

**Michigan FFA Association
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

April 17, 2025

5:00 PM Dinner Available - Room 150 Natural Resources

5:00 to 6:00 PM Committee Meeting - Please see below

6:00 to 8:00 PM Board Meeting

150 Natural Resources

- I. The meeting was called to order at 5:58p.m. on Thursday, April 17, 2025, by Hunter Bognar, the State President. 29 members and guests were present: Hunter Bognar, Sara Dammann (Virtually), Addison Van De Moortel, Sophia Barnum, Landon Umlor, Logan Bowers, Gretchen Gautz, Nicole Hollabaugh, Dori Stuever, Hannah Osterink, Mark Forbush, Dr. Tiffany Rogers-Randolph, Alex Schabelrauch, Jason Griffith, Katie Holt, Beth Wilson, Dr. Aaron McKim, Michelle Sidel, Haley Cucinello, Doug Pennington, Thomas Brewer-Brown, Angela NaDell, Chase Bos, Ramey Lunceford, Charles Scovill, Hannah Bolinger-Slone, Abigail Stubbins, Matt Jakubik, and Henry Reinart.
- II. **Opening Ceremonies - FFA State Officers**
- III. **Secretary's Report - Addison Van De Moortel**
 1. 29 members and guests were present. September minutes were presented.
 - a. Haley Cucinello moved to accept. Doug Pennington seconded. Motion passed.
 - b. Nicole Hollabaugh moved to sustain. Logan Bowers seconded. Motion carried.
- IV. **Treasurer's Report - Sophia Barnum**
 1. The FFA's Association account balance as of April 16, 2025, is \$216,670.42. There are approximately \$100,000 in outstanding payments for State Convention and for Ag Skills Contests. The balance in our contingency fund as of April 16, 2025, is \$380,273.98.
 - a. Haley Cucinello moved to receive. Doug Pennington seconded. Motion passed.
 - b. Landon Umlor moved to sustain. Dori Stuever seconded. Motion carried.
- V. **Michigan FFA Association**
 1. State Officer Report - Hunter Bognar
 - a. March: 97th Michigan FFA State Convention
 - b. April: Ag Skills Contest

- c. Upcoming Events: Chapter Banquets (April-May), FFA Day at the Loons (May), Capstone (May), 2025-2026 State Officer training (June)

2. State Advisor Report - Mark Forbush

- a. AFNRE Preservice Retention and Support:
 - i. Seven AFNRE jobs are currently posted in Michigan; three have been filled pending Board of Education approval before official announcements
 - ii. Currently, nine interns are in AFNRE program
 - iii. Seven new programs were welcomed this year, which is more than anticipated; Hopeful to add two to four new programs next year to our community
 - iv. The total number of programs and teachers is increasing - we will have 140 FFA chapters in Michigan very soon!
 - v. 39 students were accepted into Michigan State University to study AFNRE; About ten of these students have already committed to studying Ag Ed at MSU in the fall!
- b. Current Teacher Retention and Recognition:
 - i. Michigan's Department of Education and Career Technical Education have allocated \$163 million for career and technical education in high schools and technical centers, with intent to expand to middle school programs
 - ii. Thank you to all teachers for getting membership submitted quickly this year!
 - iii. MSU AFNRE faculty position has been filled: Dr. Jessica Tombs is an exceptional hire and we are excited for her to join our team in August!

3. State Executive Secretary Report - Dr. Tiffany Rogers-Randolph

- a. We are looking to hire an additional full time staff member to Michigan FFA - be on the lookout for a job posting description next week!
- b. Currently, Michigan FFA has 9,283 members - an all-time high!
 - i. As an update, a portion of the previously allocated \$4 million Michigan FFA received from the Michigan Department of Education has been (and still is being) used to help reduce membership costs for all members in every program
- c. 97th Michigan FFA State Convention:
 - i. This year, we had 50 more students receive the Academic Excellence Award, compared to last year, with a total of over 460 recipients

- ii. This year, we also had 40 more students receive the State Degree award, compared to last year, with a total of over 480 recipients
- iii. 240 delegates participated and attended the Capitol visit
- iv. Session 5 exceeded seating capacity in the Great Hall; discussions are underway to explore accommodations that reflect this growth.
- v. Thank you to everyone who made State Convention possible - our 2024-2025 State Officer Team, State Staff, Ag Teachers for bringing students, as well as our judges, industry representatives, and many, many others. We appreciate you!
- d. Ag Skills Contests: Exactly 2,800 students competed this year!
- e. Banquets: As of date, 26 banquet requests have reached our office for State Officers to attend and assist with
- f. April 19th: 2025-2026 State Officer Team will be meeting to be fit for their Official Dress and develop their theme
- g. April 24th: Regional Camp kick-off starts
 - i. In addition to reducing membership costs, a separate portion of the allocated \$4 million received from the Michigan Department of Education is being used to increase funding for all six regional leadership camps, alleviating the cost for our regions and chapters

VI. Belonging and Engagement Committee - Katie Holt

- 1. We are wrapping a year of collaboration with National FFA to develop our committee and align more closely with National FFA standards
- 2. State Convention:
 - a. Similar to last year, we were able to provide a sensory space again for students
 - b. New this year: Each contest/holding room was stocked with fidget toys to help students manage contest anxiety or other sensory needs
 - c. We would love more feedback from students on the Student Needs survey. Each student that fills out a survey will be entered into a drawing to win a gift card if selected.

VII. Michigan FFA Alumni - Mark Forbush (Jessie Nash absent)

- 1. Hosted a very successful Annual Alumni meeting, raising approximately \$8,000 for student scholarships
- 2. This year's Gator Raffle raised approximately \$65,000 for the Michigan FFA Foundation, with \$40,000 awarded to local chapters!

VIII. Past State Officers - Henry Reinart

- 1. No report.

IX. Michigan FFA Foundation - Alexandria Schnabelrauch

1. Event Highlights and Participation:
 - a. State Convention brought strong engagement, with 55 attendees at the VIP Experience
 - b. The Past State Officer Reception had a great turnout - we're excited to see it grow in the future!
 - c. Fun summer events coming up:
 - i. May 16th: FFA Day at the Loons - We're hoping for a strong turnout and would love more supporters to get involved!
 1. Fun with Flags will be at FFA Day at the Loons!
 - ii. July 23rd: Michigan FFA and Michigan Corn are joining together for a golf outing - there will be a theme and a golf cart decorating contest. Don't forget to sign up!
 - iii. NAAE Goosechase (more details to come)
 - iv. Sponsor engagement at Regional Camps, WLC, and SLCCO
2. Sponsor and Industry Engagement:
 - a. Ag Skills Contests had great sponsor engagement; sponsors were thrilled to see students in action
 - b. Our sponsors continue to be impressed and inspired by the work you and your students are doing - thank you!
3. Communication and Professional Development:
 - a. Thank you to those who had students write thank you notes - they are deeply appreciated by the recipients
 - b. We've launched a new LinkedIn profile - an excellent platform for students to find scholarships and internships, and to connect professionally with sponsors
4. Fundraising and Financial Development:
 - i. While we cannot start new endowments through MSU at this time we can continue to contribute to our current ones
 - ii. A new Endowment Exploration Task Force has been created and will begin research tomorrow

X. Ag Ed Club - Thomas Brewer-Brown

1. Club E-Board and Membership:
 - a. Officer terms now run January to December (previously Sept. to April) to avoid internship conflicts
 - b. Our roster includes over 50 members, with 23 currently active
2. Small Animal Days:

- a. Club members created an informative pollinator tri-fold and distributed seed packets and coloring pages to 500 children in attendance
3. Merchandise Sale:
 - a. FFA members had the opportunity to design our club t-shirts this year - our winning design was completed by Elizabeth Stanke from Charlotte FFA
 - b. Club members are working to launch our merchandise sale soon, with direct shipping to buyers' homes
4. Next Meeting:
 - a. Desserts and Dips - Student teaching interns will be visiting to share about their experiences and answer any questions

XI. Call To The Public

1. No report.

XII. Standing Committee's Report

- Vision and Special Topics Committee **(150 Nat Res)** - Chairperson Beth Wilson
- Awards and Activities Committee **(130 Nat Res)** - Chairperson Katie Holt
- Career Development Event Committee **(150 Nat Res)** - Chairperson Haley Cucinello
- State Officer Policy Committee **(149 Nat Res)** - Chairperson Doug Pennington
- Governing Committee **(130 Nat Res)** - Chairperson Jason Griffith

XIII. Informational Items

XIV. Old Business

XV. New Business

1. Proposals
 - a. **Gold and Silver Rating - Career Development Event Committee**
 - i. Issue: "Lack of standards for gold and silver ratings"
 1. Description: "Currently there is no guidelines for gold and silver standards. When judging is complete it is hard for judges to make clear decisions for the gold and silver ratings. More over it is hard for the kids to understand why they got a one rating at districts and then totally different at regional level even if they got the same placing from districts to regionals."
 2. Recommended Solution: "Option 1: Do away with the gold and silver ranking and just have placings; Option 2: Create

standards and a rubric for judges to use to establish gold and silver ratings.”

- a. The committee proposed amending the general contest rules for LDE’s (under Awards) by inserting after the first sentence, ‘Judges will assign teams/individuals gold and silver rankings based on the break in score performance.’
 - i. It was moved to accept the proposed amendment.
 - ii. Haley Cucinello moved to accept with changes. Motion passed.
 - iii. Nicole Hollabaugh moved to sustain. Logan Bowers seconded. Motion carried.

b. American Flag - State Officer Policy

- i. Issue: “No flag present for Jr. High and Greenhand Conduct of Meetings.”
 1. Description: “We have the students conduct the pledge of allegiance as part of closing ceremonies and at the different levels of competition there has been inconsistencies with the presence of the American Flag. It used to work to have the students turn to the Reporter station marker because the flag was there. Not all versions of the station markers have the presence of the American flag. It is hard to explain to outsiders of the FFA why students are giving the pledge to a station marker.”
 2. Recommended Solution: “Option 1: Have two small desk flags as part of all the leadership boxes so it is always there at the contest; Option 2: Add to the general rules that all hosting schools/state convention contest room ensure that a flag is present in the room.”
 - a. It was proposed to adopt Option 1 of the recommended solution, with a friendly amendment, to read ‘Have two small desk flags as part of all the leadership boxes so it is always there at the contest and have the contest chair place the flag.’
 - i. It was moved to accept the proposed amendment.
 - ii. Doug Pennington moved to accept with changes. Motion passed.

- iii. Dori Stuever moved to sustain. Landon Umlor seconded. Motion carried.

c. SAE Proficiency Awards - Awards and Activities

i. Issue: “SAEs/Proficiencies”

1. Description: “Supervised Agricultural Experiences in Degree Applications:

1. There is currently a lack of clarity on a state-level of SAEs projects that are eligible to be recognized through degree programs (Outstanding Junior Awards and State Degrees). Degree applications also tend to lack SAE descriptions to aid reviewers in determining eligibility. As a state, how do we balance the inclusivity/accessibility of SAEs while maintaining guidance on what qualifies as an SAE for recognition through degree programs?

Proficiency Applications:

2. Proficiency category submissions are getting too large to reasonably ask judges to score (ex: 27 applications in one category). At times, judges have expressed concerns on quality of applications, even those that are technically complete (ex: narrative sections with only one sentence written) and depth of programs represented in applications (ex: placement program with less than 24 hours total invested in program). These factors reduce the willingness of qualified judges to evaluate applications. This also reduces the ability of judges to provide thoughtful and helpful feedback on applications. Many proficiency judges represent organizations that are sponsors and the applications they review are a reflection of the Michigan FFA Association.

3. National FFA currently doesn't recognize any food-related projects through their proficiency program even though Food Products and Processing Systems is one of the nine AFNR Career Pathways recognized through the National Council on

Agricultural Education and the set of National AFNR Content Standards that guide the national proficiency program.

4. In 2027, National FFA will be making significant changes to the Proficiency Recognition Program transitioning to the SAE Award Program.”

2. Recommended Solution: “Create an SAE Task Force to explore and make recommendations to the Board of Directors possibly addressing, but not limited to, the following:

1. Lack of clarity of SAE projects for degrees: As a state, how do we balance the inclusivity/accessibility of SAEs while maintaining guidance on what qualifies as an SAE for recognition through degree programs?

- a. Create guidance for SAEs recognized in degree programs and how they are represented in applications.
- b. Consider how this will mirror or differ from National FFA requirements.
- c. Explore creating a standing SAE Committee that would review and provide recommendations to the State FFA Office on SAEs in degree applications that do not clearly fall within this guidance (possible make-up of the committee: AFNR educator, MSU AFNRE faculty member, and industry representative)

2. Proficiency judging: How can we ensure students have the opportunity to be recognized through this program, while keeping evaluation of applications manageable for judges?

- a. Should a review of applications (beyond the State FFA Office review for technical errors) occur to determine which applications will advance to judging? What would this process look like?

3. Lack of recognition for food-related projects in proficiencies: Should we explore the creation of a state-level food-related proficiency category?

4. Change at national level to SAE Award Program: Review the changes coming on a national level in 2027, and make recommendations for how our state can best adapt so Michigan students can be successfully recognized at a national level, while balancing the unique needs of our programs at a state level.

5. Other questions of considerations related to SAEs and proficiencies awards.

Possible make-up of the SAE Task Force - individuals with extensive experience relating degree and proficiency programs that fit the following roles:

1. AFNR educator from a two-year program
2. AFNR educator from a four-year program
3. Student representative from a two-year program (current state officer or a recent past state officer)
4. Student representative from a four-year program (current state officer or a recent past state officer)
5. AFNR industry representative - with experience judging proficiencies at the state (and possibly national) level
6. AFNR industry representative - with experience judging proficiencies at the state (and possibly national) level
7. State FFA staff member”

- a. A motion was made to adopt the recommended solution in full, including the formation of an SAE Task Force as outlined above. It was further clarified that the Michigan FFA State Office shall

hold authority to assemble and approve the members of the SAE Task Force.

- i. Katie Holt moved to accept. Motion passed.
- ii. Nicole Hollabaugh moved to sustain. Logan Bowers seconded. Motion carried.

d. Task Force on Schedule - Visioning and Special Topics

- i. Issue: “Inclement Weather: An Inconvenient Factor of District and Regional Contest Rescheduling”

- 1. Description: “In the last ten years, we have had to reschedule District and/or Regional Leadership contests 55% of the time due to inclement weather. Hosting these events during a portion of our winter that is notorious for delays and cancellations is challenging in many ways. Our policy states that in order to be fair to all chapters if a delay or cancellation should occur then the event will be rescheduled to the next available date. Additionally, with only 10-11 school days in between District and Regional contest and 14 school days between Regionals and States, this poses challenges to adequately prepare students for the next level of contests, especially as it relates to those who have additional skill or documentation needed to complete.”

- 2. Recommended Solution: “Develop a task force of advisors from each region, the state staff and other pertinent decision makers in evaluating a different schedule for district and regional contests. The goal would be to provide everyone flexibility due to inclement weather and the ability to adequately prepare teams for next level of competition. If reasonable, enact this new schedule for the 2027 contest season.

- a. A motion was made to assign both Proposal D (Inclement Weather: An Inconvenient Factor of District and Regional Contest Rescheduling) and Proposal E (Time - Is Ag Skills too soon after the State FFA Convention; Quality - Does the size of the event prohibit true state CDE competition; Opportunity - With students competing in only one CDE per year, are we limiting their exposure to

multiple areas of agriculture?) to a joint task force with the following composition:

- i. One advisor from each region, appointed by their region
 - ii. Two students, selected via application process through the Michigan FFA State Office
 - iii. Two industry representatives, selected via application through the Michigan FFA State Office
 - iv. One current State Officer
 - v. Michigan FFA State Staff to serve as non-voting members
- b. It was further requested that the task force not commence work until after strategic planning concludes in September. The committee also acknowledged the need for the task force to consider the following questions: (1) What is the trickle-down effect of these changes? (2) What impact will revised timelines have on host facilities? (3) What is the optimal rollout strategy when implementing a new schedule?
- i. Beth Wilson moved to accept. Motion passed.
 - ii. Dori Stuever moved to sustain. Logan Bowers seconded. Motion carried.

e. Ag Skills Proposal 25-26 - Visioning and Special Topics

- i. Issue: “Time - Is Ag Skills too soon after the State FFA Convention; Quality - Does the size of the event prohibit true state CDE competition; Opportunity - With students competing in only one CDE per year, are we limiting their exposure to multiple areas of agriculture?”
 - 1. Description: “1. Time - The April Ag Skills Contest only gives a few short weeks between the state FFA Convention and the contest, with spring break typically falling during these weeks. Moving the contests to late spring/early summer could provide more learning and training time for members while ensuring those most interested are the ones

in attendance; 2. Quality - CDEs take time, space, and money to run well. By limiting the number of teams competing in each event and only having students interested in truly competing at a state contest, the quality of the competition increases. Regional contests could allow more students to compete in CDEs but still increase the quality at the state CDE level.; 3. Opportunity - With the Ag Skills contest held one partial day each year, FFA members must choose only one Career Development Event per year. There is no other opportunity to experience different areas of potential interest regarding more than one CDE. In many cases, the Ag Skills Contest is the only hands-on exposure members get to various aspects of the agriculture industry, so the opportunity to participate - and learn - in more than one contest area will ultimately strengthen the future of agriculture. Potential regional contests could help facilitate this additional exposure while still ensuring the state level CDE is more competitive.”

2. Recommended Solution: Create a committee or task force to review the following regarding FFA CDEs: 1) Time of year and location; 2) Option for a full day of contests (morning and afternoon opportunities); 3) Hold regional CDE contests prior to the state Ag Skills contest
 - a. A motion was made to assign both Proposal D (Inclement Weather: An Inconvenient Factor of District and Regional Contest Rescheduling) and Proposal E (Time - Is Ag Skills too soon after the State FFA Convention; Quality - Does the size of the event prohibit true state CDE competition; Opportunity - With students competing in only one CDE per year, are we limiting their exposure to multiple areas of agriculture?) to a joint task force with the following composition:
 - i. One advisor from each region, appointed by their region
 - ii. Two students, selected via application process through the Michigan FFA State Office

- iii. Two industry representatives, selected via application through the Michigan FFA State Office
 - iv. One current State Officer
 - v. Michigan FFA State Staff to serve as non-voting members
- b. It was further requested that the task force not commence work until after strategic planning concludes in September. The committee also acknowledged the need for the task force to consider the following questions: (1) What is the trickle-down effect of these changes? (2) What impact will revised timelines have on host facilities? (3) What is the optimal rollout strategy when implementing a new schedule?
 - i. Beth Wilson moved to accept. Motion passed.
 - ii. Dori Stuever moved to sustain. Logan Bowers seconded. Motion carried.

f. Parliamentary Procedure Questions - Career Development Event Committee

- i. Issue: “The contest rule and score sheet simply state ‘Judges should be consistent by directing questions in the same manner to each team’”
 - 1. Description: “With teams having from 5 to 7 members this has been hard to interpret what consistent means. Does it mean one question to each contestant which may mean 7 directed questions, or it may mean 5 directed questions. This has been a question a couple of times from advisors at the state level contest.”
 - 2. Recommended Solution: “Make the directions more clear for our judges. Recommendation from the contest chair (Tate Forbush) ‘Each team member will be asked 1 directed question at the District and Regional Contests with the remaining questions being open to the entire team. At the State level Contests, all 10 questions will be directed.’”
 - a. A friendly amendment was offered and accepted to clarify the questioning limit at the state level by

inserting the phrase, ‘with no member getting more than two questions’

- b. Final proposal reads “Each team member will be asked 1 directed question at the District and Regional Contests with the remaining questions being open to the entire team. At the State level Contests, all 10 questions will be directed, with no member getting more than two questions.”
 - a. Haley Cucinello moved to accept. Motion passed.
 - b. Nicole Hollabaugh moved to sustain.
Landon Umlor seconded. Motion carried.

g. State Officer Election Feedback - State Officer Policy

i. Issue: “State Officer Election Process Feedback”

1. Description: “Past and present practice does not give State Officer candidates feedback on how they did during the interview process. If a feedback system was provided from the state level interview process, students could reflect on this information to help them prepare if they decide to run again. Or help elected officers know what their strengths and areas of improvement are to kick-start their year of service and help them focus on how to implement self improvement strategies to best serve our members.”
2. Recommended Solution: “Since our new interview process is competency based, a rubric using the scoring system used during interviews could be created (if not already done). At the conclusion of all interviews the State Staff or otherwise designated Nom Com member(s) could take the average score each candidate received in each competency area. This would provide each candidate a snapshot of how the panel saw them during their interview during Phase 2. This information then could be emailed or mailed after the conclusion of State FFA Convention to each candidate that participated in Phase 2.”
 - a. A motion was made to adopt the proposed feedback system, with feedback to be compiled and distributed after the State Convention, following a process similar to that used for Phase 1 Interviews.

- i. Motion not accepted - Motion failed. No further vote was taken.

h. Teams Reorder on the Day of Contest - Awards and Activities

- Issue: “Contest Order Changes”
 - 1. Description: “At this time, there is no precedent set for what steps will occur in the event that a change in the contest order must occur due to precipitating factors. The goal is to have a plan to keep all key players communicated with in the event this does happen.”
 - 2. Recommended Solution: “Add in language to the General Contest Rules as it relates to those contests who have props the following language: In the event of inclement weather, act of god or otherwise appropriate reasons decided by the contest superintendent and/or State Staff that the following will occur (Chapter Advisors must communicate this as soon as possible):
 - a. The Contest Chair will inform State Staff (or equally appropriate contest coordinator) that a change of order must occur given the information provided by the chapter advisor. The State Staff and/or Contest Chair do the following:
 - i. Contact the chapter advisors of the teams that will be impacted by the immediate change in contest order. (via phone or in person meeting)
 - ii. Update the competitors of the change occurring. Including the team that will be added to the bottom of the list.
 - iii. If needed give appropriate time for the chapter advisor immediately impacted to get the contest site to assist with props as needed or requested.”
 - b. An amendment was proposed to the recommended solution by
 - i. Striking out the phrase “who have props”
 - ii. Striking all content following the words “the following language”
 - iii. Inserting the following revised procedure:
 - 1. “Update all posted material

2. Announce to contestants in holding and spectators in contest room
3. Make a reasonable effort to contact effective advisors and give them a reasonable amount of time to assist if necessary”

Final Proposal: In the event of inclement weather, act of God, or other appropriate reasons as determined by the Contest Superintendent and/or State Staff, the following steps will occur:

1. Update all posted material
 2. Announce to contestants in holding and spectators in the contest room
 3. Make a reasonable effort to contact effective advisors and give them a reasonable amount of time to assist if necessary
- i. Motion was not moved to accept the proposal. Motion fails to accept. No further vote.

XVI. Announcements

1. Recognition of Board Members whose term has ended
 - a. Note: All appointments and decisions are expected to be finalized by the Summer PDI.
 - i. Charles Scovill has chosen to continue serving in his current position, thereby reinstating his term.
 - ii. Chase Bos’s term as the NAAE representative has concluded; NAAE will appoint a new representative.
 - iii. Region V and Region VI will each select new representatives.
2. 2024-2025 Michigan FFA State Officer Team Recognition
3. The next Board of Directors Meeting will be September 11, 2025, at 6:00 pm in Room 148 Natural Resources.

XVII. The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted for the last time,

Addison Van De Moortel

2024-2025 State Secretary

FYI: 2025-26 contests slated to be reviewed are:

- Floriculture
- Forestry
- Land Conservation
- Marketing Plan
- Greenhand Conduct of Meetings
- Jr. High Conduct of Meetings
- Jr. High Public Speaking
- Agriscience Fair
- Nursery Landscape

2025-2026 Meeting Dates:

September 11, 2025

December 4, 2025

February 19, 2026

April 9, 2026