

Highland Local School District - Regular Meeting

Highland Local School District Board of Education

Middle School Robotics Room
Wednesday, December 10, 2025
6:00pm - 8:00pm

Present: Nate Huffman, Superintendent; John Messmer, Board President; Bill Short, Board Vice President; Eric Thacker, Board Member; Burgess Castle, Board Member; Kathy Belcher, Board Member; Jessika Roberts, Assistant Treasurer; Jason Fleming; Board Member, Board Member

1 Call to Order

President

Minutes:

Mr. Messmer called the meeting to order at 6 pm.

2 Pledge of Allegiance

President

Minutes:

Mr. Messmer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3 Roll Call

President

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Minutes:

Mr. Messmer called roll. All member present except Mr. Castle. Mr. Short exited the meeting at 6:24 pm.

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

4 Approve Minutes

Resolution to approve the minutes for the November 12, 2025 Regular Board of Education Meeting as presented

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-279 Approve Minutes

Motioned: Kathy Belcher

Seconded: Eric Thacker

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

Attachments:

[Regular Meeting 11.12.2025.pdf](#)

5 Approve Financial Statements

Mr. Fleming

Resolution to approve the November 2025 Financial Statements as presented.

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-280 Approve Financial Statements

Motioned: Bill Short

Seconded: Eric Thacker

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

6 Approve FMLA

Resolution to approve the following FMLA

Jordan Kennedy-McPherson HS Counselor

Payton Woodruff Teacher

Laura Wayne Teacher

Denise Stillwell HS Administrative Assistant

Jacob Ware Teacher

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-281 Approve FMLA

Motioned: John Messmer

Seconded: Kathy Belcher

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member			X
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

7 Approve Substitute Teachers

Resolution to approve the Mid Ohio ESC Substitute Teacher List

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-282 Approve Substitute Teachers

Motioned: Kathy Belcher

Seconded: John Messmer

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member			X
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

8 Public Participation

Community

In order for the Board to fulfill its obligation to complete the planned agenda in an effective and efficient manner, a maximum of 30 minutes of public participation may be permitted at each meeting.

Each person addressing the Board shall give his/her name. If several people wish to speak, each person is allotted three minutes until the total time of 30 minutes has elapsed. During that period, no person may speak twice until all who desire to speak have had the opportunity. Persons desiring more time should follow procedure of the Board to be placed on the regular agenda. The period of public participation may be extended by a vote of the majority of the Board present and voting.

Minutes:

N/A - none wished to address the Board.

9 Retire/Rehire Hearing - Penny Coyan

Minutes:

Required hearing was held. No comments were made.

10 Accept Resignation Letters From Personnel

Resolution to approve the following resignations

Matthew Loughman ES Custodian (Effective 12/31/25)

Lori Rodgers ES Cook/Cashier (Effective 11/23/25)

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-283 Accept Resignation Letters From Personnel

Motioned: Bill Short

Seconded: Eric Thacker

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

11 Approve Classified Contract

Resolution to approve the following classified contract for one year.

Lori Rodgers Paraprofessional 2 Step 0 (Effective 11/24/25)

Angela Lowe ES Custodian Step 0 (Effective 1/2/2026)

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-284 Approve Classified Contract

Motioned: Eric Thacker

Seconded: Kathy Belcher

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

12 Approve Paraprofessional 3 Stipend

Resolution to approve the following paraprofessional 3 stipend

Lori Rodgers

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-285 Approve Paraprofessional 3 Stipend

Motioned: Bill Short

Seconded: John Messmer

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

13 Approve Classified Subs

Resolution to approve the following classified subs.

Barbara Horton cook/cashier, bus aide

Laura Dempsey cook/cashier (effective 11/25/25)

Matthew Loughman Custodian/cook/cashier

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-286 Approve Classified Subs

Motioned: Eric Thacker

Seconded: Kathy Belcher

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

14 Approve Supplemental Contract

Resolution to approve the following supplemental contract

Tyler Eldred Volunteer Middle School Basketball Coach

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-287 Approve Supplemental Contract

Motioned: Eric Thacker

Seconded: John Messmer

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

15 Approve Basketball Coaching Supplementals

Resolution to approve \$4,400 stipend for each of the following personnel.

Anthony Wilson Boy's Basketball Freshman

Ryan Stover Boy's Basketball JV

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-288 Approve Basketball Coaching Supplementals

Motioned: Bill Short

Seconded: John Messmer

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

16 Approve Home Instruction Tutor

Resolution to approve the following home instruction tutor for an elementary student

Amy Fleming (2 hours per week, paid at employee's hourly rate, effective the first day worked)

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-289 Approve Home Instruction Tutor

Motioned: John Messmer

Seconded: Kathy Belcher

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

17 Approve Request to Recognize Indoor Track and Field

Resolution to approve the recognition of the indoor track and field team to represent Highland.

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-290 Approve Request to Recognize Indoor Track and Field

Motioned: Eric Thacker

Seconded: Kathy Belcher

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

18 Student Wellness and Success Funds Plan

Resolution to approve the District's SY2026 Student Wellness and Success Plan as presented

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-291 Student Wellness and Success Funds Plan

Motioned: Kathy Belcher

Seconded: Eric Thacker

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

19 Ohio Minimum Wage

Resolution to approve an increase in minimum wage to a rate of \$11.00 and an increase in the sub rate of pay for the following classified positions effective January 1, 2026 to align with the increase in the State of Ohio minimum wage.

Paraprofessional 1

Paraprofessional 2

Cook

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-292 Ohio Minimum Wage

Motioned: Bill Short

Seconded: John Messmer

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

20 Approve Purpose and Budget Clause

Resolution to approve the Class of 2026 Purpose and Budget Clause.

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-293 Approve Purpose and Budget Clause

Motioned: Eric Thacker

Seconded: Kathy Belcher

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

21 Approve Depository Agreement

Resolution to approve the depository agreement with Park National Bank.

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-294 Approve Depository Agreement

Motioned: Bill Short

Seconded: John Messmer

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

22 Stall the Teacher

Resolution to approve the donation of funds through Stall the Teacher to be used for a district donation, in the amount donated, to Nanze to help dig wells and supply water.

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-295 Stall the Teacher

Motioned: Eric Thacker

Seconded: John Messmer

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

23 Elementary Playground Equipment

Resolution to approve an elementary playground equipment purchase in the amount of \$101,885.76.

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-296 Elementary Playground Equipment

Motioned: John Messmer

Seconded: Eric Thacker

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

24 Approve Revised Appropriations and Resources

Resolution to approve the revised appropriations (fund level) and estimated resources.

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-297 Approve Revised Appropriations and Resources

Motioned: Kathy Belcher

Seconded: Bill Short

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

25 Approve President Pro-Temp for the January Organizational Meeting

Resolution to approve the President Pro-Temp for the January Organizational Meeting.

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Minutes:

Mr. Short moved to nominate Mr. Messer as President Pro-Temp for the January 2026 Organizational Meeting. Mr. Thacker seconded this motion. Mr. Short moved to close nominations. Mr. Thacker seconded that motion. All voted in favor of the nomination for Mr. Messmer to serve as President Pro-Temp for the January 2026 Organizational Meeting.

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-298 Approve President Pro-Temp for the January Organizational Meeting

Motioned: Bill Short

Seconded: Eric Thacker

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

26 Move from Regular to Executive Session

WHEREAS, as a public board of education may hold an executive session only after a majority of a quorum of this board determines by a roll call vote to hold such a session and only at a regular or special meeting for the sole purpose of the consideration of any of the following matters:

A. Consideration of the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official.

B. Investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee, official, licensee, or student unless such employee, official, licensee, or student requests a public meeting; except that consideration of the discipline of a Board member for conduct related to the performance of their duties or their removal from office shall not be held in executive session.

C. Consideration of the purchase of property for public purposes, or sale or other disposition of unneeded, obsolete, unfit-for-use property at competitive bidding, if premature disclosure of information would give an unfair competitive or bargaining advantage to a person whose personal, private interest is adverse to the general public interest.

D. Discussion with the Board's legal counsel of disputes involving the Board that are the subject of pending or imminent court action.

E. Preparing for, conducting, or reviewing negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of employment.

F. Matters required to be confidential by Federal law or regulations or State statutes.

G. Specialized details of security arrangements and emergency response protocols where disclosure might reveal information that could jeopardize the District's security.

H. Consideration of confidential information related to the marketing plans, specific business strategy, production techniques, trade secrets, or personal financial statements of an applicant for economic development assistance, or to negotiations with other political subdivisions respecting requests for economic development assistance, provided that both of the following conditions apply:

1. The information is directly related to a request for economic development assistance that is to be provided or administered under one of the statutes referenced in R.C. 121.22(G)(8)(1), or that involves public infrastructure improvements or the extension of utility services that are directly related to an economic development project, and

2. An unanimous quorum of the Board or its subcommittee determines, by a roll call vote, that the executive session is necessary to protect the interests of the applicant or the possible investment or expenditure of public funds to be made in connection with the economic development project.

Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Highland Local Board of Education, by a majority of the quorum present at this meeting, does hereby declare its intention to hold an executive session on item(s) as listed above.

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Minutes:

The Board entered into Executive Session at 6:24 pm for item A above.

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-299 Move from Regular to Executive Session

Motioned: John Messmer

Seconded: Kathy Belcher

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Bill Short, Board Vice President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		

27 Regular Session Reconvened

Minutes:

Regular session reconvened at 7:43 pm.

28 Adjourn this Meeting and Confirm Next Meeting Date

Resolution to adjourn this meeting and schedule the next meeting of the Highland Local School District Board of Education which will be the Organizational Meeting at 5:45 pm followed by the Regular Meeting at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, January 7, 2026 in the middle school robotics room.

Roll Call: Kathy Belcher___ Burgess Castle___ John Messmer___ William Short___ Eric Thacker___

Minutes:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 pm.

Result: Approved

Resolution: 25-12-300 Adjournment

Motioned: Kathy Belcher

Seconded: Eric Thacker

Voter	Yes	No	Abstained
John Messmer, Board President	X		
Eric Thacker, Board Member	X		
Kathy Belcher, Board Member	X		