MOORESVILLE GRADED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION
Board Business Meeting Minutes, Monday, November 3, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

The Board of Education of the Mooresville Graded School District met in a Board Business Meeting on Monday, November 3, 2025, at the Mooresville Performing Arts Center, 161 S. Magnolia Street, Mooresville, NC 28115.

Board Members Present: Greg Whitfield, Board Chair; Dr. Debbie Marsh, Vice-Chair; Monica Bender; Rakeem Brawley; Kerry Pennell.

Also Present: Dr. Jason Gardner, Superintendent; Angela Davis, Chief Financial Officer; April Kuhn, Chief Human Resource Officer; Tanae McLean, Chief Communications Officer and Title IX Coordinator; Jonathan Ribbeck, Chief of Schools; Dr. Michael Royal, Chief Operations Officer; Kevin Donaldson, Board Attorney; and, Lisa Neckameyer, Board Clerk.

Media Present: Debbie Page, Iredell Free News

Mr. Whitfield, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:03pm and called for a moment of silence before reflecting on the importance of gratitude, and having a spirit of gratitude especially at this time of year.

Approval of the Agenda: On a motion by Kerry Pennell, seconded by Monica Bender, the board voted 5-0 to approve the agenda as presented.

Approval of the Minutes: On a motion by Debbie Marsh, seconded by Monica Bender, the board voted 5-0 to approve the minutes from the September 30, 2025 work session and the October 7, 2025 meeting as presented.

Schedule Next Meeting: The next regular school board meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Mooresville Town Hall, 413 North Main Street, Mooresville, NC 28115.

Student of the Month: The School Board recognized and presented the Student of the Month Award to AJ Davis, a student at East Mooresville Intermediate School. Dr. Gardner shared the reasons the student was selected as listed on the nomination form.

Artist of the Month: The School Board recognized and presented the Artist of the Month to Wyatt Marti**n,** a student at East Mooresville Intermediate School. Dr. Gardner shared the reasons the student was selected as listed on the nomination form.

Spotlight on People: The School Board recognized Undefeated Conference Champions, the MMS Boys & Girls Cross Country Teams. The team includes: Elizabeth Albaeck, Lincoln Bell, Adah Bustle, Finley Cline, Asher Di Re, Dominic George, Juliette Govern, Jayden Gray, Landon Griffith, Tatiana Hanley, Kaden Helms, Colson Johnson, Jett Johnson, Daniel Kaemba, Taitlyn Lanning, Lucia Lawrence, Brody Matthews, Andrew Mead, Jordan Merrells, Christian Moncada, Nathan Morais, Kathryn Murphy, Bek Nacey, Eloise Neal, Mckenzie Pacini, Emma Parrott, Ryen Paul, Cohen Roseman, Andrew Sherrill, Mason Stewart, Peyton Thomas, Liam Wisniowski, Owen Wolf, Ryan Xu; and coaches Troy Conley, Suzanne Harrington, Alexander Thornhill and Kari Borowiak.

The School Board also recognized School Business Manager Graduate, Ms. Trena Williams.

School Highlights: EMIS Principal, Ms. Tracy Pratt-Dixon, Assistant Principals, Ms. Debbie Birchett and Ms. Tabitha Richardson, and 4th grade teacher Ms. Rebecca McElfresh shared the new ways EMIS is enhancing reading comprehension and engagement. The group shared examples including sharktank-style presentations, socratic seminar share-outs, detective missions and podcasts to build student confidence and engagement. The plan is to expand to other subjects as well, to promote creativity, engagement and learning.

Staff Reports:

- **Maximize Opportunity & Achievement: Jonathan Ribbeck, Chief of Schools, presented updates:**
    - We held our first MOA Committee Meeting on 9/30 to review our focus areas for the current year and to set our priorities for the 25-26 year. The Planning Areas our Committee will be focused on for this year are:
        1. Implementing effective, data-driven intervention, remediation, and enrichment blocks across all schools,
        2. Reviewing grading practices, and
        3. Enhancing our Innovative Schools Model.

      Teams have started working on Strategic Plans to improve and enhance these areas.
    - The MGSD Literacy Intervention Plan, which is required to be completed and reviewed by the state, was approved without any recommendations. It's extremely rare for these plans to be approved without any recommendations. Thanks to Ms.Conley for completing and submitting this plan.
    - MGSD hosted our annual Hispanic Heritage Night on Thursday, October 9th. This was a successful and well-attended event. Thanks to Ms. Conley, Dr. Waid, and our Dual Immersion Teachers for their work in planning this event.
    - The AIG Advisory Team met on October 2nd to review and discuss our goals from the current AIG Plan which began this year. The AIG Advisory Team is made up of district staff, teachers, parents, and students. Thanks to Ms. Conley, Dr. Waid, Ms. Smith, and Ms. Fitzsimmons for leading this team.
    - Careers on Wheels was on 10/24 at the Iredell County Fair Grounds. Our 6th Graders were able to attend and learn about future careers. Thanks to our CTE Department for coordinating this event.
    - Pre-ACTs were given on 10/28 and everything went well. Work Keys are coming up on 11/18 and November Check ins will be taking place throughout the month.
    - Since joining MGSD, Mr. Ribbeck stated that he has had the opportunity to meet individually with the principals while visiting schools and classrooms across the district, and that there are truly amazing things happening for students in MGSD.

- **Safe, Happy, and Healthy: Dr. Michael Royal, Chief Operations Officer, presented updates on the Safe, Happy, and Healthy strategic initiative as well as the district's athletics:**
    - **Athletics:**
        - At MHS, we have conference championship teams in JV men's soccer, Varsity football, and co-conference champions in Volleyball, and the following teams competed in the state playoffs: Volleyball made it to the elite-8, Men's Cross Country competed as a team in the state championship meet while the women's team sent two individuals, women's golf sent one player to the regional match, women's tennis competed in the dual team tournament and sent both an individual and a doubles team to the post-season, men's varsity soccer and varsity football teams have a bye to open up their state playoffs. The MHS competition cheer squad also won their first competition this past weekend, earning a bid to Nationals later this year.
        - At MMS, the boys and girls cross country teams won the conference championship and we are honoring their undefeated seasons tonight. MMS also had the individual conference champion for girls tennis as well.

        - Winter sports seasons are underway at our Middle Schools and our high school teams will begin their first full week of practice this week.
    - We held a safe, happy, healthy subcommittee meeting last month to review the continued implementation of physical and student safety protocols, as well as strategies addressing student behavioral needs. We have our quarterly meetings on the calendar for the remainder of the year as well.
    - Last year K-2 schools were provided with dedicated behavior technicians. This year, support was expanded to intermediate schools by adding part-time Behavior Support Assistants, utilizing Title I funding. Additionally, the committee is currently reviewing and revising K-12 alternative learning programs, with a continued emphasis on enhancing mental health services for our student population.
    - On October 23 all the schools in our district participated in the "Great Shake-out", our annual earthquake drill.
    - Two weeks ago, Mr. Babbitt and Officer Walther attended an "I Love U Guys" workshop. "I love u guys" is a foundation that specializes in reunification drills and procedures with school districts around the country. Mr. Babbitt has also reached out to and visited local schools and districts to discuss different safety protocols and procedures. Additionally, he is attending a National School Safety Conference later this month as well.
    - Mr. Farmer held a district meeting this morning with the administrators from each school in our district who oversee transportation, buses, and the drivers at their schools. His plan is to have these admin meetings throughout the year to hear feedback from the schools.
    - We had 200 Stop Arm violations during the first quarter. Last year, we had 757 total, so we are on pace for more this year.
    - The certificate of occupancy for the Pre-K mobile unit at SES is expected next week. Mr. Neel and I will be meeting with Principals and Directors later this month to start discussing capital planning for the 2026-2027 school year.
    - School Nutrition food sales are up this year compared to last year. Our MGSD school cafeterias are serving our annual Thanksgiving Holiday meal on Tuesday November 18.

- **Recruit, Grow, and Retain: April Kuhn, Chief Human Resource Officer and Angela Davis, Chief Financial Officer presented the updates:**
    - MGSD was represented in September at WSSU, UNC Charlotte, App State, Mitchell and NC Works Job Fairs, where we have interacted with over 100 students and look forward to future conversations for quality candidates.
    - The Beginning Teachers program includes flexible meeting options and we have been receiving positive feedback about the flexibility to meet before school or after school.
    - Along with offering professional development for licensed staff on Sept. 22, department directors offered learning opportunities for classified staff.
    - Two HR staff members were able to attend the fall Personnel Administrators conference which focused on legislative and legal updates related to public educators.
    - Ms. Davis added that it is good to be back in MGSD, and she thanked the Board for the opportunity. Since returning to MGSD, Ms. Davis shared that the priority has been developing a budget for adoption. In the absence of a state budget, MGSD's 2025-2026 budget is formulated around the "knowns" of our current appropriations from the state and federal government as well as from Iredell County. Additional information will be presented later in this meeting regarding this year's funding and the financial landscape.

- **Culture of Relationships: Tanae McLean, Chief Communications Officer presented updates:**
    - The district partnered with Harris Teeter pharmacy to offer an onsite vaccination clinic for staff and their families who were interested. Harris Teeter offered multiple vaccines from flu to shingles. We had approximately 65 individuals take part in the clinic.
    - Last month we celebrated Hispanic Heritage month by holding a community celebration. It was a beautiful evening and the turn out was amazing. Thank you to everyone who helped make the evening possible, particularly all of our dual immersion teachers who shared a bit of their heritage with the community!

- We held our first SHAC meeting and received feedback from school reps about what they would like to see us set as our goals for the year.
- Last week we held our first Teacher Advisory and Parent Advisory Committee meetings. This year we are doing a book study around the book "The Anxious Generation" by Jonathan Haidt. We had vigorous discussion during this initial meeting and are excited to hear from our parents and teachers as we delve more deeply into this book. We are still setting aside some time each meeting to discuss other items, too.
- The calendar committee has held two meetings and will hold a third one on Wednesday. While we hoped to bring a draft to the board this evening, we also want to ensure we are getting the best calendar possible for our students and it has been a bit more difficult this year simply due to when holidays fall. We will have a draft for the board for first read at the December meeting.
- We know that there are people in our community currently struggling with food insecurity. Today we shared out via ParentSquare and social feeds several community resources. We humbly ask our community to share that information to whoever might need assistance.

- **Superintendent Comments:** Superintendent Gardner shared that on Friday October 3rd, we held our 17th annual Mooresville Foundation for Educational Excellence Golf Tournament. This event, held by our foundation, helps to raise funds for several important initiatives in our district including helping students with financial hardships with laptop fees, field trip costs, and scholarships for our summer science camp.The foundation also supports our educators by providing each school's BTOY and TOY a check from the foundation; and, providing each new teacher to the district a check from the foundation. The Superintendent acknowledged the large amount of work that goes into hosting this event, and shared his appreciation for Mr. Michael Gander, foundation president, Ms. Monica Donaldson, foundation treasurer and Ms. Tanae McLean for their leadership in organizing the event. Dr. Gardner continued by recognizing all of our true blue sponsors who provided a donation of at least $5,000: Cliff and Fariba Homesley Charitable Foundation, Christian Tours, Gates Construction, Mooresville Ford, NGK, Randy Marion Automotive, SAGE Security and Surry Insurance.

Board Events: Chairman Whitfield, provided information on several events that will take place in the district and the community including:

- Tues, Nov 4th, Election Day
- Thurs, Nov 6th, 9:30am, EMIS Board Visit
- Mon, Nov 10th, No School (Teacher Workday)
- Tues, Nov 11th, No School (Veteran's Day)
- Weds, Nov 12 - Fri Nov 14th, NCSBA Annual Conference, Greensboro, NC
- Tues, Nov 25th, Early Release (Mooresville Christmas Parade)
- Weds, Nov 26 - Fri, Nov 28, No School (Thanksgiving Break)
- Weds, Dec 3rd, 6:00pm, December BOE Regular Meeting

Public Comment: There was 1 individual signed up for public comment. The public comment period began at 6:58 p.m. with Theresa Knight of 156 Fellspoint Rd, speaking on the topic of Board Policy 1310/4002. **Public comments concluded at 7:00 p.m.**

Items for Information:

A. **Cell Phone Policy:** This summer, the NCGA passed House Bill 959, otherwise known as the "cell phone bill". Ms. McLean brought back the options presented in the October 7, 2025 Board meeting for further clarification and discussion. She shared that the bill does include "wearable technology" which would include smartwatches, and also shared that the Board can choose to adopt a hybrid version of the two options Proposed for Policy 4318: Use of Wireless Communication Devices that are in line with HB 959. Option A would implement a complete ban on electronic device use from the start to the end of the school day. Option B

would implement a ban on electronic device use during instructional time, but would allow use between classes and during lunch., providing more flexibility for secondary students, if desired. Ms. Bender sought clarification around watches not being included in the proposed policy. Mr. Donaldson, board attorney, stated that watches would be covered under "wearable technology" and Ms. McLean stated that the policy can be updated to specifically include watches. Mr. Whitfield and Ms. Pennell also stated that a one-size-fits-all solution would likely not work in this case.

Items for Approval:

A. **Policy Updates:** On October 7, 2025, the Board was presented with the following policies for review and feedback. All of the policies listed below have been recommended by the NCSBA with revisions made specific to Mooresville Graded School District policies and procedures. These specific changes are due to recent legislation signed into law this summer.

Policy Number(s):	**Name(s):**
1310/4002	Parental Involvement
3210	Parental Inspection of and Objection to Instructional Materials
3320	School Trips
3510	Religious-Based Exemptions from School Programs
3620	Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations
4120	Domicile or Residence Requirements
5024/6127/7266	Emergency Epinephrine Delivery Systems
5070/7350	Public Records – Retention, Release and Disposition
6125	Administering Medicines to Students
6340	Transportation Service/Vehicle Contracts
7100	Recruitment and Selection of Personnel
7820	Personnel Files

The recommendation is that the Board approve the policies as presented. Dr. Marsh asked for clarification on policy 1310/4002 Parental Involvement, and Ms. McLean shared that the policy language referenced in public comments last month and this evening does not contain anything about parents not receiving notifications as required by law. The lack of parental right to opt students out of student-initiated individual or group counseling targeted at a student's specific concerns or needs does not mean that parents will not be notified of changes in services or monitoring related to their children's well-being. It merely means that student-initiated counseling targeted at a student's specific concerns or needs is not encompassed in the kind of counseling which parents do have the right to opt out of. There is nothing in this subsection indicating that this counseling should be done in a confidential matter or that notifications required by law will be withheld. **On a motion by Debbie Marsh, seconded by Kerry Pennell, the board voted 5-0 to approve the policy updates as presented.**

B. **District Mental Health Plan:** On October 7, 2025, the Board was presented with MGSD's School Mental Health (SMH) Plan, developed under NC SBOE Policy SHLT-003, aiming to strengthen student and staff well-being through evidence-based SEL practices, mental health services, and community partnerships. **On a motion by Rakeem Brawley, seconded**

by Monica Bender, the board voted 5-0 to approve the District Mental Health Plan as presented.

C. **2025-2026 MGSD Budget:** Ms. Davis presented the budget, noting that the NC General Assembly has not yet adopted a state budget and historically continues to shift funds away from schools. She also added that as we have been told by the Department of Public Instruction, the NC General Assembly has stated there will be no additional voting sessions in 2025. House Bill 125 directed the Office of State Budget & Management to certify the base budget (last year's budget without nonrecurring items) and to grant teachers a salary step increase although no additional funding was provided. Additional action taken this year included establishing an employer matching retirement and health insurance rate. Employee salaries & benefits make up the majority of MGSD expenditures, which is important to note in light of the information regarding a possible reduction in state funding. **On a motion by Kerry Pennell, seconded by Debbie Marsh, the board voted 5-0 to approve the 2025-2026 Budget as presented.**

Closed Session: According to **NC G.S. §143-318.11 subsections (a)(1), (a)(3) & (a)(6)**, Mr. Whitfield, Board Chair, requested the board go into a closed session to prevent the disclosure of information that is not considered public record, review personnel and consult with the board attorney. **On a motion by Monica Bender, seconded by Rakeem Brawley, the board voted 5-0 to go into closed session.**

New Employees:
Kimberly Lucey, EC Teacher, SES, 10/15/2025
Shea Wallace, 3rd Grade DI Teacher, EMIS, 10/22/2025
Jody Vieau, Substitute, MGSD, 10/20/2025
Steven Davis, Substitute, MGSD, 10/20/2025
Andrea Leon, Substitute, MGSD, 10/20/2025
Krystal Ervin, Substitute, MGSD, 10/20/2025
Banisa Carter, Substitute, MGSD, 10/20/2025
Michelle Muzroll, Substitute, MGSD, 10/20/2025
Nicole Hemminger, Substitute, MGSD, 10/20/2025
Rebecca Mansfield, Substitute, MGSD, 10/20/2025
Cherry Gilchrist, Sub Bus Monitor/Substitute, MGSD, 10/29/2025
Robin Nussman, Sub Bus Monitor, MGSD, 11/3/2025
Christian Farmer, Asst. JV Men's Basketball/Substitute, MHS, 10/29/2025
Alexis Danner, EC 1:1, MIS, 10/10/2025
Jackie Rinehardt, Lead Custodian, MMS, 11/3/2025
Austin Beaver, Custodian, RRES, 10/08/2025
Toni-Ann Luckas, Director of the Before and After School Program (BASP), 12/1/2025

Role/Location Change:
Jennifer Becker, Small Group/ Sensory, EMIS, 10/29/2025

Retiring:
Sheryl Davis, Substitute, 10/31/2025, 28 Years of service to MGSD

Non-Continuing:
Noah Barrientos, Custodian, MIS, 10/09/2025
Tiffany Coscia, School Counselor, SBMS, 10/22/2025
Beth Watson, ESL Teacher, SBMS, 11/30/2025

On a motion by Kerry Pennell, seconded by Debbie Marsh, the board voted 5-0 to adjourn from closed session.

On a motion by Rakeem Brawley, seconded by Monica Bender, the board voted 5-0 to approve the personnel list as recommended by the Superintendent.

There being no further business, on a motion by Debbie Marsh, seconded by Rakeem Brawley the board voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jason D. Gardner, Secretary
Board of Education