



Newaygo County Area Promise Zone Authority Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, November 18, 2025
NC RESA Educational Services Center Board Room

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Present: Dr. Blake Prewitt (chairperson), Scott Rumsey, Holly Moon, Becky Tuuk, Pat Brown, Dick Dunning, Jarred Hibma, Scott Swinehart, Stu Sanders, Kathy Pope (ex-officio)

Absent: Don VanSingel, Tim Rossler

Visitors: Melissa Miller, Katie Mater, Ty Spickerman, Brandi Parsons (recorder)

Chairperson Dr. Blake Prewitt called the meeting to order at 11:31 a.m.

Approval of the Agenda:

Motion by Swinehart, supported by Hibma, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes – 9, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Motion by Swinehart, supported by Brown, to approve the August 12, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Ayes – 9, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

Public Participation:

Dr. Blake Prewitt welcomed everyone.

Scott Rumsey presented the following report on behalf of the Operations Subcommittee:

- Mr. Scott Rumsey state the SET tax capture ended up being a little over \$1.9 million, which is in line with our estimates. Mr. Jarred Himba shared we have quite a bit of revenue coming in. He wondered how we can get more students to enroll and how we can support them moving forward. He shared we do have one CD renewing soon. Last year, we kept \$1,000,000 in the current account which acts like a money market account, earning interest. We are looking to keep \$1,000,000 and move the rest over to CDs again, doing our staggering at 6 and 12 months. We are in the process of getting rates and will keep you posted. A quick estimate of investing in CDs versus our money market account has earned us about \$20,000 of interest more than if we left it in the current account. Although we are not in the business of investing money, we do want to be good stewards with it. Mr. Scott Rumsey stated the financial statement shows we have earned a fair amount of interest on some of the CDs but the statement does not include fall and summer tuition invoices, which are pretty significant.
- Mrs. Melissa Miller stated we knew partnering with Ferris would be a learning year and we are learning a lot about Cost of Attendance. There are many Cost of Attendance scenarios but it really depends on the student's financial need. Cost of Attendance can include commuter transportation, housing, meal packages, books, and other fees. Some students may not utilize our scholarship until year 3 and 4 due to Pell, TIP, and/or other institutional aid/scholarships. It has been a great collaborative partnership with Ferris because the Promise is truly in all cases coming on top of all of the aid, grants, and scholarships so students can really optimize everyone who has been investing in them, including us. This mid-dollar scholarship is the most flexible and robust to meet the gap and is doing a great job.

- Mrs. Melissa Miller also shared initial data from the National Student Clearinghouse on our cohorts. This is currently the best available data, which means it is not 100% certain. Our Promise Zone persistence rates are stellar. They have been hovering around 90% when you look at the 7-year average. The state and national average are 60 – 70%. These are students who attend right after high school that first year and they persist over the summer and stay for the second year. Our scholars are persisting at 30% more than other students, which is an incredible testament to our team with their intentional support and coaching.
- Dr. Prewitt discussed the Leadership Retreat and the intent to move forward with strategic planning. Mr. Justin Sheehan from the Lansing Promise Zone was brought in to facilitate our leadership retreat and discuss our next steps and transition from a working board to a governing board. As we move into strategic planning, we will be spending some time reviewing all the ways we are operating and what our next goals will be. We are gathering proposals from a couple of different strategic planning organizations. This will require some extra meetings and time to set our path for the next three to five years.

Becky Tuuk presented the following report on behalf of the Promise Success Initiatives Subcommittee:

- Mrs. Becky Tuuk shared there is one big encouragement event being planned for the end of the semester for all students.
- At the high schools, we are looking forward to connecting with the incoming students and presenting about the Promise Zone so they can get involved next year.
- Communications have been going quite well. Success coaches are staying connected with scholars using social media outreach, email, text reminders, and telephone calls. The Instagram account is gaining traction. They have made 5 posts, which were viewed by over 900 people. Students are making use of social media presence and using it as a tool.
- Promise scholar connections for MCC students have been held at NC RESA. Many of these students have expressed how much they appreciate the help from the success coaches. They also want to continue their education, and they are exploring ways to do that. Our success coaches are able to help them understand what their next step could look like in their educational journey. Connections have been made with 27% of renewal students and they are also very appreciative of the support. Some of these students are deciding whether to transfer to a different college or enter the workforce.
- Promise scholar connections for Ferris students have been held at the Eisler Center on Fridays. They have had over ninety one-on-one meetings this semester with students.

Holly Moon presented the following report on behalf of the Fundraising and Marketing Subcommittee:

- Mrs. Holly Moon shared the Year-to-Date Giving Report. Our 3rd quarter payroll deductions totaled \$1,221. To date, our payroll deductions total is \$3,652. Our total fundraising total is \$40,302 for this calendar year. A \$25,000 donation from Nestle Gerber is expected this quarter.
- The Annual Year-end Appeal Mailing will be going out soon and will be received in mailboxes the week of December 2.
- The promotional flyer has received cosmetic updates. It has a similar format and color scheme as we have used previously.
- We represented at the Kid's Expo. Mrs. Holly Moon gave a presentation to the Congo Church Breakfast. Mr. Scott Rumsey and Mrs. Holly Moon attended College and Career Night Out, which was very well attended.
- Mr. Dick Dunning and Mrs. Holly Moon attended the Ferris orientation. Mrs. Moon wished more parents would have attended. Mr. Scott Swinehart sent the QR code to local schools for them to include in their newsletters.
- Mrs. Holly Moon also shared the plans for 3 billboards during the same time frame as last year, prior to the application opening. They will run from December to May at the access points to the county. The cost will be \$6,200, which is similar to last year.

Action Items:

MCC Fall Tuition: Motion by Tuuk, supported by Dunning, to approve the summer tuition from MCC totaling up to \$200,000. Ayes – 9, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

MCC Summer Tuition: Motion by Moon, supported by Brown, to approve the summer tuition from MCC totaling up to \$39,019.50. Ayes – 9, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

FSU Fall Tuition: Motion by Swinehart, supported by Tuuk, to approve the summer tuition from FSU totaling up to \$119,245.70. Ayes – 9, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

NC RESA Invoice (Otr. 3 2025): Motion by Moon, supported by Sanders, to approve payment in the amount of \$75,996.82. Ayes – 9, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

KCI Year-end Appeal Mailing: Motion by Moon, supported by Tuuk, to approve the KCI Year-end Appeal Mailing totaling up to \$2,000. Ayes – 9, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

Information from Promise Zone Board Members:

Dr. Blake Prewitt presented Ex-officio Ms. Kathy Pope with a plaque and small gift of appreciation for her years of service.

Mr. Dick Dunning states success coaching is a critical element, as all students do not get the necessary support at home.

Mrs. Holly Moon wonders if orientation may be better received in a less intimidating format.

Mr. Dick Dunning noticed there were many asking questions at orientation.

Mrs. Melissa Miller noted that orientation is optional for parents but based on feedback we selected a larger venue to ensure we could accommodate a large group. We can continue looking at this for future orientations.

Adjournment:

Motion by Swinehart, supported by Hibma to adjourn. Ayes – 9, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:23 pm.



Dr. Blake Prewitt, Chairperson