



**Minutes of the Barker Central School District  
Board of Education Meeting  
Monday, November 4, 2024, 7:00 p.m.  
Board Room**

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<b>Present</b>	R. Atwater, D. Carnes, C. Gancasz, E. Gow, J. Harris, J. Sweeney, Jr., V. Voss
<b>Excused</b>	None
<b>Also Present</b>	J. Reimer, M. Carter, C. Cornwell, M. Eadie, M. Learo, M. Love Public – 5
<b>Call to Order</b>	Mr. Atwater called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The pledge to the flag was done.
<b>Agenda</b>	Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Gow, to approve the Board Meeting agenda as presented for November 4, 2024. Yes: 7, No: 0 Motion carried.
<b>Minutes</b>	Motion by Mrs. Carnes, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., to approve the October 7, 2024 regular meeting, and October 24, 2024 special meeting minutes, as presented. Yes: 7, No: 0 Motion carried.
<b>Public Forum</b>	Mr. Tuper noted the formal letter of complaint he presented to the Board last month and how he felt about the response received from President Atwater on behalf of the Board. He discussed his relationship with the school as a parent of three children and provided background on his work and work relationships. He noted that he would continue to come to the Board meetings and commented he will be filing an OCR complaint as he felt his son's civil rights have been violated.
<b>Mr. Tuper left the meeting at 7:05 p.m.</b>	
<b>Presentations</b>	<u>Principal's Update - Dr. Love</u> Dr. Love commented that the high school has closed out its first quarter and the elementary will be finishing its trimester this week. She noted that



evaluations of staff have started too. She gave a shout-out to the staff and students for a fun school-wide Halloween celebration which included performances from the chorus and band, a parade, dance class performing for students, history themed dress-up day for Jr./Sr. High School students, along with, hopefully, a new tradition in which a theme is picked and staff participate. This year it was 101 Dalmatians. It was a good team bonding experience which she hopes will continue.

There is a faculty meeting scheduled for this Wednesday, which will focus on school safety and empower the faculty to actively practice emergency events. There will be trauma informed discussions about real life situations and situations the staff have experienced, practice speaking and calling emergencies over the PA system, and more.

Dr. Love reviewed the results of the Code of Conduct survey. She noted that it is anticipated that there will be some guidance from the state on cell phone usage in the near future, and she did suggest waiting until the information is received before any final decisions are made. She stated she has spoken with other districts about these subjects to provide insight too. With regard to cell phone usage, the majority of respondents chose no change for the Elementary as well as Jr./Sr. High School. The survey results section for hats/hoods, had views on changes to the Code with regard to common spaces, teacher discretion, and a few options to be considered. She noted that some schools have gotten away from rules pertaining to hats and hoods. Most respondents had no language changes suggested with regard to the section of the Code addressing lewd language on clothing, the majority responded that no change was needed to the current language addressing this. Dr. Love commented that she would recommend staying away from specific clothing types being noted in the Code as it could have implications for the District regarding equity and Title IX. The Board discussed the results and based on a suggestion from Mr. Atwater, concurred to wait on any changes to the phone policy based on anticipated guidance. The group then discussed the formation of a committee to further review the results and make a recommendation. The Board agreed the group should be made up of parents, students, Board members, and staff. The potential make up would be 2-3 high school parents, students and staff and 1 elementary parent, student, and staff member with the Board and Administration participants. They also discussed the size of the committee to ensure effectiveness, process, moderating the meeting(s), etc. to make sure it is an efficient and productive use of time. Given the upcoming holidays and multiple events, the Board discussed timing of the first meeting, and Mr. Atwater asked Dr. Love to pull together a set of questions, how she would recommend the meeting flow, use of a moderator, and provide the Board through her thoughts on how best to move forward, and scheduling/time of the meeting based on the makeup participants. She commented she would provide the information to the Board Members for their feedback. The



Board would then approve the participation of the committee at a future meeting.

Dr. Love then introduced Hanna Andrews, who is being recommended for an appointment as a Long-term Substitute AIS Teacher for the District this evening. She noted her certification and reviewed the interview process based on that which led to the recommendation.

**Ms. Andrews and Mr. Learo was excused from the meeting at 7:26 p.m.**

Coor. of Curriculum & Prof. Learning/AP's Update - Mr. Cornwell

Mr. Cornwell provided a presentation about the data trends for results on ELA, math, and science from the school years 2017-2018 through 2023-2024, noting possible reasons for changes in results, factors impacting the results, and the focus and goals for the areas to address areas of improvement as well as continued growth. He noted that there no assessments in 2019-2020 due to COVID and that 2020-2021 is an outlier year given some districts were hybrid, and the state modified tests and removed a lot that had been in the tests previously. 2021 is also when the District changed over to computer-based testing and he noted there are different views on the impact that change could have on results. He felt it was a good move to prepare the students in advance for this form of testing before it is required. The 3-8 data results showed grades 3 and 4 indicated little change over the past few years. Grade 5 had a bit of a bounce back last year at 40% proficiency. Grade 6 had the lowest level of proficiency within the past five years at 16%. Mr. Cornwell commented that hopefully it is an outlier and an anomaly. Grade 7 has seen varied results over the past five years. Grade 8 results has also been varied, with a bit of a bounce back in 2023-2024. Mr. Cornwell then discussed some of action steps to improve on data points, as well as to continue to improve on favorable results. Improvement of literacy instruction and student achievement in this area is one of the District's goals in the District-wide Strategic Plan. Administration and faculty have been spending considerable time on this focus. He noted that as part of the recent professional development day in October, the Science of Reading literacy briefs put out by NYS were shared and reviewed with all elementary faculty members. He also stated the District has pulled some longitudinal item analysis reports at each grade level. He noted that those who reviewed this data in October found it eye opening as they had not looked at it through that lens before and could use it to focus on data points that the District had not done well at as well as favorable results. Grades 3-6 were analyzed using the Atlas protocol with the department chairs at those grade levels and with the District's consultant, Christina Lesh. In addition, the District plans to conduct a data analysis with each elementary school department using the Atlas protocol within the next month or so. This data analysis focuses on the standards/data points that we have not done well on historically and these standards make up a large part of the assessment. For example, the data analysis of grades 3-6 showed two key



areas (Craft & Structure, and Key Ideas/Details) that our students have not done well on over the years, and these areas have multiple questions each year on these assessments. After this data analysis, the conversation will turn to what does instruction around these standards look and sound like in each classroom? How can we strengthen this instruction in all classrooms and for all students? What action steps are in process or to be put in process to move it forward to improve.

With regard to the full transition to computer-based testing several years ago, he noted that the transition may be a contributing factor to students' results, but there is more to it than that. He noted that if necessary, the District can have its students practice using the computer/device to take similar assessments, then we can do that as well.

With regard to math results, Mr. Cornwell noted that overall, except for a couple, the District's math proficiency data has rebounded to levels that occurred before the pandemic. Grades 7 and 8 have posted their best numbers in the past two years. He noted that the District will follow a similar plan of data analysis of the Math assessments to identify areas of improvement for our students, however now the primary focus is on ELA.

The science assessments at the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade level are brand new in terms of their format, standards, and implementation. Mr. Cornwell noted that as a result, it was significantly different than prior years, thus comparing data from 2023-2024 to years prior is not a worthwhile endeavor. He noted the District will begin to compare its future data on these assessments to the "baseline" that was established last year, to see how the students measure up. While the District's proficiency rates were in the mid 40% range, he noted that the District exceeded the state average by 10+ percentage points.

Mr. Atwater asked how the District scores compare to the region. Mr. Cornwell noted that ELA 3-8 is below, math is in the ball park, and science exceeded scores.

Mr. Cornwell noted that while comparing Fastbridge data to NYS 3-8 data is a bit like comparing apples to oranges given different formats and types of questions, Fastbridge still represents a valid data point for the students. This assessment is administered to all students three times each year. The data aligns with state standards he noted. Not much change District-wide in this data over the past year or so. However, some grade levels saw significant improvement. He reviewed the aReading noting there was not a lot of change for grades 2, 3 and 11. AutoReading for grades 4, 6, 10 and 11, have been administered since the spring of 2022 through this fall. aMath, administered to grade 2, 3, and 6 have been the highest, with grade 2 at the 86% level.



Mr. Cornwell provided a summary of the Superintendent's Conference Day held on Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup> which provided more professional development time to the faculty. Teachers worked on data analysis with their departments/grade level bands led by the Instructional Cabinet members. Information regarding the TIG initiative, The Science of Reading Literacy briefs, and the new graduation measures were also shared with faculty. Mr. Cornwell also noted that a press release for the Blue Ribbon Commission to phase in for high school was issued today and he will provide information to the Board once he has time to review and digest.

Mr. Reimer commented and agreed with Mr. Cornwell's comment that the data points are not indicative of the students and the District looks at a number of data points as there are so many variables and points of measurement. He also commented that the work of the Instructional Cabinet with Administration and faculty is important and together review multiple data points with the goal to continuously improve will result so students that are able to effectively communicate and work when they leave and graduate.

#### Director of Instructional Services/AP's Update - Mr. Learo

Dr. Reimer noted that Mr. Learo had an emergency and that is why he left prior to his report being given. Dr. Reimer will send the information to the Board via email.

#### Financial Update – Mr. Carter

Mr. Carter discussed NYLAF as an additional cash management solution for the District's investment/deposits. He noted that NYLAF has been around a long-time and is similar to NYCLASS but offers a broader array of products. Mr. Sweeney asked who else currently uses NYLAF and Mr. Carter stated a number of neighboring districts do. He commented that he currently invested \$1 million in a 12-month and 18-month Treasury given rates, but the addition of this group may help down the road to consolidate financial institutions so that not as many institutions are being used for investments and will be easier to manage. He noted that Chase will remain the primary financial institution with the District. He provided information for the Board to review and noted he would bring a recommendation forward next month.

Mr. Carter then reviewed the tax collection report for the 2024-2025 year as of October 31, 2024. To date \$4,113,254 has been collected from the District levy portion and \$80,369 for the library levy. The combined total of \$4.193 million represents approximately 89.79% of the total \$4.193 to be collected. He stated that that percentage collected is where the District usually is at this point in time in years past. He noted that the school is no longer accepting payments but as there are some additional monies anticipated for those who mailed payments which will be applied. The final report will be brought forward in December for approval after the



November 15, 2024 filings to the counties. He noted that the District will pay the library about \$80,000 and then the remaining balance will be paid in January when the District is made whole by the counties.

Mr. Carter then reviewed the 2025-2026 budget development calendar presented for review last month. April 23, 2025, Wednesday, is when Mr. Carter suggested a fourth meeting for the Budget Advisory Committee would take place pending any changes in the timeline. There were no questions brought forward from the Board regarding the schedule.

Mr. Carter discussed the Food Service/Cafeteria area noting that NYS Department of Health and Child Nutrition could be providing a change in food prep mandate due to food allergies concerns which will result in preparation of meals for students with food allergies being done in a separate space which will require the District to purchase things to meet the mandate. Mr. Carter stated that there are funds available to pay for this. He also noted that there is a push for all schools to serve dye free foods. Mrs. Fuerch has already been researching options which she felt there would be options currently available and more healthy options in future years as this becomes a larger focus.

With regard to buildings and grounds, the concession stand has been fixed. An auto flush valve was the reason behind the plumbing issue and a professional service company was brought in to fix the situation.

Abatement is starting soon and areas are being cleared out in preparation for it. Mr. Carter noted that this will cause some additional overtime expense to prep for Phase II.

Mr. Carter then discussed the regional Questar BOCES meeting he attending with other SBOs from Erie and Niagara County. He noted that if Questar is focused on an issue it means it is important. One topic discussed was the percentage of CPI of 2% vs 4% for foundation aid and a district's contribution. By moving from 4% to 2% CPI, the state sent out millions of fewer dollars in foundation aid to schools. Also, nearly half of districts were held harmless last year, which means no increase in foundation aid. Districts with fewer than 1000 students are those that were held harmless at the highest rates, which Barker falls into. He will continue to follow the updates on this information as it is made available. Dr. Reimer noted that he felt the District will see an overall increase in aid given the foundation aid formula had for several years resulted in lower funding.

There has been a lot of discussions relative to incentive aid and consolidation of districts. Dr. Reimer noted that the regionalization piece will take a couple years to work and if at that point stabilization is not seen, then changes could be made. He sees more regionalization in other areas of the state, but we will continue to monitor as this progresses.





## **Superintendent's Information**

Dr. Reimer provided a Capital Improvement Project update, noting Phase II is moving along and the areas impacted by this are being cleared out in preparation. Temporary walls to protect people from the work zone are being erected and traffic patterns are being redirected. Communications to staff, students, and others are being issued through various sources. Dr. Reimer noted that the intent is to have all the work completed by October 2025. There could be punch list and other items to finalize so the space may not necessarily be ready for students. The last nine months of construction and the moving pieces necessary are being noticed by the community in a favorable way.

Dr. Reimer discussed regionalization more. He also noted, the APPR regulations at the state level have not been released as expected. Conversation with NYSED suggested that the information may go to the Board of Regents the next thirty days. He commented that the District will make sure observations and the process is done correctly.

Dr. Reimer met with the Erie-Niagara Coalition for Rural Health Care. He noted there was good conversation on how to bring services to Eastern-Niagara counties as well as to help change the types of services available, including more to the area, and how to provide them more efficiently and effectively to the community. They also discussed that if the services were available in these areas that it may entice people move here, which would have a positive impact to also encourage companies to move to the area.

Dr. Reimer stated he had a meeting with the Student Council about the process of having a student voice on the Board. He noted they were excited about the process and had a number of questions. He felt having them formulate the plan for this will have a positive impact on the students and would also enable them to learn about the democratic process. They also discussed when formulating the process to consider succession planning if the initial member were to be a Senior. As a result of the meeting, they have begun working on the framework, rules, and how to go about the process for putting a student on the Board. He noted that the addition of the student still could potential occur before June. During the meeting, Dr. Reimer also discussed having meetings with students on a monthly basis to build this communication between the students and staff and empower them on how to have their voice heard. He noted he asked for input on who they thought this could be done with regard to selection, process, etc.

Dr. Reimer then discussed the potential capital improvement project. He noted that the preliminary numbers that were put together and what the District could do has changed a bit after reviewing with the District's financial consultants with regard to incidentals and site work in the original plan discussed the last few months. As some of the pieces in the



current project had to be changed, it impacted the initial amount of the proposed project which was \$17,750,000. As a result, he also met with the engineers, architects, project manager, and to maintain within about \$2.7 million of the capital reserve and no tax impact, the most the District could put up for a vote is approximately \$14 million which is about \$3.7 million less than original projected. As such, Dr. Reimer wanted to reaffirm the Board's position with regard to the project, whether to put forth a project that would not have a financial impact on the community as discussed the last few months, or the alternatives would be to use more of the capital reserve to increase what the District could do with no impact to the tax payers, or increase to the amount originally projected and pass the difference on to the tax payers. He noted he would do what the Board decides but his suggestion would be for a reduced project value to \$14 million. He noted some of the work identified that could be changed included the maintenance building which could be addressed through the general fund budget as it would not be aidable. He also noted other peripheral pieces that could be removed. He noted that a special meeting in December may be needed depending on timing to approve the project size, SEQR, ballot language, and required information would be needed if the Board decided to do a mid-January vote.

After discussion, the Board concurred to do a project that would have no tax impact on the community and not take more from the reserve, and therefore for Mr. Reimer to put together a \$14 million project and send for input to the Board in a Friday letter and to arrange for a special board meeting to get the process for the next capital improvement project moving.

## **Policies/Plans**

The first reading of the following policies was presented. Mrs. Harris asked about Policy 3271/Solicitation of Charitable Donations with regard to how different events are done. Dr. Reimer noted that the policy is written to the Board of Regents language. He read section 19.6 to the Board as it is a policy Administration had been reviewing. He noted that there is no direct solicitation during the school days.

2110: Orienting and Training New Board Members
2210: Committees of the Board
2310: Membership in Associations
2320: Attendance by Board Members at Conferences, Conventions, and Workshops
2330: Compensation and Expenses
3110: Media/Municipal Governments/Senior Citizens
3140: Flag Display
3150: School Volunteers
3210: Visitors to the Schools
3230: Public Complaints
3250: Parent-Teacher Organization





3260: Use of Service Animals
3271: Solicitation of Charitable Donations
3272: Advertising in the Schools
3280: Use of School Facilities, Materials and Equipment

The second review of policies was done. There were no changes the following policies presented for approval:

1410: Policy and Administration of Regulations
1510: Regular Board Meetings and Rules (Quorum and Parliamentary Procedure)
1520: Special Meetings of the Board of Education
1530: Minutes
1540: Executive Sessions
1610: Annual District Meeting and Election/Budget Vote
1611: Business of the Annual District Election
1620: Annual Organizational Meeting
1630: Legal Qualifications of Voters at School District Meetings
1640: Absentee Ballots
1650: Submission of Questions and Propositions at Annual Elections and Special District Meetings

A motion by Mrs. Gow, seconded by Mrs. Harris, to approve the above referenced policies as presented.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

The Board then reviewed the Barker Central School District Reserve Fund Planning Booklet dated November 2024 which will be presented in December for second review and approval. There were no questions raised.

### **Education**

Motion by Mrs. Gow, seconded by Mrs. Gancasz to approve the following library items and furniture to be declared excess property and that the Superintendent, or his designee, be authorized to dispose of said items.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

### **Personnel Items**

Motion by Mrs. Gow, seconded by Mrs. Carnes to approve the appointment of Hanna Andrews as a Long-term Substitute AIS Teacher effective November 5, 2024 with a salary at BA, Step 1, \$43,056 pro-rated from the start date as per the BTU Agreement.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gow, seconded by Mrs. Carnes to approve the change in appointment for Sabrina Fuller from Substitute Teacher, Substitute



Teaching Assistant, and Substitute Aide from PreK-6 to cover grades PreK-12.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gow, seconded by Mrs. Carnes to approve the appointment of Ian Wagner as a per diem Substitute Teacher, as well as Substitute Teaching Assistant and Substitute Teacher Aide at a rate of \$15.00 per hour, effective November 5, 2024 for grades PreK-12.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gow, seconded by Mrs. Carnes to approve the appointment of Jason Royce as a Substitute Teacher at the per diem rate, as well as Substitute Teaching Assistant and Substitute Teacher Aide at a rate of \$15.00 per hour, effective November 5, 2024 for grades PreK-12.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gow, seconded by Mrs. Carnes to approve the following appointments for the Winter sports season of the 2024-2025 school year with payment based upon the BTU Agreement sports schedule.

Jacob Haight	Varsity Boys Basketball	Step 4
Colin Knight	JV Boys Basketball	Step 2
Logan Harris	Modified Boys Basketball	Step 1
James Harris	Varsity Girls Basketball	Step 1
Danielle LeFever (Co-Coach)	JV Girls Basketball	Step 1
Grace LeFever (Co-Coach)	JV Girls Basketball	Step 1
Krista Beth Feltz	Modified Swimming	Step 4
Melissa Philips (Co-Coach)	Cheer	Step 4
Bethany Duchow (Co-Coach)	Cheer	Step 1
Sabrina Buckland – Adult Athletic Volunteer		
Mia Herman – Adult Athletic Volunteer		
Daniel Jordan – Adult Athletic Volunteer		
Josh Haight – Adult Athletic Volunteer		
Todd Prynne – Adult Athletic Volunteer		
Brandon Janese - 5/6 Boys Basketball Coach		
Karli Sturtevant - 5/6 Girls Basketball Coach		
Ashley Carpenter - 5/6 Girls Basketball Coach		
Zach Gregory -5/6 Girls Basketball Coach		

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gow, seconded by Mrs. Carnes to approve the appointment of Ireland Brady Greeson as a District-wide lifeguard effective November 5, 2024 at a rate of \$18.00 per hour.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.



Motion by Mrs. Gow, seconded by Mrs. Carnes to approve the appointments of the following individuals as a parent/community volunteers as listed below:

Cieslewicz, Ashley  
Farrell, Joanna  
Maurer, Ryan  
Zambito, Gillian  
Zambito, Timothy

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

### **Business & Financial Items**

Motion by Mrs. Harris, seconded by Mrs. Gow, to accept the Warrant Report dated September 30, 2024.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Harris, seconded by Mrs. Gow, to accept the Treasurer's Reports dated September 2024.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Harris, seconded by Mrs. Gow, to accept the Extraclassroom Report dated September 2024.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Harris, seconded by Mrs. Gow, to approve the acceptance of the Corrective Action Plan in response to the Management Letter from the audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Harris, seconded by Mrs. Gow, to accept the Tax Collection Report for 2024-2025 as of October 31, 2024 and granting authority of Michael Carter, SBO, to file the final report to the counties on November 15, 2024, with a final report of the figures to be approved at the December 9, 2024 Board of Education meeting.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Harris, seconded by Mrs. Gow, to approve the 2025-2026 Budget Calendar.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

### **Other**

Dr. Reimer commented that the finalization of the Budget Advisory members will be presented for approval at the December Board Meeting.



**End of Public  
Session**

Motion by Mrs. Gow, seconded by Mrs. Carnes to adjourn public session at 8:35 p.m., and move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing employment of particular persons.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

**Executive  
Session**

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Gancasz, to approve the adjournment of the Executive Session at 9:18 p.m., and return to Public Session.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

**Public Session/  
Adjournment**

A motion was then made by Mrs. Gow, seconded by Mrs. Gancasz, to end the Public Session and adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Prepared by,

Mary H. Eadie  
District Clerk