

Stark County Board Of Developmental Disabilities March 24, 2026, Board Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

A meeting of the Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities was held on Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at 2950 Whipple Avenue NW, Canton, Ohio. President Dr. Jessica Falvo Lang called the Board Meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Roll Call

Board Members:	<u>Present:</u> President Dr. Jessica Falvo Lang Vice President Jennifer Moff Recording Secretary Cindi Sutter Kathy Catazaro Perry Maria Heege Carmelita Smith	<u>Absent:</u> Crystal Waters
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In Memoriam

A moment of silence was observed in memory of individuals served by the agency who passed away since the last meeting: Franklin Frederick, age 54, passed away on March 5, 2026. He received services from our SSA Department.

Minutes of the Previous Board Meeting

President Dr. Jessica Falvo Lang requested a motion to approve the minutes from the February 24, 2026, meeting. Jennifer Moff moved for approval, and Maria Heege seconded the motion. The Board duly adopted the minutes.

Disability Awareness Month Presentation

Lisa Parramore, Communications Manager, presented an overview of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month activities, highlighting a series of community-focused events and outreach initiatives designed to promote inclusion across Stark County.

Key events included the 6th Annual Mall Walk for Awareness on March 6, which drew significant community engagement with thousands of visitors throughout the day, and the 5th Annual Unified Basketball Game on March 19. The Legislative Breakfast on March 20 provided an opportunity to engage directly with local legislators, reinforcing the importance of advocacy and community voice.

A new initiative, "Inclusion Is Brewing," is a partnership we have created with local coffee shops to distribute awareness messaging through branded coffee sleeves and a community photo challenge, encouraging conversations about inclusion in everyday spaces.

Ongoing programs were also highlighted, including the "Books We Love" initiative, which provides approximately 180 books annually to first-grade teachers across all 17 Stark County school districts and promotes disability awareness through literature and community sharing. Additionally, the "31 Days of Advocacy" campaign provided daily prompts to encourage personal reflection, community engagement, and advocacy.

Overall, the presentation emphasized the continued growth of outreach efforts, strong community participation, and the importance of integrating inclusion into everyday experiences throughout Stark County.

Public Speaks

None.

President's Report

Dr. Falvo Lang expressed her appreciation to all individuals who contributed to the success of Disability Awareness Month. She highlighted the variety of events and initiatives, including the Mall Walk for Awareness, Unified Games, sponsorship of the Quick Connect Luncheon, and the community-wide coffee sleeve campaign, noting that these efforts created meaningful opportunities to promote belonging and inclusion throughout Stark County.

She also recognized the significance of the recent legislative engagement, emphasizing the impact of hearing directly from families and self-advocates. Dr. Falvo Lang extended sincere thanks to the McCullough family, the Catazaro-Perry family, the Hamilton family and Crystal, the Parramore family, and Michael Baer for sharing their personal stories.

Dr. Falvo Lang concluded by thanking all those who planned, promoted, and participated in Disability Awareness Month activities, noting that their efforts helped reinforce the message that people of all abilities are valued and belong in every part of the community.

This concluded the President's report.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Bill Green started his report reflecting on the success of Disability Awareness Month, emphasizing that the month's events reinforced the importance of inclusion and belonging for people of all abilities throughout Stark County. Appreciation was expressed for the collective efforts that brought visibility to this message.

Upcoming April items will include consideration of non-represented wage increases and a one-percent increase in health insurance for year three, both aimed at supporting and retaining a strong workforce. Following an abbreviated April meeting, the Board will participate in a second training session focused on Provider Compliance and Support, led by Jeremy Ballinger.

Sustainability efforts remain ongoing at both the local and state levels. The Superintendent will meet with State Representative Jim Thomas to continue discussions around funding and advocacy, building on the impact of recent legislative engagement events that highlighted the importance of input from individuals and families.

At Southgate, preparations are underway for preschool consolidation, including minor capital improvements such as modifying an entrance and enclosing a hallway to support a dedicated preschool space.

Looking ahead, development of the next Strategic Plan (2027–2029) will begin in mid-summer, incorporating stakeholder feedback and planning over a three- to four-month period. The Superintendent concluded by reaffirming the importance of this work in shaping future services, inclusion, and opportunities for the community.

This concluded the Superintendent's Report.

Committee/Department/Other Reports

1. Finance Committee – Minutes in Board packet
Tentative Next Meeting: March 16, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.
2. Personnel Committee – Minutes in Board packet
Next Meeting: March 19, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.
3. Ethics Council – No meeting in January
Tentative Next Meeting: March 24, 2026, at 5:45 p.m., if needed.

Old/New Business

None.

First Reading of Board Policies

The following policies were presented by Connie Poulton, Director of Human Resources, for first reading.

- Policy 1.01 Legal Structure and Basic Duties of the Board – Revised
- Policy 1.02 Powers, Responsibilities, and Prohibitions of Board Members – Revised
- Policy 2.13 Family Support Services – Revised
- Policy 2.16 Administrative Resolutions of Complaints – Revised
- Policy 4.03 Health Examinations – Revised

Financials and Board Resolutions

Resolution 03-11-26: Operating Fund #071

A. Two Payrolls for February	\$ 1,422,565.12
B. Bills for Payment in February	<u>\$ 8,891,883.84</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$10,314,448.96</u>

Kathy Catazaro Perry moved for approval. Jennifer Moff seconded.

Discussion:

Leigh Donatella, CFO/Business Manager, presented the February 2026 financial report. She reported total revenues for the month of approximately \$1.6M, including \$1.2M in local revenues, \$233,610 in state revenues, and \$93,239 in federal revenues.

Total expenditures for February were approximately \$10.3M, consisting of two payrolls totaling \$1.4M, benefit expenses of \$882,205, and other operating expenses of \$8.01M, which included a waiver match and administrative fees payment. Expenses exceeded revenues by approximately \$8.76M for the month.

Ms. Donatella reported that year-to-date expenses exceeded revenues by approximately \$11.2M. The Board began 2026 with \$35.4 million in carryover cash. At the end of February, there were \$21M in open 2026 purchase orders and about \$45,870 in 2025 purchase orders. Taking into account our negative net change in financial position of \$11.2M, the ending cash balance at the end of February was \$3.15M, which includes the Board's \$10 million reserve.

Reviewing the year-to-date budget versus actuals, Ms. Donatella noted \$2.43M in year-to-date revenues and \$13.67M in year-to-date expenses, bringing expenditures to about 18% of the annual budget. The available budget at the end of January was \$40.36M.

Ms. Donatella also reviewed the prior-year encumbrance report, noting that the Board carried over \$495,029 in 2025 purchase orders, of which \$418,189 were paid, \$30,970 were canceled, and \$45,870 were outstanding.

The Board reviewed payroll and non-payroll expenditures, and approved and adopted Resolution 03-11-26.

Resolution 03-12-26 approves the purchase of the curriculum for Southgate School

Maria Heege moved for approval. Jennifer Moff seconded.

Discussion:

Ginna St. Clair, Principal of School Programs, presented Resolution 03-12-26, explaining that, per Ohio Revised Code 3313.6028(B), the Department of Education and Workforce created a list of approved core curriculum and evidence-based reading intervention programs that align with the State's chosen Science of Reading approach. All public schools in Ohio are required to adopt curriculum from this approved list. After careful research of the list, the Encore Curriculum was chosen because it is specifically designed to meet the needs of students with moderate to intensive special needs. Encore provides standards-based curriculum with differentiated lesson plans to meet the needs of all students. Purchasing the curriculum will not only bring the school program into compliance with the State's mandate, but will also help our teachers improve outcomes for our students. The curriculum will be paid for annually using IDEA Grant Funds, totaling \$25,125 per year for the next 5 years. These funds have been included in the 2026 adopted budget.

The Board duly adopted.

Resolution 03-13-26: Resolution to Approve 2026-2027 Program Calendars

Kathy Catazaro Perry moved for approval. Maria Heege seconded.

Discussion:

Connie Poulton, Director of Human Resources, presented Resolution 03-13-26 and explained that the program calendars have been reviewed to ensure compliance with the Ohio Revised and Administrative Codes. For Early Intervention, the planned calendar is 245.5 service days. For educational services as delineated by ORC 3313.48, the minimum number of hours required is 910 hours for students in full-day kindergarten through Grade 6; and 1,001 hours for students in Grades 7-12. Preschool students are required to attend at least 10 hours a week and 36 weeks a year. Preschool and School Age employees work 184 days. The Board has scheduled "excess" hours above the minimum number. Hours missed above the minimum do not have to be made up. If instruction falls below the minimum number of hours, the school must extend its scheduled year by increasing the number of hours attended per day or adding hours to the end of the school year. The planned program calendar for Rebecca Stallman Southgate School has 1,050 hours.

The Board does reserve the right to amend the calendars after their adoption, but in the event that this is necessary, every effort to minimize adverse effects on all stakeholders will be taken, and as much advance notice as possible will be given. Examples that warrant a change in calendars include, but are not limited to, not meeting the required days or hours of service due to weather-related events, emergency shutdowns, or an increased need that the program calendar is not meeting. If necessary, any excess hours will be added to the end of the school day or at the end of the school year unless otherwise negotiated.

The Board duly adopted.

Second Reading of Board Policies Presented for Adoption

Director of Human Resources, Connie Poulton, provided the Board with an overview of the policies slated for second reading.

Policy 1.08 Board Policies and Procedures – Reviewed

Policy 4.05 Volunteers, Interns, and Practicum Students – Revised

Policy 4.15 Attendance, Tardiness, and Sick Leave – Reviewed

Policy 5.17 Do Not Resuscitate – Reviewed

Resolution 03-14-26: Board Policies for Second Reading

Jennifer Moff moved for approval. Carmelita Smith seconded. The Board duly adopted.

Adjournment

Dr. Falvo Lang requested a motion to adjourn. Maria Heege moved to adjourn. Jennifer Moff seconded. The Board Meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 28, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.