



# MEETING NOTES

*Meeting Notes are not official until they are voted on by the Board of Education at its next Regular Meeting.*

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. Members present: Ms. Arnold, Mrs. Byler, Mrs. Crowley, Mr. Moog, and Mr. Perry.
3. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
4. Construction Update

*Mr. Stewart:* Good evening. We have two reports tonight. First, we have Rachel from Schorr Architects, who will give us a quick update on a whole lot of projects that will be coming out of the ground here as we speak.

**NOTE:** Portions of the meeting's audio recording were difficult to decipher, so this document may include several incomplete sentences or inaccuracies. Some of the participants' names may be misspelled.

*Ms. Eiferd:* Hello, everyone. I see some familiar faces and some new faces. My name is Rachel. I'm going to talk about several projects we have with you this year. First, I'd like to say that when we put these projects out to bid, our base bid came in at just under \$7 million. The actual bids came in at just under \$5.5 million. So, we put a decent chunk of change back in your pockets. There are two factors that go into this. One is that you wanted a conservative budget for these projects, and that you ensure the quality of the items you need. And then the second one is that we provided competitive bids between the contractors. So that helps.

So, starting off with playground improvements. This project was approved on March 9th. The schools receiving playground improvements this summer are Alton Darby, Darby Creek, Hoffman Trails, Scioto Darby, and Washington Elementary School. And then I gave a little breakdown here. So, our base bid was just over \$3 million. It was awarded for just over \$2.5 million. Our start date is May 30th, and our end date is August 10th.

This is what we're looking at for new playgrounds. There will be a hard surface with a lot of asphalt striping, some gaga pits, basketball hoops, and a funnel ball. There will also be a soft surface component visible at the very top of the screen. The blue that the arrows point to is poured-in-place rubberized surfacing. The other portion will be mulch. There will be a large composite structure, some swings, a net climber, and a spinning component. Also included are some site amenities, such as a shade canopy and benches.

*Mr. Moog:* Is that hardwood mulch that's in there?

*Ms. Eiferd:* It is engineered wood fiber.

So, work that has taken place with this project, as surveys have been completed. We've located stormwater structures. We're going to tie in our underdrains into these stormwater structures. And then we have our first pre-construction meeting kicking off tomorrow.

The next project we have is secured entrances. This was awarded to Ferguson on February 23rd. We have seven schools this year – Alton Darby and Pre-K, Avery, Darby Creek, Crossing, Hoffman Trails, Horizon, and Norwich. Our base bid was just over a million dollars, and we came in significantly under, at about \$700,000. This project will begin on June 1st and end on August 10<sup>th</sup>. We try to keep the work to a minimum for these secured entrances. So here you can see the first image is the existing, and that's the demolition plan. So, we're just moving a couple of doors around, a couple of walls. This is a real-life view from Tharp. You can see that we extended the doors to create a vestibule, and the new door leading into the office will have security devices installed. We have received clean approvals and held a preliminary construction meeting with our contractors.

Next up are tennis courts. This was awarded to Byrne & Jones on March 9th. We're going to be doing the tennis courts at Darby High School and Davidson High School. The bid came at just about \$1.8 million. We're going to start Davidson a little bit earlier than Darby. So, we're starting at Davidson on April 1st and at Darby on June 1st, and then we'll end on August 10th. Here's the color scheme for the tennis courts. What you're not seeing here is that we're implementing underdrains here as well. But this matches what was done at Bradley. We've completed surveys and some borings, and we'll hold the pre-construction kickoff meeting tomorrow.

Next, we have our band towers at Bradley, Darby, and Davidson. These were awarded to Steiner Builders on February 9<sup>th</sup>. The base bid was \$500,000 dollars, and it was awarded for just under \$400,000. The start date is March 16th. That's already happened, and our end date is June 5th. I just wanted to show you an example. This won't be the color, but I just wanted to show you an example of what these tower structures look like. It'll be multi-level, and you'll be able to view from the front and from the back. Some of the setup is what you have asked for, I think it's Davidson. You have an asphalt practice field on one side and a grass practice field on the other side. So, we wanted to give you that option as well. We are providing a structure that you can essentially see through, make sure there are no students in there, and a lockable gate. As mentioned, we've already started demolishing the existing structures and are now building new ones.

So next, we have the performing arts assessment. This was a team effort between Schorr architects, engineers, and an interior designer from Cincinnati, Community Design Alliance. We created this booklet, which has very in-depth assessments of your three high school performing arts centers, Bradley, Darby, and Davidson. Some scope items that we've looked at included ADA accessibility, interior finishes, fire suppression, electrical, HVAC, and technology. A lot of these are just trying to bring these areas up to code. We have some basic recommendations. We recommend going through one PAC assessment at a time. I think there are always great lessons to learn as you do this. We anticipate 7.5 to 6.5 months for a single renovation. We're still working on a budget and timeline.

Any questions?

*Mr. Stewart:* I want to thank Rachel. We've thrown a ton of projects at her, and she just keeps delivering. She didn't really give herself credit when she showed that PAC Assessment book, but it's about this thick, and the level of detail in terms of the recommendations is impressive.

## 5. Assessment Audit

*Mr. Stewart:* Alright, shifting gears. Jake Grantier is here tonight. His word of the year is audit. He's been leading multiple audits and implementing the outcomes of others. But we try to update you on our progress with regard to the strategic plan on a fairly regular cadence. And the strategic plan specifically

called out an audit of our assessment system. And Jake has been leading that work and wanted to give you an update.

*Mr. Grantier:* Good evening, everybody. My name is Jake Grantier. I'm the director of measurement, intervention, and enrichment for the district, and I'm pleased to present the findings and proposed next steps of our balanced assessment audit.

This audit is a direct extension of our district strategic plan. Specifically, Goal One, student learning. Objective 1D – Unlocking potential requires district leaders and staff to provide equitable access to instruction and resources. To do that effectively, we must have an assessment system that accurately communicates a student's mastery at every stage of the learning cycle.

Before diving into available data, we must define and develop a foundational understanding of assessment literacy. It is more than just giving a test. It's the confident understanding of how to leverage data to meet student needs early and close opportunity gaps. We are shifting our district's culture from simply assessment of learning or a final grade to assessment for learning, such that the data shifts how we teach in real time.

Leveraging the power of assessment data requires shared responsibility and partnership among staff, students, and families to ensure that the most appropriate decisions are made for each child. A truly balanced assessment system rests on six pillars:

- Coherence – ensuring all assessment opportunities are aligned to standards and adopted curricula
- Continuity – providing information that effectively monitors student progress toward mastery over time
- Comprehensiveness – using a wide range of evidence-based measurements in support of data-driven decision making,
- utility and efficiency – providing timely and purposeful information while remaining mindful of instructional time, and
- fairness – ensuring every student, including English learners, gifted identified students, and those with disabilities are accurately and appropriately represented in available data.

Visualizing this balance is key. We look at what happens before instruction to gauge readiness, during instruction to provide responsive supports, interventions, and enrichment, and after instruction to verify mastery. A balanced system ensures no single high-stakes moment outweighs the continuous feedback loop. In addition, we must consider both the core instruction domain (highlighted in blue) and the intervention domain (highlighted in purple) when designing, administering, and analyzing assessments to ensure responsive supports, data-driven decision-making, and student progress.

The ultimate goal is to connect the dots among state-mandated, district-selected, and classroom-controlled assessments. When these three layers work together, students receive the most responsive instruction possible, and we can be assured that assessment results are truly indicative of students' knowledge and skills.

Before sharing some of our initial findings, I would like to highlight the collaborative work of our audit committee and its contributions to gathering information about our current assessment practices. Our audit committee met for a full day in December to participate in collaborative learning and review. Subsequently, a team of academic directors reviewed the initial contributions and ensured accuracy.

The following tool captures the entirety of our administered assessment opportunities, including mandated or purchased assessments, curricula-based measures, and those assessments that are administered by referral only. And as you can see, there are quite a lot of them.

Our audit revealed several key findings. Currently, our mandated and purchased assessments skew heavily towards summative functions. Curricular-based measures prioritize both formative and summative functions. However, we have found that if this information is not used to inform instruction and/or interventions, many assessments are formative in name only. Many of our current assessments, such as STAR reading and math, are leveraged for multiple roles, such as universal screeners, interim tests, and as a gifted identifier. And in K-5, we see a focus on universal screeners. As students move to the middle grades, we transition to longer, less frequent summative tests, and by grades nine through 12, the system is almost exclusively summative. This identifies a clear opportunity for us to introduce formative practices and opportunities in support of established summative and high-stakes assessments.

A natural outcome of any audit process is the identification of potential redundancy. While a majority of our current assessments are either required for compliance with state or federal statutes, leveraging measurement tools for multiple purposes can help to manage assessment overload. For example, STAR reading and math serve as necessary universal screeners and interim assessments, but are also approved gifted identifiers as required by the state. Rather than using standalone assessments for gifted identification, we can leverage tools for this purpose that are already part of our assessment system, benefiting all stakeholders and helping protect time and resources. In addition, STAR Math is a recently approved math diagnostic, and we plan on expanding its use to kindergarten next year in response to new state requirements. Again, leveraging an existing assessment to remain compliant to directives from the legislature and the Department of Education and Workforce.

Our audit also provides the opportunity to examine the extent to which existing assessments align with standards and adopted curriculum. In our analysis, we have realized that our use of the DMA (diagnostic math assessment) in primary grades does not provide standards-aligned information beyond early kindergarten. And subsequently, our curriculum team will investigate its continued use in other grade levels to ensure that the assessments we ask teachers to administer provide the most actionable information possible. This iterative work will enable our team, in partnership with teachers and administrators, to remain responsive to mandates and provide all stakeholders with valuable information about student progress.

Moving forward, our roadmap for assessment includes developing K-12 assessment maps (an example of that can be seen here for grade three in English Language Arts and math, as a complement to our curriculum maps that have already been adopted and are in place), providing clarity and communicating purpose, and continuing our use of performance matters for online assessment administration, data warehousing and item analysis. We look to invest in professional learning focused on assessment and data literacy, and on data-driven instructional decision-making. We want to support curriculum implementation and strengthen our multi-tiered systems of support framework through an emphasis on tier one instruction and formative assessment practice. And we want to continue improving how we communicate this data to our most important stakeholders: our students and our families.

Finally, I want to recognize the audit committee. This was an interdisciplinary collaborative effort involving over 30 teachers, school psychologists, teacher leaders, building principals, and administrators. Their expertise has been the driving force behind this audit's results. Thank you for your time. At this point, I'm happy to answer any questions you might have about our balance assessment audit.

*Mrs. Crowley:* A lot to digest.

*Mr. Stewart:* I was going to say it should come as a surprise to no one that a study led by Jake Grantier is that thorough. Before you ask your questions, I want to thank Jake. This is a heavy lift. This is just one piece of the strategic plan. Kara would know this, and I think many would understand that just getting everyone in the system to talk about assessment and assessment practices the same way, and to use the appropriate terminology and things like that, can take years. This is ongoing work, but Jake's done a really great job of getting it started.

*Mrs. Crowley:* I'm going to have to call you later with my questions at some point because there's so much information there. But I loved how you said the assessment for learning instead of learning. That's just such a shift in mindset and really changes the nature of assessment. You mentioned the DMA. We don't use that anymore in Southwestern, except at the younger levels, but it can be really helpful when kids are going through like tier-two or tier-three, just to see where they're at. It gives us a lot of information. Would teachers have the opportunity to continue using that if they chose to use it?

*Mr. Grantier:* Absolutely. So, we definitely see a role for it in a screening process for early kindergarten. And then beyond that, teachers would still have that as an opportunity or an option to continue to progress monitor students. This is where we want to engage teachers in primary grades.

*Mrs. Crowley:* Is everyone giving it to everyone?

*Mr. Grantier:* Yes. We're giving it to all students through grade two if they are not meeting the 60-point mark. And again, when we're looking at the opportunities to assess students at grade level and ensure that those assessments are aligned to standards, the DMA doesn't necessarily do that much beyond early kindergarten. And we don't want to waste people's time. So, providing it as an option, as you said, in a tier-two or tier-three space is much more appropriate. Now we want to include our teachers in that conversation, our teacher leaders, and our building administrators, to ensure that we all have an understanding of the role that it can continue to play. But requiring it of all students might not be the best use of our time.

*Mrs. Crowley:* I agree with that.

*Ms. Arnold:* Do you have any particular area where you found that the assessments just weren't aligning with, say, we don't have the right assessments for gifted or ELL? Was there anyone who just stood out for you?

*Mr. Grantier:* So, in terms of formative assessments and progress monitors, we have been trying to identify the most appropriate progress monitors or tools in a lot of different areas. Unfortunately, there isn't a lot out there for our English learners specifically. While the state does provide opportunities for students to practice grade-level skills through checkmark or benchmark readiness assessments on the state platform, and gives teachers the opportunity to author their own assessments using release items, that same opportunity is unfortunately not aligned to the OELPA. So, one of the things we're looking to pilot with the new service plan platform we are bringing on for EL service plans, called Elevation, is a progress monitoring component. They're actually starting to build that out. So, it might provide us the tools that we need to progress monitor our students' language acquisition. Now, part of that, too, is that it needs to align with the adopted curriculum that we now have at the secondary level. I think finding the happy medium between that curriculum and any available progress-monitoring tools will be important.

You mentioned gifted. In about a month, I'll be back in front of you to share the results of the gifted audit. We are seeing a pretty substantial increase in the number of students identified as gifted. Part of that is due to extensive renorming of tests in the wake of COVID. Just because we are a STAR district does not mean that districts that are leveraging other tools like iReady or MAP are not also experiencing the same thing. Those tests were also renormed. But as we administer STAR Reading and STAR Math, which are approved gifted identifiers by the state, anytime a student reaches the 95th percentile or higher, they are identified as gifted in that particular academic area.

I can't speak to what that number would be if we were using another assessment. However, one of the things our gifted committee has been looking at is the assessments we use, not only for academic areas of gifted identification but also for superior cognitive abilities, to see if there might be an opportunity to recalibrate around that. Now, the 3,800 students in our district who are identified as gifted, we're not going to take gifted identification away from them. Once you're gifted, you're always gifted in the state of Ohio. But I think there is an opportunity for us to review the scope of the assessments we use, as required by the state, to identify students eligible for gifted services, and if there are possible changes or adjustments to made in the future.

*Ms. Arnold:* I imagine between those two, you've got that issue of what happens when you have multiple modes of identification, ELL and gifted, and those are intersecting.

*Mr. Grantier:* Yep. And, as you can imagine, research shows that it is not a good practice to use one assessment for multiple purposes. Assessments are meant to be highly targeted. But in the case of just the huge scope of assessments we have to administer as a district, and this is true for any public system across the state, we try to check multiple boxes with a single assessment as often as we can to help our students and teachers protect instructional time.

*Mr. Perry:* First of all, the wealth of knowledge coming at us like a fire hose, and I don't have the equipment that Kara has as a teacher to process all of that. But one of the questions I had was: you mentioned some assessments that were referral-only, if I heard that correctly. What's an example of an assessment that would be referral only?

*Mr. Grantier:* Sure. So many of the assessments by referral are for students with disabilities or for gifted identification, which are referred by a teacher or parent. I'll be honest, I'm not a huge expert on all of this. This is where the school psychologist being part of this process was beyond beneficial, ensuring that we capture as much as possible of the assessments available to them. But it could be anything from the Woodcock-Johnson IQ test to the assessments we use for early entrance to kindergarten to the NGAT or CogAT, or the given to students who have been referred for gifted services but have not yet been identified, as well as any additional assessment that might be leveraged as part of the evaluation of a student for potential special education services. And there are a lot of them.

*Mr. Perry:* If a child is referred, who informs the parents that the child was referred for assessment?

*Mr. Grantier:* It really depends. It's again a parent who can request that evaluation. At that point, it would most likely go to the school psychologist at that child's building to identify the most appropriate evaluation tools. And they can conduct the evaluation, prepare a report of the findings, and then share it back with the parents. If it is a teacher who says, "Hey, I really think this kiddo might be gifted. They're well beyond their peers. I really think that they should be evaluated again." That communication would first go to a parent to say, "Hey, we think that your child should be evaluated for potential acceleration,

either grade level or subject level acceleration. Is that something you'd like to pursue?" And then again, loop in the school psychologist. One of the things that came out of this audit is just how much our school psychologists assess and evaluate on a regular basis. And just the sheer number of tools that they have to be familiar with in order to be able to be responsive when student need arises either from a parent concern, a teacher concern, or just a team coming together through our MTSS processes to say we've exhausted everything that we might be able to try for a particular kid, and we think that there might be something more there that we need to dig into.

6. The Board of Education adopted the agenda.
7. The Board of Education approved the following trip request:
  - a. Bradley Baseball, Clarksville, TN – March 29, 2026
8. The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

**AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH AMERESCO, INC. FOR THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY/LED LIGHTING PROJECT AT DAVIDSON HIGH SCHOOL PURSUANT TO O.R.C. 167.081 FOR CONTRACTS PROCURED THROUGH A REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

The Superintendent recommends that the Board authorize an agreement with Ameresco, Inc. ("Ameresco") for the Energy Efficiency/LED Lighting Project at Davidson High School (the "Project") pursuant to R.C. 167.081 for contracts procured through a regional council of governments.

**Rationale:**

1. The District has identified a need for the Project.
2. R.C. 167.081 allows a school district to participate in a construction contract of a regional council of governments (a "COG") without the need to engage in competitive bidding or other competitive selection methods. Specifically, R.C. 167.081 states that a COG may enter into a contract that establishes a unit price for, and provides upon a per unit basis, materials, labor, services, overhead, profit, and associated expenses for the repair, enlargement, improvement, or demolition of a building or structure if the contract is awarded pursuant to a competitive bidding procedure of a public entity that is a member of the COG or a competitive bidding procedure of a statewide or multistate consortium of which the COG is a member.
3. The Board is a member of the Equalis Group ("Equalis"). Equalis is a COG established under Chapter 167 of the Ohio Revised Code. As a result, the Board may participate in contracts procured by Equalis pursuant to R.C. 167.081, by virtue of the Board's membership in Equalis.
4. Equalis has procured and entered into an agreement with Ameresco, under Equalis Contract COG-2114A, to perform the types of work needed for the Project in which agreement the Board may participate.
5. Ameresco is an experienced contractor and has provided a proposal for the Project in the amount of \$408,892 (the "Contract Sum"), which is based on unit pricing set forth under its agreement with Equalis.
6. In order to facilitate timely completion of the Project, the Superintendent also requests authority for the Superintendent and Treasurer to enter change orders and contract amendments on behalf of the Board in a total amount not to exceed 10% of the Proposal Sum.

Change orders or contract amendments in excess of that aggregate amount will be brought to the Board for its approval.

The Board of Education resolves as follows:

1. Based upon the information provided and exercising the authority given in R.C. 167.081, the Board authorizes the procurement of Ameresco through Equalis.
2. The Board authorizes the Superintendent, Treasurer, and Board President, working with other administrators and legal counsel, to negotiate and enter into an agreement with Ameresco, in an amount not-to-exceed the Contract Sum, and to sign any related documents consistent with the intent of this resolution.
3. The Superintendent also requests authority for the Superintendent and Treasurer to enter change orders and contract amendments on behalf of the Board in a total amount not to exceed 10% of the Proposal Sum. Change orders and contract amendments in excess of that aggregate amount will be brought to the Board for its approval.

*Mr. Dudgeon:* So, just to give you some context for what you're approving here. As you're aware, we received a \$175,000 grant through the state. While the resolution you're approving is for a \$400,000 lighting project, we will actually be reimbursed \$175,000 of that from the state. When we initially applied for the grant, based on the electrical rates at the time, this was a five-year return on investment. So, saving approximately \$55,000 a year in energy reduction at Davidson.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 p.m.