

NORTH MAC COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #34
Regular Board of Education Meeting
North Mac High School Media Center
231 West Fortune Street, Virden, IL
6:00 PM January 28th, 2026

1. Call to Order – Roll Call

Present – Alexander, Pinkston, Prose, Watson, Webb, White, Christopher

Also Present – Kyle Hacke

2. Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Christopher

3. Communications

3.1 Elementary Student Presentation –The Elementary presented on their Leader in Me service-learning project where students created a project for the nursing home to serve our community. 2nd grade went in and played tic tac toe, colored, and even interviewed the residents to connect with our community. This helped the students establish a connection. Nursing home residents were so welcoming, and the students were wonderful with the residents. Residents were so thankful for the visit. Staff member, Leslie Naugle, shared how rewarding the project was. Students shared their experiences. Each student shared their favorite experience from their visit. Students who presented were LJ McMasters, Easton Muchalfen, Emersyn Peregrin, and Rowen Coyle.

3.2 Administrator's Reports – Christopher thanked the Administrators for putting the reports together.

4. Public Comment – Chase Millburg spoke regarding the Football program. Please see the attached comments. Jack Rovey also spoke regarding the Football program. His comments are also attached.

5. *Motion was made by Alexander, seconded by Watson to approve the consent agenda as presented. Yea Votes: Prose, Alexander, Pinkston, Watson, Webb, White, Christopher

Consent Agenda (ALL ITEMS ITALICIZED AND IN BOLD)

5.1 Approval of Minutes from Truth in Taxation Hearing, Regular and Executive Sessions on December 17, 2025

5.2 Financial Reports

5.3 Bills Payable

6. ***Personnel*****

6.1 Accept Resignation of Robbie Howard, Head Football Coach

6.2 Accept Resignation of Tom Lenz, Middle School Head Baseball Coach

- 6.3 ***Approve Employment of Michael Rodriguez, Girls Head Soccer Coach***
- 6.4 ***Approve Employment of Kaedyn Royer, Girls Assistant Soccer Coach***
- 6.5 ***Approve Employment of Maddux Rigsby, Assistant High School Track Coach***
- 6.6 ***Approve Employment of Andrew Crook, Assistant High School Track Coach/Timer***
- 6.7 ***Approve Employment of Mark Connour, Bus Driver***
- 6.8 ***Approve Employment of Isaac Karrick, Bus Driver***
- 6.9 ***Approve Larry Butler as FCA Sponsor***
- 6.10 ***Approve Kaylee Perrine as Volunteer Assistant Track Coach***
- 6.11 ***Approve Employment Contract of Amy Sullenger, Middle School Principal, Beginning July 1, 2026***
- 6.12 ***Approve Maternity Leave Request***
- 6.13 ***Approve Leave of Absence Request***
- 6.14 ***Accept Retirement of Kristy Barnes as a Clerical Aide effective July 31, 2026***
- 6.15 ***Accept Resignation of Johannah Gotcher as Elementary Teacher effective end of 2025/2026 School Year.***

*****Note: Final employment of all new employees is contingent on the successful completion of a criminal background check and all necessary local and state requirements.***

7. Discussion Items

7.1 Student-Centered Services Presentation – Mike Kelley and Dr. Lett presented their plan for starting the Superintendent search. Student Centered Services will provide a customized search to find the best fit for our students and community. The outlined a timeline starting in Spring for 2026 with interviews with the board members, community survey in July/Aug, Market/screen in Aug/Sept, October for interviews, November for Board Action and Announcement, and December for Coaching and transition.

7.2 Superintendent's Report & Board Discussion Items

a. Softball Field – possibility of improving. Hacke opened the discussion to the board to brainstorm ideas to improve the field. Watson, Alexander, and Christopher mentioned they would like to see improvements made. White would like to see us put a committee together to avoid having to use an architect and save 10%. Hacke was checking into this to see if an architect would be required to sign off on the project.

b. School Calendar/Wednesday Schedule – A survey was conducted among staff. Overall, 53% of staff participated. Admins had been discussing Wednesday Early Dismissal and benefits versus losing instructional time. What would a different schedule look like? Monthly half SIP days where students are dismissed at 11:30, allowing for a larger block of time to bring in individuals to provide professional development for our staff.

Hacke would like to bring this tonight and have would like a vote on this next month when approving the calendar for next school year. Board members would like survey left open and staff asked to complete if they had not already.

- c. John Downs recognized as Principal of the Year nominee.
 - d. Thank Michael and his crew for cleaning up the campus'
 - e. Ongoing boiler issue- hopefully up working tomorrow
8. Items to be Considered for Action
- 8.1 *Motion was made by Pinkston, seconded by Watson to approve the Semi-Annual Review of Closed Session Minutes July Through December 2025 and that they Remain Closed. Yea Votes: Webb, Alexander, Pinkston, Prose, Watson, White, Christopher
 - 8.2 *Motion was made by Webb, seconded by Alexander to approve the destruction of Executive Session Audio Recordings Older than 18 Months. Yea Votes: White, Alexander, Pinkston, Prose, Watson, Webb, Christopher
 - 8.3 *Motion was made by Alexander, seconded by Watson to approve the sidewalk project at South Campus for bidding purposes. Hacke presented drawing to update the walking path along the bus lane to improve safety. Pinkston asked if trees, bushes, and grass were part of the project. Hacke indicated that the update would not include those items and would be for a sidewalk and permanent posts to replace current blocks and chain as well as remove the telephone pole parking blocks and replace them with regular blocks. Yea Votes: Pinkston, Alexander, Prose, Watson, Webb, White, Christopher
 - 8.4 *Motion was made by Pinkston, seconded by Webb to approve the adoption of Press Policy 120 – Second Reading & Adoption. Yea Votes: Alexander, Pinkston, Prose, Watson, Webb, Christopher. No Votes: White
 - 8.5 *Motion was made by Alexander, seconded by Watson to approve the purchase of Bus Stop Arms. Hacke indicated that this would improve the safety of our students. This arm would open with the stop sign be illuminated and flashing. Yea Votes: Prose, Alexander, Pinkston, Watson, Webb, White, Christopher and provide more visual sign to stop.
 - 8.6 *Motion was made by Alexander, seconded by Pinkston to approve the District Auditor Contract for 2026 – Loy Miller Talley, P.C. Yea Votes: White, Alexander, Pinkston, Prose, Watson, Webb, Christopher
 - 8.7 *Motion was made by Webb, seconded by Pinkston to adopt the Resolution to Revise SASSED Articles of Agreement. Hacke stated that most edits deal with how a District can leave the Cooperative. Yea Votes: Watson, Alexander, Pinkston, Prose, Webb, White, Christopher

9. *Motion was made by Pinkston, seconded by Alexander to adjourn to closed session for the purpose of discussing the Appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of a specific employee or office of the public body, pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1). Yea Votes: Alexander, Pinkston, Prose, Watson, Webb, White, Christopher.

9.1 Superintendent's Evaluation

*Motion was made by Alexander, seconded by Pinkston to return to open session at 7:15 pm. Yea Votes: Alexander, Pinkston, Prose, Watson, Webb, White, Christopher

10. *Motion was made by Watson, seconded by Alexander to adjourn at 7:16 pm. Yea Votes: Alexander, Pinkston, Prose, Watson, Webb, White, Christopher

Chase Millburg

01/28/2025

Good evening members of the board, administrators, and members of the community. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak FOR THE TEAM tonight. **AT THIS POINT, ALL PLAYERS STAND UP QUIETLY AT THEIR SEATS – STAND LIKE YOU WOULD FOR THE NATIONAL ANTHEM – HANDS FOLDED. NO GIGGLING. NO NOISE.

Like many people in this town, I care deeply about our football program, not just because of wins and losses, but because of what it represents for our students and our community. I believe that is why this coaching decision matters so much.

There's no avoiding the reality that last season was disappointing. Everyone here knows that. But I don't believe the answer to a difficult season is to completely reset the program or walk away from the foundation that has been built. I believe the strongest path forward is thoughtful leadership that understands both what went wrong and what needs to change.

That's why I (WE) strongly support promoting from within, specifically a former assistant. This individual understands our school, our community, and the expectations that come with representing this program. You don't have to teach someone like that what Friday nights mean here, or what it means to wear our colors with pride, they've lived it.

After a tough season, our players need belief restored. They need stability, trust, and leadership they already respect. A coach who has been in the building, who has relationships with these players, and who understands their strengths and struggles can provide that immediately.

Hiring internally also sends a powerful message, that this district believes in developing leaders, that commitment and loyalty matters, and that when someone invests in this program through both success and adversity, that investment is valued.

This decision isn't just about next season. It's about who we trust to guide our students, represent our town, and build a program that lasts. Sometimes the best choice isn't the newest or loudest option, it's the one who already understands who we are and is ready and willing to lead us forward.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to our students and our community. We look forward to next season.

Continuity & Stability (Especially for Players)

High school athletes aren't professionals—they're kids juggling school, family, and their own desires to be successful. We want to win. Please help us to do that.

- A former assistant already knows the expectations, and culture
- Players don't have to relearn the culture or adjust to a totally new philosophy
- Reduce disruption during a critical developmental window No learning curve of getting used to a totally new person and new program – for many players for the second or third time.

Relationships Matter at This Level

High school football is built on trust more than talent.

- The assistant already has solid relationships with players, parents, teachers, and other students who might be recruited
- Players are more likely to buy in when they know the coach knows *them*
- Parent confidence matters in a tight-knit community

Community Identity & Pride

In football towns, this matters more than people admit.

- Hiring from within signals belief in the program's foundation
- Builds pride: "We develop leaders here"
- Keeps the program rooted in school pride and the community remains bought in. We want them to attend our games and support our school. It makes sense for there to be continuity in the program.

Disappointment Calls for Accountability, not a Restart

After a tough season, it's tempting to blow everything up—but that's NOT how SMALL high school programs recover.

- This assistant understands what went wrong and why and likely has ideas already on how to improve the program
- They've been inside the program during the hard moments, they aren't picking us off a job list. Film doesn't tell our story.

- ~~Real improvement comes from honest evaluation, not erasing institutional knowledge~~ Real improvement comes from consistency, not always from starting from scratch

Leadership Earned, Not Introduced

An outsider must prove they care. This assistant already has.

- They stayed when things weren't easy. They chose the program even during a downturn, showing more than enough leadership for the job.

When you go up to speak – ideally there should be a junior and sophomore standing there with you – they do NOT have to speak. Just join you at the podium.

Jack Rovey

Key Points

Connections

- Hiring a coach who has been a part of this program, and has built relationships, and connections with the team can help strengthen a team's locker room a lot more than you think.
- Also, players will know the coaching style which can help a lot with practice efficiency, and game effectiveness.

Knowledge of the Program and School Culture

- As a coach who has been on the coaching staff for the past few years, he understands the culture, and traditions of our program.
- And he has experience playing in this conference and what to expect, which is a big attribute to having that a new coach from somewhere else may not have or develop fast enough.
- Over the past few years, he has seen the players' strengths and weaknesses, and if he already understands that early, it can make the transition into a new season very smooth, helping with future success.

Leadership and Accountability

- As a former player of this coach, I can say he was always one who took accountability for his mistakes and made sure his players did too.
- This attribute can build more leaders within a team which can strengthen spirit and efficiency within the team.

Jack Rovey

Football Coach

Hi, my name is Jack Rovey, I'm a sophomore here at North Mac and I've been a part of the football team for the past 2 years. The sport has become very important to me, and I have learned a lot not only about the sport but also about life through the program.

When us as the players heard we are looking for a new coach for our team, there is a candidate that we all feel is best not only for the program, but also the players within it. And if the right decision is not made, we may not be able to have a team next year due to a lack of numbers, since a lot of our team wouldn't want to play for any other coach.

And the reason for that is the overall connection he has made with the players over the past few years, and I have spoken to some of my classmates, and a lot of them who have either played in the past and stopped, or have never played and they said if the right decision is made they would play again, which would help build our numbers up higher, and help build our chances for a great future within the program.

Overall, sport means a lot not only to me, but also to my other classmates and teammates.

So, when considering who to hire, please consider this.

Thank you everyone for your time