

NORTHERN TIOGA SCHOOL DISTRICT
110 Ellison Road
Elkland, PA 16920

Minutes – January 12, 2026

1.0 OPERATIONS

1.1 Call to Order

The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Tioga School District Board of Directors was called to order by Rod Butler at 7:01 PM.

1.2 Moment of Silence

Rod Butler led a moment of silence.

1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

Rod Butler led those present in the Pledge to the Flag.

1.4 Board Attendance: Board Members Present: Allison D’Haene, Greg Cummings, Rod Butler, Denise Mack, James Moyer, Kim Strauser, and Ed Bonham. Absent: Julie Preston and Craig Stage.

Administrators Present: Superintendent Kaufman, Kathryn Slavinski, Dan Fie, Matt Sottolano, Daren Bryant, Bonnie Walker, William Butterfield, Kathy VanSchaick, and Kate Slavinski.

1.5 Student/Staff Recognitions & Presentations

Student of the Month

Williamson High School – Alisha Benjamin

Williamson’s Student of the Month is Alisha Benjamin. She is the daughter of Matt Benjamin from Millerton. Alisha is a junior who is a member of the National Honor Society, History Club, and Yearbook Club. In her free time, she enjoys hiking and art. Alisha likes English and science classes best and plans to become a substance abuse counselor in the future. Her teachers describe her as an academically driven student who is enthusiastic about her education. Alisha is also an honest and dependable young lady of great character who is kind and genuinely supportive of other students in her classes as well as the school community in general. Congratulations to you, Alisha! You make Williamson proud to call you a warrior.

Williamson Middle School – Navaeh Ring

Williamson Middle School is proud to announce Navaeh Ring as the January Student of the Month. Navaeh is the daughter of Dustin Ring (Millerton) and Deanna Wheeler

(Lawrenceville). Her teachers describe her as an exceptional student to have in class, with a noteworthy work ethic. Neaveh is an active member in the Student Council and recently attended the PASC State Conference. Additionally, she participates in volleyball and softball. She is a dedicated flutist of the Williamson Band. She is an avid hunter and enjoys any reason to be outdoors.

Cowanesque Valley High School – Emily Myers

Cowanesque Valley proudly recognizes Emily Myers as the January Student of the Month. Emily is the daughter of Cheri and Phil Sauder of Westfield. Her teachers describe her as a conscientious and dedicated student who consistently approaches her work with care, responsibility, and attention to detail. Emily's assignments are always thoughtful and complete, and she takes initiative in her learning and holds herself to high expectations. Polite, respectful, and is a pleasure to have in class, Emily truly exemplifies the qualities of an outstanding student. Outside of the classroom, Emily is an avid reader who enjoys listening to music and spending time with her mom. She plans to attend Mansfield University in the fall, where she will major in psychology. Emily's commitment to excellence and positive character makes CV proud!

Cowanesque Valley Middle School – Ashlynn Watkins

The Cowanesque Valley Middle School teachers are proud to name Ashlynn Watkins as January's student of the month. Ashlynn is the daughter of Matt and Michelle Watkins of Little Marsh. She is a very responsible and dedicated student, consistently coming to class prepared and ready to participate and learn. Her positive attitude and cooperative nature make her a joy to have in the classroom. She plays several sports for Cowanesque Valley including basketball, softball, and volleyball. Additionally, she plays travel softball for Fury Fastpitch in Horseheads. Her activities at school outside of sports include chorus, Junior FFA, and Battle of the Books. Ashlynn hopes that her education will one day allow her to become a welding engineer. Great job, Ashlynn!

R.B. Walter Elementary School – Liam Scott

Liam Scott has been selected as our January Student of the Month. Liam is 11 years old and the son of Andrea and Bill Scott of Lawrenceville. Liam loves Math because "it just makes sense in his brain." Outside of math Liam's favorite part of school is getting to socialize with his friends. Liam is involved in band and soccer. He hopes that one day he will get a chance to play soccer when he is in college. Outside of soccer he enjoys playing video games and experimenting with weird foods. One of his favorite foods to make and eat is zucchini lasagna. Liam is kind to his classmates, a hard worker, and proud of how he does in school. One of Liam's greatest qualities is his perseverance, which can be found on the field, in the classroom, and wherever else he is going. Liam's perseverance has shown this year with his grades, classroom participation, and reputation as a leader in school.

Clark Wood Elementary School – Kenna Johnson

We are proud to share that Kenna Johnson is Clark Wood's January, Student of the Month. Kenna is a first-grade student in Mrs. Rowland's room. Mr. Craig and Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson are her proud parents. She also has a brother named Charles. Kenna is always respectful to classmates and teachers in our school and goes out of her way to show kindness to everyone. She works hard in the classroom even when things are hard and

perseveres through challenges as they happen. She isn't afraid to ask for help when she recognizes a difficult situation. Kenna takes pride in always showing her best effort. She exemplifies our Clark Wood RAMS no matter where she is. We are very proud of you, Kenna!

Westfield Area Elementary School – Abigail Heyler

Abigail Heyler is a 4th grade student at WAES and is the daughter of Afton Heyler of Westfield and Ben Heyler of Westfield. Mrs. Kulish says that Abby is a joy to have in class. She comes in every morning with a smile on her face and is eager to learn and try new things. She can always be counted on to be a leader and role model for her classmates. She works hard every day and isn't afraid of a challenge. She is also a very kind-hearted friend and always willing to help another student in need. She participates in soccer, basketball, softball, and dance. She is on the Battle of the Books team and plays the clarinet in the band. She enjoys reading but her favorite subject is math. Abby likes helping her classmates with their papers when they need help. Outside of school, Abigail enjoys playing with the animals on her grandparents' farm and playing outside. This past year, she showed a pig at the Tioga County Fair and plans to do it again. In the future, she plans to be a massage therapist or a teacher.

1.6 Open Forum

Bob Goodrich, Osceola, PA.

Mr. Goodrich shared his appreciation for all of those involved in the success of the district.

1.7 Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Ed Bonham, seconded by Greg Cummings, to approve the monthly meeting minutes from December 2, 2025. votes were affirmative. The motion carried.

1.8 Budget Transfers (Exhibit #2) - None

1.9 Approval of Bills (Exhibit #3)

A motion was made by Kim Strauser, seconded by Allison D'Haene, to approve bills as outlined in Exhibit #3. Roll Call Vote. All votes were affirmative. The motion carried.

1.10 Facility Use Permits & Conferences (Exhibits #4 & #5)

1.11 Attendance Area Exception Requests

1.12 Information & Correspondence

2.0 REPORTS

2.1 Superintendent's Report (Exhibit #15)

Local Auditors Report for July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025 (Exhibit #15):

Kayla Demar and Stephen Rock discussed the July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025, Audit Report with the Board Members. Steve provided an overview of the audit. A motion was made by Greg Cummings, seconded by Kim Strauser to approve the Local Auditors Report for July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025, as outlined in Exhibit #15. Roll Call Vote. All votes were affirmative. The motion carried.

School Director Appreciation Month

January is School Board Appreciation Month. Mr. Kaufman emphasized that school board members are elected as volunteers who receive no compensation. They attend regular board meetings and work sessions to handle district business and learn about budgets, projects, and policies. Many also serve on additional committees, such as Buildings and Grounds, and participate in contract negotiations that require frequent extra meetings. Board members represent the three attendance areas of NTSD and serve as the voice of local taxpayers. The district is grateful for their dedication to students, staff, and the community.

Ready Index

Mr. Kaufman also shared, that the PA Future Ready Index is the state's report card for school districts and cyber charter schools, and results are reported to the board each year. NTSD showed positive results in math, attendance, and graduation rates: three schools improved in math (two above the state average), both high schools exceeded the state's 88% graduation average, and four schools exceeded the statewide attendance rate of 79.6%. Graduation and attendance are "lagging indicators," meaning they reflect data from two years prior. Statewide ELA performance declined, and most NTSD schools showed similar decreases, with only one school improving in ELA. NTSD schools continue working to improve learning, recognizing that state assessments are only one measure and that multiple assessments are used to track progress. Overall, staff, with family support, are working hard to ensure students gain the skills needed for success.

Senior Project Requirement

Mr. Kaufman presented the board with a list of pros and cons regarding the senior project. It was his recommendation that the senior project be removed from the district's graduation requirements. The project itself is no longer a state requirement. NTSD students do perform community service throughout the school year, outside of the senior project. Following some discussion by the principals about that community service that is done outside of the senior project, it was agreed that the project will be removed as a graduation requirement.

Cyber Charter Habitual Truancy Verification

Also, Mr. Kaufman shared that recent changes to school code significantly impacted cyber charter schools, particularly in attendance. One key improvement involves habitual truancy, now defined as six unexcused absences. Under the new law, cyber charter schools cannot enroll students identified as habitually truant unless a judge determines it is the best placement. As a result, at least one cyber charter school is now verifying habitual truancy status before enrolling students.

Athletic Project Update

Mr. Kaufman also asked the board for approval for the district to move forward with the bidding process for the athletic facility project. Additionally, the board was presented with and had a discussion on a timeline for the project. Adjustments to the timeline were discussed with some recommendations for the architect surrounding the awarding of the bids and the substantial completion dates. At the January 26th work session, the board will receive a presentation on financing for the project and there will be a public information meeting held during the February 23rd work session on the scope of the project, the timeline, and financing for the project. The district is hearing that RACP awards may be announced this month.

Comprehensive Planning 2027-2030

Lastly, Mr. Kaufman shared that the district will be starting the comprehensive planning process this spring. The board was provided with a timeline of the planning phases and some preliminary information on the needs assessment. Comprehensive planning is a cyclical process that is required of school districts in Pennsylvania. The needs assessment that is completed will allow the district to set goals and develop plans for academic growth, career readiness, and professional development. Throughout the planning process, updates will be provided to the school board for public information.

2.2 Business Manager's Report

Monthly Reports – (Exhibits #6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11, and #12)

A motion was made by Kim Strauser, seconded by Allison D'Haene, to approve the Payroll Rate Changes-None, Capital Reserve Report (November & December), Financial Report (November & December), Cash Investment Report (November & December), Student Activity Report, Cafeteria Bills and Report, and Transportation Changes, as outlined in Exhibits #7, #8, #9, #10, #11, and # 12. All votes were affirmative. The motion carried.

2.3 Buildings and Grounds Report

Daren Bryant prepared a report to provide the board with an update on the various projects that have been completed or are in progress throughout the district by the buildings and grounds team. Including 3 completed work orders with one in the queue.

2.4 Grant Update

Mr. Kaufman discussed grants updated that have occurred recently.

3.0 ACTION ITEMS- VOICE VOTE

3.1 Voice Vote (Exhibits #13, #14, #16 and #17)

A motion was made by Greg Cummings, seconded by Kim Strauser to approve the

following voice vote action items as outlined below and in Exhibits #13, #14, #16 and #17. All votes were affirmative. The motion carried.

- 3.1.1 2025/2026 Co-Curricular Appointments (Exhibit #13)
- 3.1.2 Substitutes (Exhibit #14)
- 3.1.3 Retirements & Resignations: Katherine Kulish, Special Education Teacher, Clark Wood Elementary School, Resignation effective December 4, 2025, to be held up to 60 days and Daniel Fie, Student Services Coordinator, Administration Building, Retirement effective July 3, 2026.
- 3.1.4 Approval of the 2026/2027 school calendar with Labor Day, December 30, December 31, Good Friday, and Easter Monday as official local school district holidays per BEC 24PS15-1502. (Exhibit #16)
- 3.1.5 Adoption of PSBA's Principles for Governance and Leadership, a framework designed to increase board effectiveness. Last adopted January 13, 2025. (Exhibit #17)
- 3.1.6 Additional Vacancies During January- to interview and offer positions to successful candidates for any teacher, classified, or Act 93 vacancies that may occur between the January and February Board meetings. Those recommendations will be made to the Board at the regular February meeting. (This will eliminate the need to convene a special meeting.)

4.0 ACTION ITEMS- ROLL CALL VOTE

4.1 Roll Call Vote (Exhibits #17 and #18)

A motion was made by Ed Bonham, seconded by Denise Mack to approve the following roll call vote action items as outlined below and in Exhibits #17 and #18. Roll Call Vote. All votes were affirmative.

- 4.1.1 Classified Appointments in accordance with the contractual agreement between the Northern Tioga School District and the Northern Tioga Education Support Professionals: Logan Chapman, Westfield Area Elementary School, Custodian, \$18.15 per hour, effective January 5, 2026.
- 4.1.2 Approval for Brittany Mondock, Tara Wells, and Christina Shenk to take the necessary steps to meet the requirements to become a PA Notary for the district at a cost of approximately \$435.00 per person, for a four-year term. This will allow the district to have broader access to notary services.
- 4.1.3 Approval to work with Tioga County Youth Programs, Youth Diversion Services to provide Drug and Alcohol Prevention Programming for the remainder of the

2025-2026 school year. (Exhibit #18)

- 4.1.4 Pennsylvania Pre-k Counts Partnership Proposal which will establish Stepping Stones Preschools pre-k classrooms at RB Walter Elementary and Westfield Area Elementary Schools. This is not a district grant, the program will be run entirely by Stepping Stones, but will be housed at the two elementary schools. (Exhibit #19)
- 4.1.5 Approval to advertise for bids on the Athletic Facility Improvement Project at both high schools.

4 NEW BUSINESS

5 ANNOUNCEMENTS

5.1 Future Board Meetings

An executive session for purposes authorized by the Sunshine Act may be held between tonight and the next Board meeting.

Board Work Session– January 26, 2026, 6:00 PM
Regular Board Meeting– February 9, 2026, 7:00 PM

5.2 Committee Meetings

6 ADJORN

6.1 Adjourn

A motion was made by James Moyer, seconded by Greg Cummings to adjourn. All votes were affirmative. The motion carried.

Adjournment was at 8:12 PM.

Brittany Mondock
Board Secretary

All documents as attachments to the minutes not contained herein are maintained in a separate file located in the Superintendent's Office.