commitment of this Board has positioned Van Buren ISD as a statewide leader in early childhood systems building, ensuring that our community's youngest learners and their families have the support they need to thrive.

As Nobel laureate economist James Heckman's research demonstrates, high-quality early childhood programs yield a 7-10%% annual return on investment through improved education, health, and economic outcomes over a lifetime. Investing early is one of the most effective ways to build strong communities: strengthening families, improving readiness for school, and reducing the need for more costly interventions later. (<https://heckmanequation.org/>)

For more than two decades, the Van Buren ISD Board of Education has embodied this understanding. Long before "early childhood" became a statewide priority and buzz word, this Board of Education recognized that supporting young children and families is both a moral and economic imperative. Through sustained general fund investment, VBISD has ensured that high-quality home visiting, early intervention, and community engagement programs remain available to Van Buren County families, regardless of changing state and federal funding streams.

That foresight has proven especially critical now, following the unexpected elimination of Michigan's 32p Great Start Collaborative, Home Visiting (32p4), and Early Literacy (32p6) grants in the FY 2026 state budget. While these grants have long supplemented VBISD's general fund commitment, their sudden removal underscores how vital local investment is to maintaining a stable foundation for prevention and family engagement work.

Today, that investment is reflected in the strong and collaborative work of the Great Start Collaborative (GSC), which unites more than 40 community partners including health systems, libraries, mental health, and family resource organizations to ensure families have access to the right support at the right time. In the past year alone, over 5,600 books, 8,300 literacy education materials, and 5,000 learning tools were distributed to families, and 19 community trainings totaling 142 hours were provided for parents and professionals.

The GSC also provides the foundation for our new Help Me Grow system, an integrated approach that connects families, pediatricians, and early childhood providers through a centralized access point, family outreach, health care provider engagement, and data-driven continuous improvement. Van Buren ISD is participating in the state's Help Me Grow pilot, with full commitment across Early On, Parents as Teachers Home Visiting, GSRP, Build Up Michigan and the Great Start Collaborative. This integrated system is not a stand-alone program; it strengthens and aligns what already exists. By bringing partners together under shared goals, Van Buren County is maximizing resources, reducing duplication, and improving outcomes for children from birth to age five.

In addition to this local work, VBISD Early Childhood leadership is actively engaged in statewide advocacy efforts to bring awareness to the impact of the 32p eliminations and to help shape Michigan's plan for sustainable early childhood funding moving forward. Through collaboration with regional ISD partners, state agencies, and the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP), VBISD continues to share local data, elevate family and provider voices, and contribute to solutions that protect and strengthen early childhood systems statewide. This advocacy reflects the same commitment that has defined VBISD for decades, ensuring that every child in Van Buren County, and across Michigan, has access to the supports needed to learn, grow, and succeed.

[\(Van Buren Impact Report FY 2024–2025\)](#).



Van Buren County

LOCAL IMPACT REPORT

Oct. 2024 - Sept. 2025

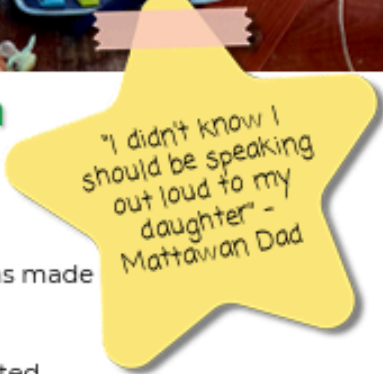


Collaborative Work

- 40+** Community organizations
- 130+** Direct community staff connections
- 17+** Organizations working together to developing programing/services
- 162+** Hours of learning for VBC parents/professionals

Family Outreach

- 33** Community events
- 288** Family connections made
- 325** Children participated
- 5600+** Books distributed in FY 23-24



"I didn't know I should be speaking out loud to my daughter" - Mattawan Dad

Family Coalition

- 13** Parent Reps. from seven towns
- 1,407** Households on GSFC distribution list
- 1499** Followers on social media including community groups



"I wish I would've known about this information sooner! These books will help me build our home library!" -- a parent after receiving literacy supplies at Family Reading Night.

Parent Café

Conversations to keep your family strong



Parent Cafes are research informed, guided conversations around the Protective Factors.

- **28 Individuals trained** • **9 Parent Cafes hosted**
- **Community Partners: Community Mental Health, Bronson Health, VBISD Instructional Services, HOPE Parent Resource Center, South Haven Library, Great Start Family Coalition, Flowers Early Learning**

Literacy Materials & Ed FY 24

- **5,660 books distributed**
- **8,339 literacy education** (Written materials such as Talking is Teaching and Literacy Essentials)
- **5,055 literacy tools** (items such as blocks, magnetic letters, writing materials, scissors, and balls for babies)
- **Parent training** ("Raising a Reading Rock Star" and "Alternatives to Screen Time")

These materials were developed under a grant awarded by MiLEAP.

QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT:

7-10% ROI

"The rate of return for investment in quality early education for disadvantaged children is 7-10% per annum through better outcomes in education, health, sociability, economic productivity and reduced crime."

--Dr. James Heckman,
Nobel Laureate in Economics

***Communities Thrive Together**

Leadership, Level of Professional Awareness, Professional Standards & Ethics, Communication Skills, Resourcefulness, Creativity & Innovativeness, Personality, Professional Preparation, Community Relations

On October 3, 2025, the Van Buren ISD Family Links Playgroup joined the Memory Café group at the Paw Paw District Library for a heartwarming intergenerational gathering. This collaboration, an inspired idea of Family Educator Susan Gendron from the VBISD Family Links program, brings together young children and older adults for shared experiences that benefit everyone involved.

Susan recognized the unique value of creating space for these interactions: offering older adults the joy and energy of spending time with babies and toddlers, while giving children meaningful “grandparent-like” connections that nurture empathy and social growth. Thanks to a grant awarded to the Paw Paw District Library last year, these specially designed intergenerational sessions are hosted quarterly throughout the program year, enriching the lives of participants across generations and strengthening community ties.



III. **ACTION ITEMS**

III.A. Approval of Architectural and Engineering Services for Bright Futures (**Roll Call Vote**)



Date: October 29, 2025

To: VBISD Board of Education

From: Dave Manson, Superintendent

Subject: Approval of Architectural and Engineering Services for Bright Futures

Background:

As part of the Bright Futures project, the Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD) continues to collaborate with Owen-Ames-Kimball (OAK) and TowerPinkster (TP) in the planning, design, and development of the Special Services Center renovation and expansion. Based on the scope and scale of the proposed projects and services, TowerPinkster will provide professional architectural and engineering services at a fee of **6.5%** of the Cost of the Work as defined at the conclusion of the Design Development Phase, plus reimbursable expenses. If the final bid amounts of the project vary by 10% or more, the fee will be adjusted accordingly.

Based upon the Conceptual Budget prepared by OAK, the estimated fees are as follows:

- **Estimated Fee Associated with Base Bid Scope:** \$652,732
 - East Wing Demolition: \$19,268
 - Existing Building Renovation: \$293,767
 - Building Addition: \$339,697

- **Estimated Fee Associated with Alternate Scope:** \$47,774
 - East Wing Demolition: \$29,029
 - Existing Building Renovation: \$6,359
 - Building Addition: \$12,386

RESOLVED that the VBISD Board of Education hereby approves the professional services agreement with TowerPinkster for architectural and engineering services for the Bright Futures project as presented, with fees based upon 6.5% of the Cost of the Work plus reimbursable expenses, and authorizes administration to execute all necessary documents to move forward with the Design Development Phase.

III.B. Approval of PowerSchool Litigation **(Roll Call Vote)**

MEMO

DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2025
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: DAMIAN KOOB
RE: POWERSCHOOL DATA BREACH LITIGATION APPROVAL

BACKGROUND

Schools nationwide are joining a lawsuit against PowerSchool and related defendants concerning the December 2024 PowerSchool data breach and PowerSchool’s alleged contract breaches, specifically MDL No. 3149 in the United States District Court for the Southern District of California (“Lawsuit”). According to Frantz Law Group, a California law firm representing schools in that litigation, PowerSchool hackers claim to possess data of 62.4 million students and 9.5 million teachers. That data includes names, addresses, phone numbers, emails, medical information, and social security numbers.

Frantz informed Thrun Law that Michigan schools that used PowerSchool in December 2024, but that do not directly join the Lawsuit, are expected to be lumped into a class action, which has been defined as “all school districts in the United States who are PowerSchool users.” Meaning, such schools are likely to be impacted by the PowerSchool litigation regardless whether they take any action – they will either directly join the Lawsuit or receive notification about defaulting into a class action settlement.

The class action notification is likely to contain a narrow window for a school to opt out of the class action settlement to preserve any potential claims against PowerSchool. A financial recovery for a school in the class action is also expected to be substantially lower than for a school that directly joins the Lawsuit. Joining the Lawsuit will exempt a school from being lumped into the class action.

RECOMMENDATION

RESOLVED that the Board of Education authorizes and directs the Superintendent or designee to sign the attached Attorney-Client Fee Contract on behalf of the School and to take such other action as necessary to obtain monetary damages and injunctive relief for the School in the Lawsuit, subject to review by the School’s legal counsel.

III.C. Approval of Learning Center Pool (**Roll Call Vote**)



Date: October 29, 2025

To: VBISD Board of Education

From: Dave Manson, Superintendent

Subject: **Approval of Learning Center Pool - Architect Services**

Background:

The Bert Goens Learning Center Pool has required repairs and renovations for several years. GMB Architects & Engineers conducted a thorough assessment and have estimated the total project cost to be approximately \$887,914. Based on their findings and proposal (attached), we are requesting the school board's approval to proceed with GMB's professional services.

RESOLVED, that the Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD) Board of Education hereby approves the engagement of GMB Architects & Engineers for a fee of \$77,000 to provide Architectural, Interior Design, Structural, Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing design services related to the renovation of the Bert Goens Learning Center Pool.

III.D. Approval of Thrun Policy Updates (**Roll Call Vote**)

MEMO

DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2025
To: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: DAVID D. MANSON, SUPERINTENDENT
RE: APPROVAL OF THRUN POLICIES

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following policies as presented for approval effective October 29, 2025:

3118 Title IX Sexual Harassment - Revision

III.E. Approval of School Social Worker Position (**Roll Call Vote**)

MEMO

DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2025
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: ROBERT SMITH
RE: VAN BUREN TECH SOCIAL WORKER

BACKGROUND:

Over the past couple of years, VB Tech has witnessed a significant increase in the requests for Social Work services from students. To address this increasing need, Van Buren Tech is interested in hiring an additional Social Worker to provide these needed services to all VB Tech students. If approved, the position will be posted immediately and hopefully filled by mid-November.

RECOMMENDATION

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the posting for an additional Social Worker at Van Buren Tech.

III.F. Approval of Employment of New Staff (**Voice Vote**)

MEMO

DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2025
TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: BRITANI OLDS, HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATOR
RE: APPROVAL OF EMPLOYMENT OF NEW STAFF

BACKGROUND

Following is a list of new staff, their position, salary and start date. Copies of resumes are attached.

<u>New Employee</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Start Date</u>
Jeremy Thompson, LEA Accounting Specialist	\$57,000.00	10/15/2025
Donald Herber, School Counselor	\$77,962.00	10/20/2025

**Salary may be prorated based on start date*

RECOMMENDATION

Resolved that the Board of Education approve the employment of the staff listed above.

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

MEMO

DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2025
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>
Amy Steinman, School Social Worker	11/15/2025 - Resignation

RECOMMENDATION

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

Attachments

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

IV.A. Adjournment

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