

**ISOA Executive Board Meeting
February 4, 2026
Minutes**

Present

Dansville Dave Lilly
East Lansing Abbie Tykocki
Holt Matea Caluk
Ingham ISD Jason Mellema
Ingham ISD John Wolenberg
Lansing Ciera Strode
Leslie Eric Isham
Stockbridge Carrie Graham
Waverly Alicia Guevara
Mason Lacy Harding/Liz Evans

Webberville Joshua Rockey
Williamston Sarah Belanger

Absent

Okemos Leeni Shrestha
Haslett Amy Clark

Engagement and Attendance

- Jen McLoud and Jessica Martell – MTSS Community of Practice: Improving Engagement and Attendance

Early Warning and Attendance Work

- 2009 Districts implemented early warning systems.
- 2023 Districts began collaborating through the EWIMS Network
- Spring of 2025: Multiple departments raised concerns about attendance.
- Mark Larson (Kent ISD) presented on attendance and due to a strong interest, he returned in the Fall 2025 for a half-day session with attendance secretaries, principals, and counselors.
- The court also presented on the truancy referral process and what occurs once cases move to court.

Chronic Absenteeism Data and Goals

- Chronic absenteeism rates: National – 22%, State – 28%, Ingham ISD – 32%
- Goal is to reduce chronic absenteeism by 50% over 5 years (approximately 1,380 students)
- 69% of chronically absent students in our county are identified as homeless.
- Highest impacted grade levels: Kindergarten, 8th, 10th, and 12th.
- Priority is to establish common language and consistent practices across districts and strengthen family engagement.

Current Strategy (MTSS – January 21 Meeting)

- 2-Pronged approach:
 - Community of Practice – Collective learning focused on creating school environments where students want to be.
 - Work Groups – Streamlining efforts and aligning resources:

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- Attendance Procedures/Understanding Truancy Process (including a consistent attendance agreement)
- Attendance Tiered Systems of Support
 - Supports for promoting common messaging and terminology around attendance and a calendar of activities
- Engaging Families & Community to Improve Attendance including stakeholder recruitment and building a family and community engagement toolkit.

MTSS Next Meeting

- Feb 26th Dr. Jeremy Singer (UM Flint) will share research-based strategies from his book *Rethinking Chronic Absenteeism* based on his work with Detroit Public Schools.

Superintendents' Round Table Update

Jessica Benavides, Lansing Public Schools Interim Superintendent, provided discussion highlights from the January Superintendents' Round Table including:

- Internet services – StarNet Security system (Palo Alto firewall) needs to be replaced. The recommendation from technology directors and Ingham ISD is to pre-buy a 5-year subscription bundle which has increased cyber security saving districts money.
- Section 164K (K-5 Reading Curriculum) – MDE has released a list of approved K-5 reading curriculums. If your district is not currently using an approved program, there is still time for vendors to seek MDE approval. Vendors must initiate the approval process. Districts choosing not to adopt an approved curriculum are required to notify families by mail in accordance with MDE guidelines.
- Special Education Bond – If you have not visited the Beekman Center or Heartwood you are encouraged to do so. They are not as up to date as they need to be. Election Day is May 5. Please help get the word out so that our special education students receive the learning environments they deserve.

ISOA Bylaws and Election of Officer

The annual bylaws were emailed to all ISOA board members prior to the meeting. There were no comments or changes.

Annual Election for the ISOA President and Vice President.

- Josh Rockey, supported by Abbie Tykocki, moved to confirm Sarah Belanger as President.
- Sarah Belanger, supported by Abbie Tykocki, moved to confirm Josh Rocky as Vice President.

District Updates

Lansing – Ben has moved to Seattle and Jessica Benavides is now serving as Interim Superintendent. Five board member terms are ending this year, and those seats will be up for election. The Lansing School District Board remains focused on supporting Lansing's students and families during this transition.

Leslie – The current elementary curriculum is not included in the 164K approved list. The district is hoping to move from the 2nd to the 3rd edition to meet the MDE requirement. Leslie was a district that opted out of 31aa. Brad Dunlap is the new board president.

Ingham School Officers Association

East Lansing – Construction at the new administration building is ongoing. The district is also implementing additional security updates at the high school. There have been recent changes in board leadership, and Elizabeth Lyons is now serving as board president. East Lansing was a district that exceeded the 31aa funding.

Holt – currently working with MASB in the search for a new superintendent. The application period closes Friday, February 13, 2026. A survey went out to a focus group to gather feedback and that input is currently being reviewed. There will be board vacancies in the fall. The district is in the process of refreshing their strategic plan so that the new superintendent can be involved in the new plan going forward.

Stockbridge – the district went phone free last fall, and it is going well. FFA is going to the Dominican Republic to do education outreach and lead a workshop. Test scores and attendance rates have increased this year.

Ingham – The special education bond will be on the ballot in May. It will serve our most vulnerable student ages 3-26. The Wall of Fame and Awards dinner is scheduled for March 24, 2026.

Webberville – The basketball programs are doing very well this year. The salt shortage has affected our district. The districts cell phone ban is bell to bell, and they are seeing a decrease in disciplinary actions as a result.

Mason – passed a renewal bond last fall, and related projects are expected to begin soon. Jason will be presenting bond information to the board on February 12. The district anticipates a few leadership openings, including positions at the elementary and a middle school principal.

Dansville – none at this time.

Williamston – The Little Hornets received the highest rating. The high school was recognized by the College Board AP Honor Roll. The Mental Health Awareness & Suicide Prevention “Be Nice” basketball game between Williamston and Haslett will take place on February 6th. The district is planning to break ground on March 2nd for the new 3-5 building. Two board members positions will be up for election this year.

Jason - Jennifer Smith will join us at the next meeting to provide a legislative rundown. We expect the governor’s budget to be released this month.