

Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes



Jan. 13, 2026

BOARD MEETING

Ms. Liz Brennan, board president, called the Heartland AEA Board of Directors meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

Board Members Present: Ms. Liz Brennan, Mr. Shawn Holloway, Mr. Kasey Huebner, Mr. Mark Lane, Ms. Tiara Mays-Sims, Ms. Mary Poulter, Ms. Margie Schwenk and Ms. Heather Sievers.

Heartland AEA Administrative Staff Present: Mr. Kevin Fangman, Chief Human Resources Officer; Ms. Valerie Hubert, Executive Assistant; Dr. Susie Meade, Chief Academic Officer; Ms. Jenny Ugolini, Executive Assistant/Board Secretary; Dr. Kristi Upah, Chief Student Services Officer; Dr. Cindy Yelick, Chief Administrator; and Mr. Brian Whalen, Director of Business Services.

Approval of Agenda

A MOTION was made by Mr. Holloway and seconded by Ms. Sievers to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes from Dec. 9, 2025

A MOTION was made by Mr. Lane and seconded by Ms. Sievers to approve the minutes from Dec. 9, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Forum & Correspondence

No one from the public was present to address the Board.

Public Hearing on the Provisions of the Children's Internet Protection Action

A public hearing was held on the Provisions of the Children's Internet Protection Act, as outlined in Board Policy 505, Internet Acceptable Use and Safety. There was no one from the public to address the Board. A MOTION was made by Mr. Lane and seconded by Mr. Holloway to close the hearing at 4:02 p.m.

Discussion Items

Fiscal Year 2025-26 and 2026-27 Budget Conversation

Mr. Whalen gave a brief overview of AEA funding before discussing the Agency's FY2025-26 and FY2026-27 budget. Highlights include:

- For the past three years, Supplemental State Aid (SSA) has been on a downward trend.
- The Agency is now serving 48 non-public schools that's ten more than last year.
- The general fund balance shows that the Agency is living within its budget.
- The budget for FY2026-27 shows no increases in additional staff.

Board members asked about staffing ratios, shortages and recruitment, and progress of the District Service Plan (DSP) meetings. DSP meetings are progressing and will wrap up in late January or early February.

Chief Administrator Professional Development Goals

Dr. Yelick provided an update on her professional development goals. She develops her goals in the early fall with periodic check-ins with the Board on their progress.

Special Education Data Dashboard Demonstration

Dr. Upah gave a brief demonstration on the Special Education Data Dashboard. The dashboard contains various reports pulled from the Iowa Dept. of Education's ACHIEVE data system. Districts can access various reports regarding special education and students with IEPs. The dashboard can be purchased for a one-time fee or based on a per-student fee.

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Spirit Lake CSD Service Request for 2026-27

Dr. Yelick shared that the Spirit Lake CSD School Board approved purchasing special education services from Heartland AEA for the 2026-27 school year. They will move 90% of their special education funds to the Agency starting July 1, 2026. Last year, four districts transitioned their special education services to Heartland AEA. The Agency does not solicit districts.

Heartland Board Policy Review Process Update

Dr. Yelick noted that when House File 2612 passed legislation, updating policies was paused until more clarity on the role of AEA Board's was known. The Agency will continue to bring immediate need policies to the Board, but will begin to transition the policy manual to a formatting and numbering system similar to the Iowa Assoc. of School Boards policy manual. It will be a work in progress over the next year.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Whalen reviewed the board financial reports. A MOTION was made by Mr. Huebner and seconded by Ms. Sievers to approve the consent agenda, including payment of warrant numbers 423330 through 423415 and electronic warrant numbers 56093 through 56621. The motion passed unanimously.

- There was no personnel report this month.
- Board Financial Reports
- Ahlers Cooney Informed Consent Conflict Waiver Agreement
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Heartland AEA and Kerrie Baish (Dyslexia services) for 2026-27.

Chief Administrator Comments

- As a reminder, the Governor's Condition of the State Address will be held this evening.

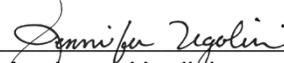
Board Comments

- If Board members wish to attend the Jan. 26 IASB, SAI and Iowa AEA's Day on the Hill, please contact Ms. Ugolini for registration.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Poulter and seconded by Mr. Lane to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

Reports and documents and the full text of motions, resolutions or policies considered by the Board at this meeting are on file in the Board Secretary's office, (515) 473-6644, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.


Ms. Liz Brennan
Board President


Ms. Jenny Ugolini
Board Secretary