

**REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Held at: 45 E. Buena Vista Street
Highland Park, MI 48203-3322

**Tuesday, May 12, 2026
6:00 PM**

APPROVED MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER –

The meeting was called to order by President Cheryl Sanford at 6:10PM.

ROLL CALL –

Ms. Cheryl Sanford, President, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Ms. Famika Roberts, Vice President, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Ms. Yolanda Harrison, Secretary & Sergeant-at-Arms, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Ms. Cassandra Walker, Treasurer, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Ms. Doris Harris, Member, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Ms. Linda Wheeler, Member, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Ms. Janet Spight-White, Member, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent

QUORUM

COMMUNICATIONS

- (1) HP Journal Periodical
- (2) Notice of Litigation

Discussion:

APPROVE MEETING AGENDA

MOTION: SECRETARY HARRISON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MAY 12, 2026 MEETING AGENDA

SUPPORT: VICE PRESIDENT ROBERTS SECONDED.

DISCUSSION:

- AS PRESENTED.
- WITH MODIFICATION, MOVING THE PRESENTATION OF THE AUDIT PRIOR TO THE PUBLIC COMMENTS.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Cheryl Sanford, President, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Famika Roberts, Vice President, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Yolanda Harrison, Secretary & Sergeant-at-Arms, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Cassandra Walker, Treasurer, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Doris Harris, Member, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Ms. Linda Wheeler, Member, Board of Education
 Ms. Janet Spight-White, Member, Board of Education

Yes No
 Yes No

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

PUBLIC COMMENTS (Agenda Items Only – 3 minutes only)

- None

MOTION TO APPROVE APRIL 14, 2026, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: SECRETARY HARRISON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE APRIL 14, 2026 MEETING MINUTES SUPPORT: VICE PRESIDENT ROBERTS SECONDED.

DISCUSSION: Ms. White asked about the two versions sent. Ms. Sanford clarified

- AS PRESENTED.
- WITH CORRECTIONS,

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Cheryl Sanford, President, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Famika Roberts, Vice President, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Yolanda Harrison, Secretary & Sergeant-at-Arms, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Cassandra Walker, Treasurer, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Doris Harris, Member, Board of Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Linda Wheeler, Member, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Janet Spight-White, Member, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

MOTION CARRIED 6-1

PRESIDENT’S COMMENTS

Ms. Sanford mentions that she did an interview on WDET. They are doing a series of stakeholder interviews in Highland Park. In the interview she discussed the vision for the school district, how they got there and their plan for the future.

DISTRICT DEPARTMENT REPORTS AND INFORMATION

(1) FINANCE-ALAN C. YOUNG, PC. PRESENTED BY MR. PETTWAY (LUSKA GERMAN HAD ANOTHER ENGAGEMENT)- Mr. Pettway asked that we correct the word December on the agenda. He speaks on the district needing to redeem a portion of the bond and legal counsel Attorney Gavin and Luska are working to get the specific documents needed in order for the redemption to happen.

Questions:

Ms. Wheeler asked if the BOE will need attorney Gavin services every year for bonds, Mr. Pettway explains that he is the bond counsel and what if the BOE wants someone else its up to them to decide but as of right now Attorney Gavin is the bond attorney.

Ms. Roberts asked the amount of the bond. Luska answered that at least %50 will be redeemed of the \$600,000 and the remainder bond debt would be recovered via the annual millage.

Ms. Harris asked there is extra money available for us (the BOE)?

Mr. Pettway said that it’s a debt service fund from taxes on the business districts in the city. and says that you can use the funds to pay off the debt service.

Ms. Harris then asked about the millage and where it would go and Mr. Pettway says that since the BOE bond debt has went down the businesses will be paying less in taxes towards the district. Therefore, the millage doesn’t change but the rate business has to pay in taxes will.

MOTION TO APPROVE APRIL 2026 FINANCIALS

MOTION: VICE PRESIDENT ROBERTS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE APRIL FINANCIALS.

SUPPORT: TREASURER WALKER SECONDED.

DISCUSSION:

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Cheryl Sanford, President, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Famika Roberts, Vice President, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Yolanda Harrison, Secretary & Sergeant-at-Arms, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Cassandra Walker, Treasurer, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Doris Harris, Member, Board of Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Linda Wheeler, Member, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Ms. Janet Spight-White, Member, Board of Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

MOTION CARRIED 6-1.

- (2) **BOARD GOVERNANCE/OVERSIGHT REPORT VANESSA GULLEY, PROVISION-** Ms. Gulley was not available this evening. Mr. Pettway mention that there was a great board development day and that there will be another on for the summer and the info will be available soon.

- (3) **HPSD REPORT- MR. ISAIAH PETTWAY, CEO MR. PETTWAY-**
 Mr. Pettway expresses how it was teacher appreciation this week and the BOE provided Olive Garden and Bunt cakes.
 The elevator is fully operational and the inspection was passed. The BOE came in under budget just shy of \$70,000.
 Ms. White asked how do access the key for the elevator and Mr. Pettway said security will have the key for meetings.
 Mr. Pettway says that the ADA compliance is not on the city but is on the BOE. Mr. Pettway contacted the same company that will be doing the parking lot for a quote and they will look at it this summer when there not so much traffic.
 Mr. Pettway said the authorization to start the windows quote was just given and is still being looked at and that once it complete, he will present it to the board. Mr. Bolden suggests to do it in phases. The cost has gone up from the previous quote.
 Ms. White asked about the pervious quotes. Mr. Pettway explained the previous company refuses to work with the district again.
 Ms. Roberts asked about the flow of traffic in case there’s an increase in the school’s population. She mentioned having the extra lot would help with the congestion.
 Ms. Wheeler asked about moving the cul-de-sac. Mr. Pettway says that is owned by the city and we would have to reach out to the planning commission.
 Mr. Pettway says that Ms. Martain of Martin Record Services has given notice of her resignation. The digitalization will still continue and there will be an audit of the project. Also, the BOE will be looking to hire in that position
 Ms. White commented that someone reached out to her and has not received their records and has been waiting for months.
 Mr. Pettway reminded Ms. White to have the person contact him directly.
 Ms. Harris commented that she could give the name of others that can take over the digitization project.
 Mr. Pettway let the board know that we did submit the proposal on time the reimbursement specifically for the digitalization project. He explained that the district has gotten it every year and hopes that will continue
 Mr. Pettway says the appraisal for Barber and Ford school has came in under budget and was \$15,000 and that

we should have the results soon

BOARD OF EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. **Executive Committee Report-** Ms. Roberts said that they met on May 6th and they discuss several things including renovations, appraisals for Barber and Ford schools, launch of the new executive mentoring program between the BOE and BOD. They also discussed coffee hour to be held at the district office and ways to continue to support Barber and the ongoing IEP challenges.
2. **Finance Committee Report-** Ms. Walker mentioned to keep an eye on our bonds and keep an eye on our funds due to our political climate and thanks Luska and Mr. Pettway.
3. **Educational Expansion Committee Report-** Did not meet
4. **Fundraising Committee Report-** Mr. Pettway says that every student will get pictures sponsored by the BOE. May 23th the sound system will be installed and Mr. Pettway talked to Ms. Arnold about have a dedication. The engineer has offered to train someone to operate the equipment.
Ms. Walker asked if one of the students can also be trained to learn how to use the sound system equipment

UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

NEW BUSINESS

The BOE members gave recommendations for food options, through a show of hands the next three dinner options chosen were be Main St, Royal Kaba and Fish Bone.

EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 minutes only)

None

BOARD OF EDUCATION AFFAIRS & COMMENTS

1. **Board Professional Development Presentations (NSBA)-** Ms. Roberts reported that, “President Cheryl Sanford and Secretary Yolanda Harrison, and I attended the 2026 National School Boards Association Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas, from April 10–12. The conference provided valuable opportunities to participate in leadership workshops, governance discussions, networking events, and Delegate Assemblies where educational leaders from across the country collaborated on solutions impacting public education. A highlight this year was the redesigned Welcome Reception, which encouraged more meaningful engagement with conference vendors and educational resources in a relaxed networking environment.
Throughout the conference, we attended sessions aligned with our district priorities, including governance, educator support, student achievement, community engagement, and workforce readiness. Sessions addressed topics such as legal decision-making for school boards, educator burnout and mental health, strategies to support at-risk students, and the importance of empathetic leadership and communication. Presenters emphasized the value of thoughtful governance, mentorship programs, data-driven interventions, and creating supportive environments for both students and educators.
Additional workshops focused on career readiness, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and building strong partnerships between schools, businesses, and communities to prepare students for future workforce demands. Overall, the conference provided practical strategies, leadership development, and valuable resources that will continue to support informed decision-making and strengthen educational opportunities for our students and community.” Ms. Sanford shared pictures of nooks that are suggested for students with special needs when they need a quiet place to decompress. Ms. Sanford would like to recommend the centers to Barber. She also mentions that there were several vendors there for security and one was exit signs that speak and provide direction in the event of a crisis. She also mentioned a metal detector that detects weapons and would like to bring it up to the board.

Ms. Wheeler asked several questions regarding the conference.

Ms. Walker asked about the career exploration and what grade level was it for. Ms. Sanford replied it was 7th

grade and is being done in Oakland County.

Mr. Pettway mentioned that the cameras and fobs have been installed at Barber and now the metal detectors can also be installed.

Ms. Harris asked about the law suit and whether the last one was filed in the federal court

CLOSED SESSION

1. PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS

Motion to Approve MOTION to go into closed session to discuss written opinion of counsel at 7:37pm: VICE PRESIDENT ROBERTS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE SUPPORT: SECRETARY HARRISON SECONDED.

DISCUSSION:

ROLL CALL:

- Ms. Cheryl Sanford, President, Board of Education Yes No
- Ms. Famika Roberts, Vice President, Board of Education Yes No
- Ms. Yolanda Harrison, Secretary & Sergeant-at-Arms, Board of Education Yes No
- Ms. Cassandra Walker, Treasurer, Board of Education Yes No
- Ms. Doris Harris, Member, Board of Education Yes No
- Ms. Linda Wheeler, Member, Board of Education Yes No
- Ms. Janet Spight-White, Member, Board of Education Yes No

MOTION PASSED 6-1

CLOSED SESSION EXIT

MOTION TO EXIT CLOSE SESSION AT 8:17PM VICE PRESIDENT ROBERTS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE EXIT OF CLOSED SESSION SUPPORT: MEMBER HARRIS SECONDED.

DISCUSSION:

ROLL CALL:

- Ms. Cheryl Sanford, President, Board of Education Yes No
- Ms. Famika Roberts, Vice President, Board of Education Yes No
- Ms. Yolanda Harrison, Secretary & Sergeant-at-Arms, Board of Education Yes No
- Ms. Cassandra Walker, Treasurer, Board of Education Yes No
- Ms. Doris Harris, Member, Board of Education Yes No
- Ms. Linda Wheeler, Member, Board of Education Yes No
- Ms. Janet Spight-White, Member, Board of Education Yes No

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7-0

Board Affairs and Comments:

Ms. Harrison asked about the lawsuit referenced in the board packet and what impact it could have on the district. Mr. Pettway explained that litigation is harmful to the district and negatively impacts the district's insurance coverage. He stated that due to the district's loss history, the district has already been required to make additional payments and was previously dropped by its former insurance carrier. He further explained that the current insurance provider could also choose to discontinue coverage, which would likely result in increased premiums and significant financial impacts on the district, the board, and the overall budget.

Ms. Harrison asked whether, after the lawsuit is resolved, the district could potentially become uninsurable. Mr. Pettway responded that if the district were unable to obtain insurance coverage, the state could intervene and potentially close the

district. He explained that the state ultimately has authority over whether the district continues to operate. Ms. Harrison then asked Mr. Pettway to define a censure and confirm whether the lawsuit had been filed by a fellow board member. Mr. Pettway stated that the lawsuit is public information and confirmed that the litigation was filed by a current board member. He then explained the meaning of a censure.

Ms. Harris commented that anyone has the legal right to file a lawsuit.

Ms. Sanford asked that the board avoid discussing the specific details of the lawsuit. She also stated that all board members, with the exception of Ms. Harris, signed the Code of Conduct and emphasized that the Board of Education is responsible for holding members accountable.

Ms. White stated that she did not want to file the lawsuit and explained that she believed the Board failed to follow the bylaws after the first censure, leaving her feeling that she was denied due process. She also mentioned that the week was recognized as Michigan Week and that she would be working and representing Highland Park. Mr. Pettway clarified that the school was participating, but not the district.

Ms. White asked whether the new laptops had been ordered, and Mr. Pettway responded that they had.

Ms. Wheeler noted that the election will take place in November.

Ms. Roberts expressed disappointment that the district is facing another lawsuit and described the matter as frivolous. She also referenced board policies during her remarks.

Ms. Harrison commented that, because it is an election year and the district is currently involved in litigation, she wanted to bring awareness of the matter to the public.

Ms. White disagreed with Ms. Harrison’s comments and chose to leave the meeting.

Ms. Roberts read a quote and expressed that the board must continue to do what is right for the children.

Mr. Pettway then apologized to the board and stated that the level of disrespect and lack of consideration had become problematic and needed to stop. He explained that he has attempted to remain neutral in his role as CEO, but that the level of disrespect had become intolerable.

Ms. Walker stated that she believes there are individuals on the board whose actions are intended to sabotage the district.

***Ms. Wheeler leaves the room at 8:37PM
Ms. Wheeler returns at 8:42pm*

***Mr. Pettway leaves the room at 8:43pm
Mr. Pettway returns to the room at 8:46pm*

***Ms. White leaves the room at 8:45pm*

CONFIRMATION OF THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

REGULAR MEETING: Tuesday, June 9, 2026 @ 6:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn at 8:56 PM

**MOTION: MEMBER WHEELER MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:56 PM
SUPPORT: MEMBER HARRIS SECONDED.
MOTION CARRIED 6-0.**


Respectfully submitted by:

Yolanda Harrison

Yolanda Harrison, HPBOE Secretary

06/11/2026

Date

Signature: 
[Yolanda Harrison \(Jun 12, 2026 10:48:49 EDT\)](#)
Email: harrisony@hipark.org






School District of the City of Highland Park

Final Audit Report

2026-06-12

Created:	2026-06-10
By:	Camille Wright (wrightc@hipark.org)
Status:	Signed
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