



Newaygo County Area Promise Zone Authority Board Meeting

Tuesday, August 11, 2026, at 11:30 a.m.

NC RESA Educational Services Center Board Room

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Present: Dr. Blake Prewitt (chairperson), Holly Moon, Pat Brown, Dick Dunning, Jarred Hibma, Dr. Tim Rossler, Stu Sanders, Don VanSingel,

Absent: Scott Rumsey, Scott Swinehart, Becky Tuuk

Staff: Melissa Miller (Director of Career, Technical, and Postsecondary Education), Katherine Mater (Student Success Coordinator), Ty Spickerman (Promise Zone Success Coach), Brandi Parsons (Student Success Administrative Assistant)

Chairperson Dr. Blake Prewitt called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m.

Approval of the Agenda:

Motion by Brown, supported by Dunning to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes – 8, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

Visitors:

None

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Motion by Moon, supported by VanSingel to approve the May 12, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Ayes – 8, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

Public Participation:

Dr. Prewitt welcomed everyone.

Jarred Hibma presented the following report on behalf of the Operations Subcommittee:

- The preliminary financial statement through July 31, 2026, was shared and reviewed.
- Mr. Hibma shared we will receive SET capture in October.
- Dr. Prewitt shared information from the Operations Committee meeting regarding diversifying investments. Various banking and state investment options were considered, and ChoiceOne was found to offer rates that were comparable to, if not better than, the other options reviewed. The committee did not believe there was significant risk in keeping the funds with ChoiceOne. Dr. Prewitt also stated that transferring the funds to other institutions offering lower interest rates would not be worthwhile, as the resulting loss of interest income would outweigh the potential benefit. We will continue to look at the percentages each quarter. If a better rate becomes available from another institution, we will revisit this option.
- Mr. Hibma shared that Dr. Prewitt and Mrs. Miller submitted the form to move the funds from the Newaygo County Area Promise Opportunity Non-Endowment Fund to ChoiceOne Bank. We will now earn a higher interest rate.
- The NC RESA invoice to Promise Zone for Quarter 2 was shared.
- The MCC summer invoice was shared. The invoice is currently being reviewed resulting in an up to amount rather than an exact amount to allow for adjustments.

- Mrs. Miller shared the Fall 2026 Promise Scholar application numbers total 197.
 - 86 applications for MCC
 - 111 applications for FSU
 - We received 100 renewal applications (53 for MCC and 47 for FSU)
 - Based on our preliminary data, our combined overall persistence is 85%. We will share more definitive numbers at the November meeting. Of those not persisting with us, some are transferring and some are going into the workforce, leaving only a very small number of students not persisting.
- There are 23 appeal requests being reviewed. This is our highest number of appeals. There is an assortment of reasons for appeal requests. Some requests are for students who are outside the NC RESA service area and some were not eligible due to the GPA requirement but are apprenticeship eligible.
- Dr. Prewitt shared information on the Harmel Academy of the Trades for registered apprenticeships, an all-male religious institution, not a college. They offer programs in HVAC, auto, construction, and welding. There are currently 40 students enrolled from around the country. We do not have any Newaygo County students enrolled and we have not had any students show interest in this program, but we wanted to offer this for discussion. If we happen to have a student interested in this route, would the Promise Zone cover part of this apprenticeship? If the Board was interested, we would need to revise our development plan to add them as an eligible institution. We would also need to verify they are eligible for Title IV funds, even if they do not accept the funds. A few board members expressed interest in supporting opportunities of this kind.
- Our next strategic planning meeting is scheduled for August 27, 2026, from 12:00 – 2:00 pm. Lunch will be provided.

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

- Mrs. Moon shared we have only received one gift since our last meeting. Our total giving for 2026 is \$38,200.00.
- Mr. Spickerman shared the National Baby Food Festival Kid's Expo held on July 22 had a great turnout again this year. It is enjoyable to hear the older siblings talk with their younger siblings about what they want to do when they are older.
- Mrs. Mater shared the Baby Food Festival was 50's-style theme. We had a license plate the children could take home and fill out what they want to be, encouraging career interests and their future.
- Mrs. Moon shared College and Career Night Out will be held on September 22, 2026.
- Mrs. Miller shared CCNO has been a great event for students and families to launch thinking about their next steps.

Melissa Miller presented the following report on behalf of the Promise Success Initiative Subcommittee:

- Mrs. Miller shared that summer student connections are under way.
- Mrs. Miller also shared the Promise scholar mandatory orientations were held on July 14, 2026 for MCC-bound students and July 15, 2026 for FSU-bound students. Both orientations were held at the Dogwood Center and went very well. We had great student and family participation. Mrs. Miller thanked the team for their hard work.
 - 30 students and 14 sets of parents attended MCC orientation and 48 students and 31 sets of parents attended FSU orientation.



- Mrs. Mater shared how orientation is set up for parents and students. She also shared students are not only hearing information but they are participating in activities and getting to know each other, along with learning about the scholarship and how to keep it.
- Dr. Prewitt shared that to maintain an 85% retention rate, we will need to consider adding an additional Success Coach after this year. As our student population continues to grow, we will eventually reach a point where Success Coaches may not be able to maintain the same level of connection and individualized support with students. The Operations Committee has been discussing this as part of its long-term planning efforts.
- Dr. Prewitt highlighted the importance of making sure families understand the NC RESA service area.
- Dr. Prewitt shared the agriculture program at Ferris is still in the design phase.

Action Items:

MCC Summer Tuition: Motion by Brown, supported by Sanders to approve the summer tuition in an amount up to \$36,120.00. Ayes – 8, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

NC RESA Invoice (Qtr. 2, 2026): Motion by Moon, supported by Dunning to approve payment in the amount of \$80,434.99. Ayes – 8, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

MCAN MPZA Salesforce License: Motion by Brown, supported by Moon to approve payment in the amount of \$181.79. Ayes – 8, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

Information from Promise Zone Board Members:

Dr. Prewitt shared Dr. Pink along with Ferris leadership will be holding a dinner on September 16, 2026, at Ferris State University from 6 – 8 pm for our Promise scholars and board members.

Adjournment:

Motion by VanSingel, supported by Rossler to adjourn. Ayes – 8, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:34 p.m.



Dr. Blake Prewitt, Chairperson