



BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

May 11, 2026 | Washington Elementary

MEETING NOTES

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

- A1 President called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- A2 Members present: Ms. Arnold, Mrs. Byler, Mrs. Crowley, Mr. Moog, and Mr. Perry.
- A3 Pledge of Allegiance

NOTE: *Portions of the meeting's audio recording were difficult to decipher; therefore, this document may contain several incomplete sentences or inaccuracies. Additionally, some of the participants' names may be misspelled.*

B PROGRAMS / PRESENTATIONS

- B1 Consistent with District Treasurer Swearingen's March 9, 2026, notice under Section 3307.353 of the Ohio Revised Code, the Board of Education will now hear the issue of whether or not to reemploy STRS retiree David Stewart, Superintendent. This individual has given notice of intent to retire under the State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio (STRS), effective at the end of the day on July 31, 2026, and has applied for reemployment in their previous positions, effective August 4, 2026. Any audience member who wishes to comment on this issue will be recognized.

- B2 Embrace, Empower, Inspire Award Winners: Amanda Jenkins and Carter Williams

Mr. Stewart: Okay, we'll move on to our Embrace, Empower, Inspire award winners. First up is Amanda Jenkins.

Unknown speaker: I wanted to share some words from a previous student about how you inspired her and shaped her life journey. She was among the fifth-grade teachers who stood out as among the most influential educators I've encountered in my K-12 experience with Hillier City Schools. It's been over a decade since I sat in her classroom at Washington Elementary, yet the impact she had on me remains clear in my mind. Mrs. Jenkins exemplifies what it means to embrace, empower, and inspire students. She did this not only through her teaching but also by intentionally investing in each of us as individual learners. She cultivated a classroom environment where curiosity was encouraged, questions were valued, and learning had meaningful application rather than being a burden.

She said she went on to say that, at this stage of her life, you've inspired her to keep growing. You've inspired her to think critically and approach challenges she has in life, and she's a recent graduate of college, so congratulations.

Mr. Stewart: And next up, Lauren Barkdull's here to present to Carter Williams.

Ms. Barkdull: Thank you. Carter is a first-year teacher in Hilliard and has already done so many amazing things for our school community and for his students. But the reason I nominated him for this award goes

well beyond academics. This past Monday, now two weeks ago, at the very end of the school day, he noticed a fifth-grade student in his classroom choke on a piece of candy and was struggling to breathe. After a few seconds of observing the student and realizing her airway was likely blocked, Carter decided to perform the Heimlich maneuver, which quickly resolved the issue. He immediately walked the student down to the office to have her check in with the school nurse and contacted the student's parents. Thankfully, the student was completely fine and made it home safely that day. While Carter brings so much to the table as a teacher and a staff member at Horizon, his quick decision to put student safety first and do what is necessary at all costs is the most inspiring act I've seen from Carter. Thank you, Carter, for showing up for your students every single day. Congratulations.

- B3 Scott Brown, Regional Liaison for the Ohio Auditor of State, to present the Auditor of State Award with Distinction for our Fiscal Year 2025 audit report.

Mr. Stewart: All right, up next, Scott Brown, who's the regional liaison for the Ohio Auditor of State, is here to present the Auditor of State Award with Distinction for our fiscal year 2025 audit report.

Mr. Brown: My name is Scott Brown, and I happen to be a resident of the district and put two kids through the district. I'm also the Central Ohio liaison for Auditor of State Keith Faber. To you, that means I serve as your customer service representative. I may drop off a few desk calendars every year, but it also means I can navigate our 800-member staff so your challenges are addressed as quickly as possible.

Auditor Faber asked that I stop by this evening on his behalf to present the Auditor of State Award with distinction to the Hilliard Local School District. Our office oversees 6,000 clients statewide and conducts 4,200 audits annually. This award places your organization in the top 4% of these 4,200 engagements.

The Auditor of State Award is presented to local governments and school districts upon the completion of a financial report and a financial audit that meet the following criteria, described as a clean audit report. The entity must file financial reports with the auditor's office by the statutory due date, without extension, on a GAAP basis, and prepare a comprehensive annual financial report. The audit does not contain any findings for recovery, material citations, material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, uniform guidance findings, or other questioned costs.

Auditor Faber would like to recognize the board, the administration, and the finance department for doing an outstanding job overseeing every dollar. This award recognizes the hard work of all your staff and employees as they continually strive for accounting excellence. What this truly means is that, across your entire organization, you have the people and processes in place to understand fiscal accountability. We especially want to recognize your treasurer, Melissa Swearingen, for her outstanding leadership and commitment to protecting your organization's finances.

So, on behalf of Auditor of State Keith Faber, I would like to present the Hilliard Local School District with the 2025 Auditor of State Award with Distinction. Congratulations.

- B4 Special Education Update

Next up, it's not saving lives, but it is a very important part of our organization. Jamie Lennox will give you an update on special education in Hilliard City Schools.

Ms. Lennox: Hello. Thank you for allowing me to be here tonight. As we get started, I just want to take a moment to talk about our current student demographics. We have 16.91% of our students in the district who are students with a disability. This is very much in line with the state statistics as well, so we're aligned there. As well as our distribution by eligibility categories. We currently serve students under 14 eligibility categories. Again, very much in line with the state's percentages in these areas as well. So that takes us to how we are serving our students.

Last year, we conducted our special education audit based on a recommendation from our strategic plan, analyzing how we're going to evaluate our student support systems and ensuring we are meeting students' needs for students with disabilities. And so when we looked at that special education profile or special education audit, we used various guiding questions to inform that work. Some of those questions came from the spec ed profile, how we are measured every year by the state department, the strategic plan, and how we are supporting staff development and engaging our families.

So I will take us through some of those pieces. The first question in our special education profile wasn't specifically addressed in the audit because, at the same time last year, we were also running our preschool program of study and the resource adoption with Frog Street. But one area that we do look at is whether students with disabilities are entering kindergarten ready to learn. And so this is looking at one of the indicators. Students participate in what's called the Child Outcome Summary, which the teachers complete alongside the student at various points during their preschool education. So one is when they've entered preschool special education annually at their annual IEP meeting, and then again as they exit.

And so this looks at the growth of those students from when they enter to when they exit the preschool program, as well as whether they exit at each level. We definitely have some work to do in this area. We're very hopeful that with the Frog Street implementation beginning this year, we will continue to see these scores increase. Our team has done really well in adopting the new schedule that's been put in place, as well as completing various professional development, not only beginning last year but also throughout this year and continuing this summer. So we're very excited by the implementation of Frog Street so far at our preschool program.

The indicators we look at in the Child Outcome Summary include social-emotional skills (peer interactions and building positive relationships), language and math literacy, and foundational cognitive skills (motor skills, self-care habits, and independence). So those three areas are condensed from those nine domains within the Ohio Early Learning Development Standards.

Some other components we looked at to indicate how well we're doing in our preschool program are identifying students who are transitioning from birth to these services called early intervention, and then identifying students by their third birthday for special education services if, in fact, they need them. And so we continue to meet the target rate of 100 percent for meeting those IEPs by that third birthday. We are also looking at how well we're serving our preschool students. And we are serving them very appropriately in that integrated preschool setting. So our preschool students are being served alongside their typical peers, which is what the state is also looking to see. So those are areas where we're continuing to do good work.

We're transitioning over now, looking at our K-twelve students. One question is: To what extent do our students with disabilities have access to the general education environment? These are two different areas. One looks at any removals for suspensions or expulsions and any discipline discrepancies. We don't have any, which is great. But that is an area we take a look at, as well as how we're serving our students.

So, who are the students who might need a separate facility, or who are our students receiving access to their peers less than 40% of the time, which is a very low percentage? So we're meeting right where we need to, a little bit below those areas. An area of opportunity for us that also came out of that spec ed audit was looking at our students who have access to their peers for 80% or more of their schooling. And so that was one of the recommendations that came out of the audit, which was looking to reduce our resource room setting for our students.

In the next couple of slides, we'll look at whether our students with disabilities are achieving at high levels. One thing I will point out is that some of this data is from the spec ed profile last year. While the state said this year's profile or some of the results would be released on the seventh, it has not yet arrived, which is unfortunate. I fully anticipate it will arrive tomorrow, right on time. For now, we're looking at reading scores. One thing I will note that was very hopeful was that the year 23-24 is when we started implementing the new Wit & Wisdom curriculum. And as you can see, we had a 5% increase in the proficiency rate for students with disabilities, which is a huge rate of growth overall. The other thing we changed that year was to offer more inclusion services rather than more small-group work. So we took a look at that and said, "That is something to look forward to as we're looking at our six through twelve grade students." And so that's just something we noticed when we were looking at these trends that we needed to make a switch for. And that's why, beginning this year, we reduced or eliminated our resource rooms at the secondary level for English language arts and moved toward a more inclusive model. We started that work last year, alerting families and staff. Professional development geared up at the beginning of this year, once teachers had their class lists, continued throughout some of our professional development days, and will continue.

Again, looking at our math proficiency rates, we saw a 5% jump during the year we started implementing illustrative at the elementary level. This year, I was very fortunate to work alongside Erin Dooley, who formed a math committee to explore how we can transform our math programming at the secondary level. Through that committee work, there's a recommendation for a three-year plan to start phasing out our...*(unintelligible)*... So families were notified this past year. So next year we will have inclusion for grades six and seven, and also for our twelfth-grade students. One school, Davidson, had already transitioned to full inclusion at grade twelve, so we're just mirroring that at the other high schools.

The final category we looked at, as far as achievement, was our students who take the alternative assessment. And so the state would like us to keep a threshold of 1%, meaning 1% of our students participate in what they call alternative assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. This is a process that families review annually to determine whether they qualify for alternative assessment. It looks at students' adaptive skills, the instruction they're receiving, and the assistive technology they're using. This again is an area that we are still going to need to look at.

We're in year two of implementation for our Teachstone intervention program, a specific K-12 program. Also works on some social skills and transition skills; it has what's called basics, which also looks at foundational cognitive skills. So we're in year two. We have some great feedback from coaching cohorts that have been going on with our teachers, and we're seeing increased use of that program as well.

Looking at our older students now and how we're preparing them for life, work, and post-secondary education. One of the big things is that beginning at age fourteen, all of our students receive a transition plan. That's looking at their post-secondary education, competitive integrated employment, and independent living. So our students receive a goal and some activities for each of these areas moving

forward. So, we are always writing those plans. We also looked at our graduation and dropout rates. These are areas that we've worked to improve over the past few years. I think a lot of this has to do with Molly Walker's endeavors with attendance. We are experiencing fewer dropouts than we used to. The efforts underway in our buildings are paying off for our students.

And then also looking at graduation and how our students are meeting the graduation requirements by a traditional diploma. And so this looks at whether they're meeting competency requirements or accessing one of those alternate pathways, and also how they're earning those skills and credits. I want to highlight the pictures below. This past year, we also launched the Community Access and Transition Skills (CAST), which is housed at our Hub. So this was our first step toward exploring a deferment program. So some of our students who may not have quite met the rigor of a traditional diploma may be looking to further some of those transition skills. This is a program we have put in place this year.

We have community connections with The Well and Walgreens. Students spend half their day at the Hub working on those job skills in the classroom, and then transition into those community sites in the afternoon. Next year, we're looking to expand that program. We also have some students who aren't quite ready for community-based job sites, so we're partnering with Station as well as different things within the Hb to grow those skills within a safer environment, a school environment, and then hopefully be able to transition them into the community, maybe the next semester. So we're excited to strengthen that program.

Also looking at whether we're serving our students equitably. And so this looks at disproportionate representation by ethnicity across all categories, as well as within individual categories. Again, this is an area that we should apply ourselves. We have to address disproportionate representation in our special education identification.

And finally, we're looking to see whether we're implementing IDEA as designed. One of the things we measure is the timeliness of our initial evaluation. Once a parent signs consent for evaluation, we have 60 calendar days to wrap up the evaluation team meeting. Again, we are meeting the indicators there.

And then the Special Education Family Survey looks more at our family engagement. Every six years, the state asks us to complete that. This is not our year to do that. But one thing I do think is important is that we surveyed our families last year as part of the audit, and in a couple of years, we will have the desk review, where we'll survey families again. In the meantime, Amelia McCarty is our parent mentor, and I cannot speak highly enough of her. The amount of work she does to reach our families by attending meetings with them. And then this year, she also became an ambassador for Charting the Life Course. And so this is taking those transition pieces for students even down into preschool, 'cause our students, as they transition grades, their teachers are always thinking about that next step, and families are always wondering, oh, I gotta tell my student's story again. So she's been working to put some things in place to help with that process for families.

A couple of other pieces we are excited about the work that we've done this year include our onboarding process for a new intervention specialist. I've been meeting monthly with those staff to make sure they understand how they're writing IEPs to ensure compliance with those pieces. And the same with progress monitoring and data collection. And then we've also switched from our crisis prevention program to ...*(unintelligible)*...our board-certified behavior analyst, Chris, has started those trainings with teachers this spring as well.

Do you have any questions?

Mr. Moog: I had one quick one. You talked about transitional services. How long are those services provided to students? Is it up to graduation, or does it go beyond that?

Ms. Lennox: It can start pretty early. Some families will get linked up with the Franklin County Board of DD pretty early on. The transition services officially begin on an IEP at age fourteen, but they can start earlier if deemed appropriate. For students who may need services after graduation, the Franklin County Board of DD or Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities are agencies we connect our students with. And so they are really good about providing job support for families and students once a student graduates. So even if they exit K-12, other agencies take over at that point.

Mr. Perry: First of all, phenomenal presentation as always. A couple of questions that I had. So we have a target goal to have more of our students transition into a full inclusion classroom through least restrictive environment. I wonder: as we move towards having more folks in a full-inclusion classroom, are we then transitioning our resources or the classroom teacher to be proportionate with the additional inclusions?

Ms. Lennox: Yes. And so as we look for staffing, we're based on the ratios as defined by the state. So we always make sure we have enough intervention specialists to meet the state's case-load recommendations and wouldn't exceed them. The same applies to staffing at the general level. We take all that staffing into consideration and then also provide the support. For example, this year our English and literacy teachers participated in co-teaching training together. So, as they knew which parents they would have together, they were able to plan. We're looking to keep some of those teams together for next year. That worked really well. Also, common planning time is very important so that teachers can plan together. One change we are going to make is that, since we have a tiered approach to math, we're going to have our gen ed teachers or content experts push into any of our remaining resource classrooms, so we have the IS alongside that content expert. So, we're very mindful about those pieces.

B5 AI Task Force Report

Mr. Stewart: Okay, our next presentation, probably as I'm in the community or just talking to people about education, probably the number one question I get asked is, "Hey, what are you doing with AI?" Rich Boettner, alongside Jim Smalley and Mark Tremayne, has, over the last two years, been leading an effort to start bringing answers to that question. The challenging part is that it's not just a one-dimensional kind of answer. We need to look at logistics, ethics, safety, how it impacts instruction, and on and on, and they really have done that. They are here tonight to discuss where we are with that task force today. Because one thing that I know will come up, and I'll underscore this is going to be an iterative process. This is going to keep changing and evolving, and we're gonna have to keep evolving with it. So, what they are going to share with you is where we are today.

Mr. Boettner: Thanks for having us. We built a team of teachers, principals, directors, and all of our superintendents who have spent this school year looking at where we are with artificial intelligence and where we will go from here. It feels a lot like when the internet first came out, and things are very up in the air in many ways. So we want to start with a short video.

Obviously, one thing we see in this clip is a reminder that technology is often very disruptive. Technology advances can cause a lot of discomfort for people because of what's happening, where we are going next, and that was really just good reminders.

Mr. Smalley: So this takes us to the vision. This plan is built on listening. So a lot went into this, including surveying our community, staff, teachers, and students to develop a shared vision statement. I know the text is small, so I'll read it out loud. It says, "Hilliard City Schools aims to cultivate a human-centered AI-literate community, where technology serves as a catalyst for personalized and innovative learning and operational efficiency. We foster an environment that leverages the benefits of AI while addressing potential biases, data security, and cognitive offloading. These opportunities ultimately prepare our students with the essential skills for the rapidly evolving global workforce of tomorrow."

So we left that word cognitive offloading in there. That might be a new term for many people unfamiliar with AI. But that's the use of an external tool to reduce our mental effort required for a task, and over-reliance on AI might lead to reduced memory retention. What we love about this is that the human-centered approach is right in that first line, and we emphasize it, and we also want to address some of the negative concerns about biases, data security, and cognitive offloading.

This is Mark Cuban. You might have seen him on Shark Tank, but he made his money in the tech world, and he had a very profound statement. He said, "Artificial intelligence acts as a pivotal living library that divides people into two distinct groups on how they use it. Those who will use AI to learn everything, and those who will use it so they don't have to learn anything." And the important takeaway that we saw from this is if we don't push our students into that first group, they're going to fall into the second group. So it's really important that we guide them in this process.

These are our strategic recommendations. We're going to do an overview of this. I know some of the text is small, but these are the things that we considered as we developed the plan. We're going to continue to focus on governance and compliance and establish that framework for privacy and security. We have literacy and ethics addressing some of the bias concerns and are critically evaluating the tools we're using. When we talk about infrastructure, we'll align with our curriculum and technical infrastructure to ensure transparency. We'll continue to develop professional development for our teachers as we use these tools and engage our community. As Dave said, it's very iterative, and the community is a big part of how we continue to educate everybody. And then, throughout this process, a continued focus on digital wellness and using technology and AI with intent and purpose is really important to us.

Mr. Tremayne: As we've gone through this journey, we've connected with many different stakeholders inside and outside the district and conducted extensive research. This is the CEO of Anthropic. If you're familiar with Anthropic, it's Claude. It's their large language model. Daniela Amodei has a background in the humanities, and in a world where AI is very smart and capable of doing many things, the things that make us human will become much more important. So that direct connection to our portrait of a learner really comes to life as we investigate AI's capabilities and the need for a human in the loop. So our district's belief is that AI will never automate or replace the skills that humans have, and we want to equip our kids with the hopes, dreams, and aspirations that the community sets about our portrait of a learner. They want our students to be purposeful communicators, empathetic citizens, resilient learners, critical thinkers, and self-advocates. So that becomes a mission as we roll this out, that comes to life. Not just within AI, but certainly within AI. And you can see that Anthropic's values align directly with our portrait of a learner, with critical thinking, empathy, communication, and understanding human behavior. And so that jumps out to our portrait, that direct correlation. And as we roll this out, we will make sure this comes to life even more than it already has within the district.

As we met with different stakeholders, aiEDU was one of the firms we connected with, and we took their AI literacy framework and made it our own. They did a lot of research. We scaled it down to the grade bands PreK-two, three-five, six-eight, and nine-twelve. There are three pillars that it's founded on: knowing your basics, leading with the human advantage, and then critical thinking. And so at each level and in that pre-K two, it is about building awareness of what artificial intelligence is. And then three-five, they may use some things that have it embedded. Then they advance through six-eight, nine-twelve, they're levered it with more intent and purpose. As we roll this out next year with our staff, this framework will help guide that implementation.

Mr. Smalley: So often, we don't want more information; we want some real examples. And Ridgewood, just this last week, had a perfect example of what the blend we hope for looks like. They had a Touch a Truck event. Katie Kibler is on our innovation discovery specialist team, working to integrate technology into the K-5 classroom. And we hear the community: we want to go slow to go fast, and it was really important that, at the elementary level, we expose kids to this while keeping them safe. And so they had a Touch a Truck event, and we're going to click through here. This is an example of what's called vibe coding. Katie worked with each classroom in advance to go through this. She used a tool called Canva AI, and she worked with teachers, and each kid got to kinda go through this and describe what sparks their creativity. So when we talk about career readiness, starting as early as the elementary level, and getting kids thinking about what they're curious about and their strengths and weaknesses. And the cool part is that it adapts based on how kids answer, using this AI tool. And again, while they're using this, they're also building their AI literacies and understanding that this isn't a genie behind a computer. This is based on inputs that determine the output, and that's really important for them to see that.

And so, at the end of this, it ties into the Touch a Truck event they led up to. They had all these community partners come in, and they could look and say, "What are my strengths? What are my interests? And maybe, what's a future career that I want to pursue?" And pull that thread all the way through K to twelve, which is our hope to create that Hilliard advantage that we know we're providing for kids. So this was just a really cool example of kids being exposed to it, kept safe, and also tying in community partnerships and that human-centered approach we want to continue to have and use. And shout-out to Katie Kibler and Kevin Buckman, they did an amazing job. Kevin Buckman wants to fly in on a helicopter next year. I don't know if that's going to happen, but we'll see. I think that's sweet. I vote for that.

We also want to continue to support our staff. Again, we listened to our staff and said, "What do you need to support kids in the AI use?" This is just one framework from the previous teacher guidelines that we adapted for our new staff guidelines this year. Again, it's very iterative. This is our second draft, and it gives them some things to lean into as they start to integrate and use AI in the classroom. And then this is one chart at our secondary level. We're really trying to get away from no AI or full AI, but it's a spectrum. There are opportunities within each lesson to really define it for kids. We know our kids are saying, "We want to know when we can use a tool and how we can use it?" They're looking for that guidance, and our teachers want it as well. And this is a good tool that we're gonna partner with the ETC, our EdTech coaches at the secondary level, and our innovation and discovery specialists at the elementary level to really integrate this again purposefully and safely with our students, and also supporting our staff through professional development.

One more thing to celebrate: we also had our Hilliard U PD, where we rolled out our newest guidelines and updated all staff K through 12, and we had such a great response to that. We are running a program called AI Pioneers, just like we did with our iPad Pioneers back in the day. We're trying to lead with the runners in each building to show us best practices and how the tools are used, and to build capacity in our

buildings as we build this out. And we had over 110 staff say they wanted to be a runner in the building, which is a huge win for us. We're going to capitalize on that over the summer and give us momentum into the school year. So we're really excited about this opportunity. Our staff is excited to learn more, and that's just more ways we're supporting our staff throughout the summer.

Mr. Boettner: So obviously, helping our students learn how to use AI and be ready for their tomorrow is the most important thing we do. But in addition to that, there are some operational things we need to look at, and we can use agentic AI tools to grab some efficiencies and do things we've never been able to do before. These are just a couple of examples of how AI can help us. There are mountains of paperwork when you start dealing with twenty thousand people in an organization. And so there's a lot of data, and AI can help us work through workflows and read and get through different pieces of data much faster than a human can. We can leverage those agents to help us with work. With HVAC and energy optimization, you can install sensors to significantly increase HVAC efficiency. Transportation. What if we could just have an agent that could look at every single route and find the most efficient path to put together a transportation model? And finally, AI is going to help us with our cybersecurity in the future. It can look at much more data at the same time, keep an eye on all of our data as it moves through our system and network in a much more efficient way, and then show us when we need to pay attention to something.

The second big part of this is making sure we protect our district data and maintain strong security practices. This has long been a very important part of what we do in the technology department in our district. AI just brings that to the next level. There are four pillars that are part of what we do when we're designing for the safe, secure, and private use of our data. The first one is making sure we're meeting all of our legal and regulatory compliance. We actually adopted national cybersecurity standards over four years ago. And we use those to help us evaluate every tool, but also artificial intelligence tools. That leads us to our second pillar, where Jim's team takes a look at every single tool that we approve and use in the district, so that students are safe in their use of the tools that are available to them, and that is no different and actually even more important with artificial intelligence. We stand behind being very careful to make sure that we only give systems the information they need so that we are protecting what's called PII, which is Personally Identifiable Information. We do our best to protect everything our staff and students do, the way we use data, and how we store it. And then, finally, just like our kids, teaching our adults how to use AI ethically, how to protect data while they're using those tools, and how to make sure they are safe in all of that work.

Mr. Tremayne: Stakeholder engagement has been very important throughout this journey. As we previously shared with the board, we conducted a community survey. We did focus groups with students and staff. As we continue, we will have additional ways to engage with different stakeholders. And we'll do it together. We'll bring them along with our vision and mission. And we'll have ideas like interactive forums where families and students come to school together to learn about different things, as well as informational sessions, and a continual feedback loop. We'll build with purpose. We'll make sure we have academic integrity, that our students are not doing cognitive offloading, that they are the primary people in the learning experience, along with the teachers who support them, and that community of learners. And just keep that digital citizenship at the forefront. We want to continue using what we learn to shape the future, ensuring our students are equipped to thrive in an AI-driven world.

Mr. Smalley: So, again, here's a roadmap of where we've been. I know some of this seems new, but in 2022-2023, ChatGPT was dropped and released to the public. In Hilliard schools, like everything we do, we were willing to dive in and get ahead of the game. So in 2023-2024, we had some initial learning and staff PD immediately following. And then you can see that in 2024-2025, we developed our first set of staff

guidelines and started delivering professional development to staff inside the building. If you look at the orange section, that's where we are right now. We revised our teacher guidelines and called them staff guidelines to be all-encompassing, and we had our AI district task force to make some of those recommendations to all of you tonight and start the work on that process.

And then looking ahead to summer. We're really excited about some of the ideas and building the excitement of our AI Pioneer Program. We have something called Summer Fest, and we're super pumped about it. It's a new opportunity to reinvigorate our PD for teachers over the summer. We're going to have food trucks. It's going to be awesome. And we're also going to have some ongoing professional development throughout the school year in a small department —departmentalization. What does this look like in biology? What does AI look like in geometry? What does it look like in third grade? We'll have ongoing PD throughout the district as we move forward in this iterative process.

Mr. Boettner: We have a district website for our artificial intelligence plan, and this QR code and link can take anyone who wants to see the plan in detail. We just scratched the surface this evening and gave you an overview. Anybody can take a look at that. It is now available on the district site through the technology department page. Do you have any questions for us?

Ms. Arnold: I think we have a ton of questions- ... but wrapping your head around all of what AI is and what this all encompasses, I think it's, like you said, it's we're gonna be constantly revisiting this... appreciate the breakdown, but man I'm a little overwhelmed with where it all goes, especially when we look at some of the concerns with bias and authentic work. What is AI drawing in? So I'm glad you guys are staying on top of it.

Mr. Boettner: We've put a lot of time into helping teachers begin to understand how all of those things work, both the positive tools as well as the negative aspects of it, so that they know how to teach and make sure kids understand those.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, guys, so much for that presentation. And I'll say this as well, to echo Ms. Arnold's point: we have a policy later on the agenda for a second reading. And when we were discussing that policy, it says we're going to continuously revisit and revise. And I pushed back a little bit on Mike, and I said, "We can't possibly be doing this continuously." And he said, "No, we are." And this is what you guys are seeing right here: we are literally doing this continuously, continually going back over it because it is moving so quickly. And I'm glad that we're taking this approach of using it as a tool.

I have a colleague who works over in the Xenia School Board. I don't really know how they're my colleague, but they are. And so I was watching what they're doing, and they're just outright banning AI across the school district. I think that's entirely the wrong approach. I think using it as a tool with those caveats, making sure we're still engaging in human-to-human relations, and also making sure folks know cognitively what's going on, rather than relying overly on AI.

I see this all the time in my profession as an attorney, where folks will-- they've gotten caught doing this. Wrote briefs citing entirely false case law. Wasn't real. So there are judges' standing orders that say you cannot use this, or you have to identify whether you can use it. It's a tool that I use in my profession. It's a jumping off point. But it's oftentimes incorrect. You can verify. I get a lot of AI-generated emails from newly minted attorneys telling me to buy their case for \$300,000. And I'm like, "Did you tell AI that you make fifteen dollars an hour and got a job a week later?" "Nope." But it-- so it's helpful. It's a tool. But I'm glad we're using it intentionally, not just willy-nilly, like you said, or completely banning it. I think it is

what's going to be in the future and for a long time. Using it intentionally now, I think, is incredibly important. So thank you for all that continuous work that you guys are doing.

C ROUTINES

- C1 The agenda is correct, as amended.

Ms. Arnold made a motion to move Consent Agenda Item E3B for separate consideration. Ms. Crowley seconded the motion.

- C2 The Board of Education adopted the agenda as amended.

- C3 The Board of Education approved the April 2026 Treasurer's Report.

Mrs. Swearingen: Just want to point out that we still have not received our real estate and final settlement for the public utility personal property tax, or our final homestead rollback settlement. The county estimates it will happen before year-end, but probably not until mid-June. And then the homestead rollback comes from the state, and that usually lags several weeks behind. So, we may not receive that before the end of the fiscal year. And that amount totals \$26 million, which we are still waiting on. Typically, those funds, at least the tax portion, arrive in our bank account by the end of March. So we are a couple of months behind in receiving those. And just another point of why having cash on hand to cover our \$18 million a month in payroll and benefits is important when we're waiting on those other funds to come in.

Mrs. Crowley: Did they give a reason why?

Mrs. Swearingen: They're still doing some reconciling with the county treasurer's office, and it's just taking longer than they had anticipated. The county auditor's office has been great in communicating with us and letting us know about the delays. But that still doesn't get the money into our account, unfortunately. So we're still hoping, as I said, to get that by the middle of June for the fiscal year-end.

- C4 The Board of Education approved the minutes from the following meetings:
- a. April 13, 2026 – Regular Meeting
 - b. April 13, 2026 – Meeting Notes
 - c. April 27, 2026 – Work Session
 - d. April 27, 2026 – Meeting Notes

D PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Board of Education appreciates citizen interest in meetings of the board. This place on the agenda is set aside to hear comments from visitors. When called, please go to the microphone so that remarks may be clearly heard and recorded. You must give your name and limit comments to three minutes. Comments must be respectful and professional in nature. Board members may or may not ask questions or make comments. No board member has the power or authority to act for the board; therefore, no response from an individual board member should be interpreted as an official action of the board. Portions of this meeting are being recorded.

Mike and Alyssa Perry

I'd like to thank the administration and also the school board for allowing for and welcoming community input into the naming of the new sixth-grade building. I'd also like to say happy belated Mother's Day to our moms. And also to our superintendent, I'd like to say enjoy your four days of retirement.

We would like to propose naming the new school Mudsock. Naming the new school Hilliard Mudsock sixth-grade building would honor a unique and meaningful part of our local history that is deeply connected to the Hilliard area. It represents resilience, independence, community, and the hardworking roots of the people who first settled this region.

The original Mudsock community existed in the general vicinity of where the school will be located. The nickname came from the muddy farmland and roads that early residents traveled every day. Local stories say horses looked like they were wearing mud socks. Mudsock began as a farm man around 1830. By about 1850, the settlement had grown to several hundred residents and included farms, a post office called Darby, a general store, a school for African American students, churches, one of which has been moved to the current Franklin County Fairgrounds, which is still operable, and you can rent it out for weddings and other occasions, and small local businesses.

Using the name Mudsock as a school would do several things. One, it would preserve an important piece of local history that residents no longer are even knowing about. Two, it would celebrate perseverance, hard work, and pride in its humble beginnings. And three, it would encourage students to learn about their heritage, the people and stories that helped shape the area in which they live in today.

If you're wondering why Alyssa's standing next to me, it's because she was instrumental in putting a lot of this research together, and she's very excited to show you a mascot, a possible mascot that she came up with. This is Muddy the Maverick. A maverick is an unbranded and independent name for a horse or cow, and that's appropriate for this new school.

Also, don't worry about it not being named after a cat. Most of our elementary schools don't have cats in their name, including this one here. This is a wolf here. There's a school to our north in Dublin that recently named their mascot the Golden Eagles. Dublin's not known for golden eagles, but there was a golden eagle nest across the street from the school. Unfortunately, that nest is no longer there, but anytime someone says the Golden Eagles, they now have to tell the story.

And anytime someone says the Mudsock Mavericks, they'll have to tell the story of the people of that area. So we're asking you to strongly consider naming the new school Mudsock. Thank you for your time.

Shelley King

Hello, my name is Shelley King, and I'm a Hilliard resident. My children go to Darby and Heritage. First of all, I thank you for your time and service to our district. I'm here to ask the board to support our high school band's attendance at away band camp.

Camp is an educational leadership and team-building experience that directly supports the student growth. It's supporting the culture that they learn together and bond together at this camp. We've had two years. I've never gone to this camp, and it's just been incredible to watch these kids bond, and they grow. It's very important. This program is funded by boosters and parents, not additional district dollars. Families and community members have already invested significant time and resources because they believe in these students and what this program brings to our schools. It's educational, slightly

recreational. They have a pool. They enjoy some downtime, but mostly it's educational. They learn teamwork, leadership, time management, communication skills, and they return to school ready to start with the performance competitions and school events where they've already learned what they need to learn to perform that first football game.

The financial burden is not on the district. Let me be clear. Parents and boosters fund this trip. Families voluntarily participate in fundraisers. This organization exists to support these kind of opportunities. I have volunteered. My husband has volunteered. All these band parents volunteer. We enjoy it. We want to do that for our kids because we know how important this is to them. For many students, band is where they find belonging, mentorship, and purpose. Experiences like this band camp have strengthened those connections in ways that probably wouldn't have happened in the school environment. I feel like this band maybe was failing and kids not feeling welcome. This marching band in my experience, watching these kids grow together through the years, it's a very inclusive upperclassmen to lowerclassmen dynamic where I feel like this camp is where that all gets started. They look out for each other. They have question they can understand where all these younger ones. You don't see that in other school group sports. It's a different animal. So we really want you guys to support that with us.

Marlena Woodtke

Hi, I'm Marlena Woodtke. I have a senior tuba player, a freshman snare, and a future sixth-grade euphonium player. As band boosters-- Oh, wait, I forgot to tell you. I am the current secretary, and I will be the president next year for the boosters.

As the band boosters, we center every decision around one simple question: Does this benefit our kids? The philosophy guides every dollar we raise, every program we support. Our goal always has been to ensure that no student is left behind because of financial circumstances. If a student needs marching shoes, reeds, or mouthpieces, we provide them. On long competition days, we feed them. And when it comes to band camp, we work tirelessly to get every child who wants to attend band camp – I'm sorry, I'm a crier – regardless of their financial ability. If we ever reach a point where we can no longer support students equitably, we will reevaluate the program. Last year, we took 140 kids. Nine needed full scholarships, and we paid for it. Three got partial scholarships, and the two kids that didn't go, it was because they had a vacation, not because they couldn't afford it.

Mr. Kozman creates opportunities for every student who wants to participate, regardless of skill level or experience. None of our kids sit the bench. And to be a high-performing band and not have kids sit the bench is incredible work by Mr. Kozman. Another thing that makes this program special is the collaboration and flexibility it offers students. Mr. Kozman works closely with student athletes, so they can participate in both band and sports without feeling forced to choose one over the other.

When my oldest child was a freshman, there was no away band camp. Mr. Kozman polled us and asked us if we wanted it back, the kids and the parents, and it was an overwhelming yes. Since then, our marching band retention rates have remained exceptionally high, around 95%. It's the highest of the three high schools. That tells me that students find value, connection, and belonging in this experience.

I understand that comparisons are always made amongst schools. I was on the PTO board at Beacon, and I volunteer here at Washington, where my kid is now. Each school gets what they need. They do not get the same thing. Parents raise money and give it to the school as the school needs it. I've seen it firsthand. I've done it. I've been to the PTO president's meetings with the superintendent, not this one, but Dr. John. I have heard it. I've seen it. I'm sorry, I'm getting off track.

At the beginning of the school year, a senior bass drum player came to me and said, "Mrs. Woodtke, you remember me from Beacon? And that we always loved when you came in and did fun activities with us. Thank you for doing that." That moment stayed with me because it reminded me how deeply students remember the opportunities an adult creates for them. They remember feeling included, and the experiences brought them joy and connection. I have heard from countless students and parents about how meaningful away camp is to them. Away camp builds friendships, confidence, leadership, teamwork, lasting memories. From my perspective, we really love it. And I invite all of you to come to band camp with me, especially on senior night, it's fantastic. Thank you.

Matt Adams

Good evening, everybody. I'm Matt Adams. I have a senior, or have a daughter entering her senior year at Darby in the fall. I wanna talk to you tonight about the away band camp at Darby, as both a parent and a former marching member myself. I'm a self-professed lifelong band nerd. I take vacation every fall. We go to a three-day marching band competition in Indiana. I have a drum corps playlist. I have a licensed plate that says...(unintelligible)... so what some people would call extreme, I call passion. That passion was actually born back in my high school days at away band camp. It is an insatiable love of an art form, and is the basis for everything I wanna talk to you about tonight.

Waking up and going to sleep every night with peers that share the same interests as you, the same goals, the same sweat equity, does something to you. It makes you lock in. It energizes you even when you're exhausted, which you always are, these kids will tell you. But you wouldn't give it up. You wouldn't change it for anything. Because during that seemingly endless sleep-wake cycle of away band camp, bonds are formed, and friendships are forged, all while excellence is born among the competitive.

Competitively, an away band camp makes our band better. Their success brings a positive light to the district as a whole, and it's the things like an away band camp that make things like the highest ever score by a Hilliard school at the OSU Buckeye Invitational possible. As a parent, I have witnessed this band, these amazing leaders, and this band family take in my daughter and develop her in every way. The friendships that she has formed through this band all started at her first away band camp as a freshman. That band camp helped my self-conscious, introverted daughter find both her people and her voice. For a freshman entering a large school, the first day can be an intimidating thing. But for a band kid, they've already established their community and look forward to seeing their new friends.

Darby doesn't just go to any camp. They go to a camp that is built for this type of thing. There are air-conditioned cabins for cooling down after a grueling day in the sun. There are facilities that allow the band to continue to improve, rain or shine, a fully staffed kitchen that is food safe for anyone with an allergy. They are attentive, and they are an amazing camp where as a parent, I feel zero anxiety sending my child.

But it's not just the camp staff, it's our staff, and it's this band family that makes the away camp so effective. Every year, we have parent volunteers that give an entire week of their summer vacation to chaperone away camp to make sure that the kids are safe at all times. They are there twenty-four seven. They say it takes a village, and that village is formed through the shared dedication of these parents for their children. These parents work tirelessly to help the band, and that includes securing sponsorships, including this year a \$2,500 scholarship that is specifically allocated to any student who needs help. Thank you for your time.

Andrew Leitch

Good evening, members of the board. My name is Andrew Leitch. As a proud graduate of Hilliard Darby High School, a current member of the Ohio State University Athletic Band, and a student of public management, leadership, and policy, I understand both the profound impact of community programs and the importance of thoughtful resource allocation. I'm here tonight to advocate for the Darby Band away camp.

During my four years in Darby's Marching Band, I spent two years at home camp on school grounds and two years at away camp. The difference is night and day. At home camp, we practiced hard from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM. However, when the day ended, we went our separate ways. The social events were brief, and the focus on band was temporary. Away camp was a completely different experience. Living in cabins with fellow bandmates created unbreakable bonds. You actually get the time to truly know each other, to become a real team, and to learn how to pull together and be there for one another when things get tough.

For that entire week, we ate, slept, and breathed band. Away camp provides a vastly superior environment for both musical dedication and teamwork. You can't just build those same connections when everybody goes home by the end of the day. Looking back at my experience in marching band, the last two years at away camp were way more productive and fun. In fact, the first two years of home camp were filled with stories from the upperclassmen about how great their away camps were. Investing in away camp is a direct investment into the band's culture, unity, and excellence. I strongly urge you to approve this vital experience. Thank you for your time.

Tracey Holloway

Good evening. I'm Tracey Holloway, and I have a junior at Darby. He's now going into his senior year this year. I have already submitted a letter, so you guys don't really need to hear from me. But my friend Tamika Rangel, sent me a letter. She's not able to be here, so I would just read her letter for you.

"My name is Tamika Meredith Rangel. My daughter, Mariah Rangel, joined the Darby band as an incoming freshman in the summer of 2023. Going into high school can be an overwhelming experience for a middle schooler, especially when they're going to high school that they only know one person. This was Mariah's experience as she graduated from St. Brendan's, and there was only one student in her graduating class that would be joining her at Darby.

Mariah is a very introverted and shy student. She was very nervous about attending Darby, but was excited about the opportunity to join band. The sense of community and inclusion created by Director Kozman and team were instrumental in Mariah thriving in her newfound band family, assimilating to her new high school, and excelling academically.

Away camp not only provided Mariah the opportunity to improve her mastery of playing the sax to catch up with her peers, as St. Brendan did not have a rigorous band program, but it also helped build her confidence. Mariah learned how to step outside her comfort zone independently and engage in direct peer-to-peer interactions. Camp afforded Mariah the experience of learning how to communicate, engage, and meet new people of her own. This experience alone set her on the right path to start high school without feeling like a stranger. In today's era of heavy smartphones and social media use, away camp created an atmosphere for my daughter where she disconnected from her device for a week and focused on learning her material and cultivating real relationships through peer-to-peer interactions.

I hope that the board will recognize the incredible opportunities and experiences that away camp provides in helping our students grow musically, but also improve their interpersonal and communication skills while participating in one of the best programs in the city.”

That's her letter. Just in summary of my letter, I also went to band camp when I was in high school, so I know the difference between the two. And the interactions that you get with the band directors are something totally different than your regular professional atmosphere. And they're seeing them as a DJ, they're having a dance party with the directors, or hanging out with other adults, or just interacting with each other. It's really a bonding experience for them. And they walk in as freshmen, and they know a ton of people. It's unbelievably important, so I hope the...(unintelligible)... Thank you.

Josh King

Hello, board. Thank you for allowing me to speak. So my name is Josh King. My wife Shelley already spoke. Everybody else that has spoken, really appreciate it. Unlike Matt, I am not a lifelong band nerd. I played soccer, so I was a soccer nerd. But last year for band camp, I had the honor of actually being one of the chaperones, and I never realized until my son joined the marching band how much work and dedication they require all day, every day.

They take a week off after school ends, and they start two-a-days. I watched him lose like ten pounds last summer because he was busting his butt every single day. When they went to Disney, he was the one carrying the big bass drum, and he was the quietest kid when he came into...(unintelligible)... Now he has this group of friends that are incredible, that have come in and supported him, and he's made what I think will be lifelong friends.

And I can't fathom why there's even a consideration to take away this summer band camp. These kids work so hard, work so much, and supported by the boosters and the parents. They actually did a survey of all the parents this year and asked how many parents thought that it wasn't a good investment of funds, and ninety-nine percent said, "Yes, it was." So I think just that in and of itself, not even taking into account the fact that the kids here are obviously-- they came out to a school board meeting. What kid came out to this? I can't imagine that your school board meeting is this full most of the time, unless there's something like this that comes up.

And I just think that this is such a foundational event for them. Like Matt and the other parents have said, this is something where they are able to go out and learn something that is a skill that they can take forward the rest of their life. And just like one of your other speakers earlier, with the AI coming in and taking over so much, but when you're at band camp, kids aren't on their phones. They're practicing. They're learning a musical talent that they're going to be able to use for the rest of their lives. And so any time that you are able to get a bunch of fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen-year-old boys and girls to get off of their phone for eight, ten, twelve hours a day and actually do something that is foundationally important to what they're going to be doing for the rest of their lives, I don't see anything better than that for a group of kids.

I wish that we could get all the kids at Hilliard Darby to go to band camp. Because I think it would be better for all of them, because I see how hard all these kids work every single day. These are the smartest and best kids out there. And I also think, how many Ohio State football players came from Darby last year? I don't know if there are any, but I do know there were eleven members of Darby's marching band that were in Ohio State's marching band last year. Thank you.

Niki Brown

Hi, my name is Niki Brown, and I am a parent of a Hilliard Darby Marching Band member. I am the parent who sent the board a letter about how going away to camp directly develops all of the skills that our district has identified in the portrait of a learner. While I'm here tonight as a parent, it is probably not a surprise to you, based on my emphasis of the portrait of a learner, that I am also a teacher in the district. During my 24 years here, whenever there's been a decision that needed to be made, I was asked to consider if it was what's best for the kids. Whether I was making decisions about my own classroom schedule, figuring out how to fit in all my small groups into each day, choosing a math and literacy curriculum for the district, or helping to create the master schedule for my building, the same question has remained: Is it what's best for kids?

So now I ask you the same question: Is it what's best for kids? Is it best for kids to send them away to camp where they can develop skills in becoming an empathetic citizen, a critical thinker, a self-advocate, a resilient learner, and a purposeful communicator? I think the answer is yes. Is it best for kids to participate in a camp that enhances their music education experience? I think the answer is yes, and so do 98% of the marching band parents. That figure comes from a survey the director sent out in which they received 97 responses. We have 140 kids in the band. I think that's a pretty significant level of response from parents.

Is it best for kids to provide them with an experience they would not be able to have in any other way because their trip is either partially funded or fully funded by the music boosters? I think the answer is yes. Is it best for kids to have and feel the success of all their hard work? I think that answer is yes, too. This year, Darby earned the second highest music score in the entire state of Ohio. I believe this is attributed to the relationships, community, and work ethic that was created at away camp, not just band camp, away camp.

I could go on about the positive impact away band camp has on our kids, but in the interest of time, I will thank you for all you do for our students and ask, as you make your decision tonight about Darby's away camp, is it what's best for kids?

Debbie Cochran

Good evening. My name is Debbie Cochran, and my family has been part of the Hilliard community for over 35 years. I'm also a proud parent of a former Hilliard Darby field commander. Thank you for all you do for Hilliard Schools. Your job is important, and it is appreciated. Thank you, too, for those of you who responded to the updated Hilliard data and voucher information I sent last month. I appreciate your time and your reflections.

It is hard to believe it is May and that Hilliard graduation ceremonies are less than two weeks away. The school year has flown by and is coming to an end. Yet the work toward a successful start to next year began months ago. Time has a way of catching up with you. It seems like just yesterday, Kara was preparing for and giving her inspiring speech at last year's convocation. It seems like just yesterday, fall campaigns were underway, and people were voting for several of you. It seems like just yesterday, Tony, Sarah, and Kara were being sworn in as board members.

And I noticed last week the students in my Scioto Darby kindergarten class where I volunteer are no longer the kindergartners they were the first day of school. They are now confident, a bit sassy, ready for summer break for sure, but they're also ready, prepared, and excited for the challenges of first grade. It's been a year in a blink of an eye.

In that blink of an eye, Ohio's unconstitutional voucher program has continued to drain and siphon funds from our schools. Over \$5 million going to Hilliard students on vouchers this year alone. Tomorrow, May 12th, the historic VHO lawsuit challenging the \$1.7 billion EdChoice private school voucher program will go before the Tenth District Court of Appeals. It is disappointing that Hilliard schools are not represented in this judicial procedure. Our students and our community deserve representation with those who are willing to stand up for equity and fairness in school funding. Please join the Vouchers Hurt Ohio lawsuit now. No matter how fast time flies, it is always the right time to do the right thing. Thank you.

Amanda Burnaugh

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Amanda Burnaugh, and my daughter is a rising senior in the marching band. In the 2025 marching band season, Hilliard Darby earned a superior rating in all six of their OMEA competitions, including State Finals. They were grand champions at multiple events, and they received best in category awards across the spectrum, from music to auxiliary, visuals to percussion, and overall effect. At the OSU Buckeye Invitational, the marching band received the Best in Music award out of forty bands that were invited from across the region to participate, and they were the second-highest-scoring school in all of OMEA competition last season.

Successful seasons like that don't just happen. At Hilliard Darby, they begin in early summer, earlier for auxiliary and show designers. When approximately 160 students and staff converge on the band room and the practice fields, we begin learning basic marching, drill, visuals, and music. Imagine the challenge of taking nearly 160 kids from incoming freshmen to rising seniors and turning them into a unified group that can march in coordination, play together in a way that tells a story, and moves an audience.

The required cohesion and complexity of what the marching band is striving for is unmatched in high school extracurriculars. No one gets to sit on the sidelines. Everyone is committed, everyone is accountable, and no one gets left behind because they all succeed or struggle together, and they all know it.

Away band camp provides an opportunity for intensive individual and group instruction where the band can learn anywhere from thirty to forty percent of their new program. Missing that opportunity puts them at a severe disadvantage. As important, away camp creates an environment necessary for students to build relationships and establish a culture of trust and support between squads, sections, band, auxiliary, students and staff members. The environment at camp allows new leaders to emerge. It allows new students to find their footing and for the community to come together and lay the foundation for a successful season.

These kids are champions who take the field every Friday in your stadiums even when the audience doesn't know it. They infuse school events and community parades with great music and school spirit. Their parents and their siblings fill your stands at both home and away games to cheer on the teams. And our booster volunteers run your concessions, one of our biggest fundraising efforts and one of the ways we make sure that all kids have the opportunity to participate in the Hilliard music programs.

Music is a year-round investment for our band community, and we gladly support it because it builds lifelong passion and leadership in our children. That's why well over ninety-eight percent of survey respondents agreed that away camp was important for students. Thank you for your vote to consent.

E CONSENT AGENDA

The Board of Education approved the consent agenda, items E1 through E2.

E1 Approved the following Certified Personnel actions – See attachment to the Minutes.

E2 Approved the following Classified Personnel actions – See attachment to the Minutes.

Mr. Perry thanked the following for their many years of service:

Certificated Personnel Retirements:

- Robert Daniels has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/27/1999.
- Roseanne Hetterscheidt has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/26/2005.
- Tonya Miller Thomas has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/31/2001.
- Anita Norris has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/25/1995.
- Tammie Strawser has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/27/2004.

Classified Personnel Retirements:

- Jodi Pachuta has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/24/1998.
- James Vawter has been with Hilliard City Schools since 02/01/1999.

Mr. Stewart: Okay. In your vote just now, you approved two administrative positions that I want to call out. First up is Kellie Axelband, who's here tonight. I would invite Kellie to come forward. Kellie is joining us and is currently at Dublin Thomas Elementary. She's going to be joining us as a special education coordinator.

Ms. Axelband: Hello, everyone. It was important for me to be here tonight to say thank you in person for this opportunity. I loved getting to know Jamie Lennox and her team, and can't wait to get started with them next year in Hilliard City schools.

Mr. Stewart: And next up, Jennifer Lowery will be returning as principal here at Washington.

Ms. Lowery: I just want to say thank you to the board. Thank you for this opportunity. I feel like I am returning home. I had the pleasure of opening this building in 2007. I was here for 10 years, have been at the central office for the last 10, and I'm coming back. I'm thrilled for the opportunity and just excited to get to work. So thank you.

E3 Approved the following trip requests:

- a. Bradley Boys Basketball, Sandusky, OH – June 26, 2026
- b. Darby Marching Band Camp, Mt. Gilead, OH - August 2, 2026
- c. Bradley Girls Basketball, Sandusky, OH – June 18, 2026
- d. Bradley Cross Country, Geneva Hills Camp, August 3, 2026

Mr. Stewart: The Superintendent recommends that the Board of Education approve Consent Agenda Item E3.

Mrs. Crowley: Did we separate them?

Mr. Moog: We separated them.

Ms. Arnold: We just separated E3B.

Mr. Stewart: I'm sorry. I apologize, E3, items A, C, and D.

Mrs. Crowley: Yeah. A, C, and D, because we've only done E1 and E2.

Mr. Perry: Just procedurally, according to the motion, I believe the motion was for E3B. So we've already approved E3A, C, and D.

Mr. Moog: No, we did not.

Mr. Stewart: No, we only did E1 and E2. So we need to do this.

Ms. Arnold: It was read out as E1 and E2. Yeah.

Mrs. Crowley: All right. Let's go ahead and vote on A, C, and D then. Can I take a motion for A, C, and D? All right. Moved by Mr. Moog, and seconded by Mr. Perry and Melissa, will you call the roll? Ms. Arnold? Yes. Mrs. Byler? Yes. Mrs. Crowley? Yes. Mr. Moog? Yes. Mr. Perry? Yes.

Mr. Stewart: The superintendent recommends that the Board of Education approve Consent Agenda Item E3B.

Mrs. Crowley: Moved by Mr. Moog, and seconded by Mrs. Byler. Discussion?

Ms. Arnold: So I'll lead off the discussion because I was the one who requested this, as I did last year. Your words do not go unheeded. I was a band kid myself, fourth grade through 12th grade, and very similar to the story that Ms. Holloway read from her friend, I was a Catholic school kid who went to a separate Catholic high school, and I was the only kid from my school to attend that high school, so I know the importance of band family. We had another name for ourselves that I won't repeat in public. I truly understand what it is to create those connections through the band. Both my children were Darby students. My kids, eight years' worth of band camp. Percussionist for four years, and then I had an orchestra daughter who also did color guard for five years, actually, 'cause she did Heritage color guard for one year.

My concern here is not... I think there's a misperception about what this is about. It's not about who's paying for it, and I appreciate Mr. Kozman's survey and looking through the results, but the problem I see, and this is information I've shared with my colleagues, is that our band does not look like our district. So, if you take a look at our economically disadvantaged numbers as a district, they have not decreased. They have increased every year for the past 25 years, which would be a reasonable assessment. You have data before you for '24, '25, and '26. This is data I have requested every year since I've been on the board, covering all of our buildings and our economically disadvantaged, and their jurisdictional... This is something I look at outside of this question. But then I also take a look at it with respect to this question in terms of what our band students look like. I do not expect our bands to look exactly like our district. There are costs borne by instruments, and what have you. But I would expect it to look better than it does.

So, for those of you in the audience, the Darby band has the lowest economic representation in our district. And looking at just this past year, only 9.5%, half a kid there, let's say 10% of our students are economically disadvantaged. But when you look at Bradley, it's 13.4%. And make no mistake, their numbers don't look great either based on their current at-home fees. And then there's Davidson at 22%, which charges only \$50 for an at-home camp. Davidson manages to score just as well on superior ratings. And I know you will disagree, but they have superior ratings every year.

Mrs. Crowley: Let her speak, thank you.

Ms. Arnold: They also are grand champions, best music, best effect, best general effect, all of it. They do just as well, as does our Bradley bands. The measure here should be what is best for all kids, like you've said. But all kids, and this is where we have to look at some of the hard questions within our district about what our schools look like. This is not a new thing for me. The first time I looked at this was way back when I was on the Athletic Sustainability Committee, when the levy failed back in May of 2011, and there were considerations about how that would go.

I ran into Mike McDonough at a hearing in November of 2015 when there were pay-to-participate hearings. I have advocated immensely for the uniform fees and the instrument fees, which are no longer part of this. I won't take all the credit for that, but it was a product of a lot of people working on it, and I kept hammering it home because I want kids to have the opportunity I did.

And I also want to say that the economically disadvantaged numbers are not the end-all, be-all here, because they do not capture the full picture of what goes on within our district. Paul Lambert and I used to have a conversation about the donut hole kids who weren't poor enough to qualify for economically disadvantaged, but at the same time couldn't afford these opportunities.

My concern is that we are reflecting what would be best for all students across our district. They don't have to look the same, but they cannot be this far apart when we have one school at \$50 and another at \$350 for a pre-school camp, and this is a co-curricular. And I have to ask this question in the context of two things. First of all, we will be redistricting here in the near future. How that shakes out, we don't know yet, but we can make some assumptions that at some point there may be a kid or two or three that comes over from Davidson and is now at placed at Darby, and their costs would have increased sevenfold just because of their boundaries.

We frequently say during levy times that everybody pays the same rate. That's not exactly true if we're allowing for such a wide disparity in our costs and fees. There's also this...and I appreciate all the comments on the skill sets that everybody develops through this process. But our Davidson and our Bradley kids are developing those same skill sets, and again, at a significantly reduced cost.

We would not accept this with algebra or English language arts, yet we do it here. And it's not limited to just this; it's a starting point here as a co-curricular. Our extracurricular programs really need to look at our costs, and we don't have the bandwidth for a full audit. But I would--and I've had this conversation with Mike-- that our athletic folks need to be taking a look at what their expectations are, too, because our district does not look like it did fifteen years ago.

So when we take a look at those survey results, inclusion — the quote's often attributed to Abigail Disney, but I can't actually find the source, again, Al, thank you, — "Inclusion is about walking into a room and observing who isn't there." As the numbers show, in that survey, those kids aren't there. So I want to

make sure we have the opportunity, and I understand the boosters and your support of students, but then there —it —the survey results show that some parents didn't take advantage of that for whatever reason. It doesn't go into those details, but those details could be the fact that we want to retain privacy, too. And how is that privacy retained?

So those are my thoughts and concerns that we need to have these difficult conversations, and we need to do it on a regular basis. And this is where it frustrates me that we had these conversations way back in the athletic sustainability. We talked about the program costs, but we didn't-- one of the recurring themes in our two hundred and sixty-six page report back in the day was the fact that we didn't talk about these extra costs, how much uniforms are, marching shoes, all these extras that come along with the band camp or marching programs. So this needs to be something we revisit, not just for this, but a lot of our programming, to make sure that we are doing what's best for what our district looks like now. Our district has 36.7% of its students economically disadvantaged. And if you break that down by the fact that we are saying a school lunch is \$3 for a high schooler, and 180 days for the year, that's \$540 that we're saying is a burden already. Think about that. That's all I've got. I'll leave it to my colleagues to discuss.

Mr. Perry: Just make a brief comment as well to that point. I think what I've learned through this entire process – and I have reservations about any stay-away camps entirely – but that being said, I think what I've learned through this process more than anything is that we really ought to be looking at when it is relevant, important, and necessary to do a stay-away sleepover event that incurs liability for the district. I think that we should update our forms to perhaps include additional data points to justify why people are leaving. I think that the Darby folks have actually shown exactly that. I think it's actually unfair for them to be the only ones to have to show why they require a stay-away event. But I do think that's part of what we need to look at, is making sure that when we send students away from our campus to make sure that they're going with folks who we trust, with our staff, and that they're well-monitored, and that they're explaining why they need to do this versus something that they could do back in our district or go to a field trip and return. So, I think that's something we should look at.

Mr. Stewart: We can do that.

Mrs. Byler: I'd also like to add that I have a greater issue with changing the voting process for these stay-away camps. I think this trip looks like they're leaving on August 2nd, so we are making this vote in less than three months from this camp. And if I'm correct, a lot of the people in this room have been looking forward to this camp for a long time, and three months seems like last-minute voting. So I'd like to, if at all possible, change the vote for stay-away camps to a longer leeway, so there's better planning if and when there's a vote to say no to a certain opportunity.

Ms. Arnold: Sarah, can I comment on that real quick?

Mrs. Byler: Yes.

Ms. Arnold: This has been on the calendar since at least January, yet the form was not submitted to us until April. In past years, when this question came up, the forms were submitted earlier for a time, but we're back to where we are now, where they're submitted later.

Mr. Perry: Is there a requirement? Is there a cutoff for when you have to...

Mr. Stewart: There is. We'll take a look. We can take a look at the information you've asked for regarding the data we collect. We can review the timelines and make recommendations as well. It's not a problem.

Mr. Moog: The only thing I'll say is my son graduated from Davidson in 2011 and went to Europe on one of the theater trips to Edinburgh. We are not economically disadvantaged, but we did have him do some fundraisers to help pay for that trip. But those types of trips, I don't think, are, you know, economically disadvantaged. I'm not sure there were any kids involved in that who were as well. Obviously, that was approved, and they went several years through there. It was an invaluable experience for him. He learned some life skills and gained some better friendships out of that as well. So, I think the away adventures are beneficial to kids regardless.

Mrs. Crowley: Any other comments? Okay. Melissa, will you call the roll? Mrs. Byler? Yes. Mrs. Crowley? Yes. Mr. Moog? Yes. Mr. Perry? Yes. Ms. Arnold? No.

F ACTION AGENDA

- F1 The Board of Education approved the 2026 Graduates. A complete list of graduates can be found in the approved meeting Minutes.

Mrs. Crowley: Congratulations to all of our graduates.

- F2 The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

AUTHORIZING BUILDER'S RISK INSURANCE COVERAGE PLAN FOR PHASE I OF THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

The Chief Operating Officer ("COO") recommends that the Board authorize the builder's risk insurance coverage through the Hylant Group.

Background:

1. The COO and Treasurer, working with the Hylant Group, have identified a need for the District to maintain builder's risk insurance coverage in connection with Phase I of the Capital Improvements Project.
2. The Hylant Group has submitted a quotation for coverage from April 8, 2026, through January 1, 2030, in a total amount of \$357,708 ("Total Insurance Premium").
3. The COO recommends that the Board authorize payment of the Total Insurance Premium for the coverage described herein, for the term beginning April 8, 2026, through January 1, 2030, subject to annual appropriation by the Board.

The Board of Education hereby resolves as follows:

Board authorizes Payment of the Total Insurance Premium for the coverage described herein, for the term beginning April 8, 2026, through January 1, 2030, subject to annual appropriation by the Board; and authorizes the Superintendent, Treasurer, Board President, and COO to execute any documents, as appropriate, consistent with the intent of this resolution.

Mr. Dudgeon: This resolution is for our construction insurance. It protects the district against damage, injury, theft, and catastrophic failures to equipment. This policy will be in place for the duration of phase one of our master facilities plan.

F3 The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

AUTHORIZING NEGOTIATION AND EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT AND GUARANTEED MAXIMUM PRICE AMENDMENT WITH RUSCILLI CONSTRUCTION CO, INC. FOR THE HERITAGE AND WEAVER MIDDLE SCHOOL RENOVATION PROJECT BASED UPON O.R.C. 167.081 FOR CONTRACTS PROCURED THROUGH A REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

The Chief Operating Officer (“COO”) recommends the Board authorize a construction manager at risk agreement (“CMR Agreement”) and guaranteed maximum price amendment (“GMP Amendment No. 1”) with Ruscilli Construction Co., Inc. (“Ruscilli”) to provide construction manager services for the Heritage and Weaver Middle School Renovation Project in accordance with O.R.C. 167.081 for contracts procured through a Regional Council of Governments.

Rationale:

1. The District has identified a need to renovate the Heritage and Weaver Middle Schools (the “Project”).
2. O.R.C. 167.081 allows a school district to participate in a construction contract of a Regional Council of Governments (a “COG”) on a per unit basis for materials, labor, services, overhead, profit, and associated expenses for the repair, enlargement, improvement, or demolition of a building or structure without the need to engage in competitive bidding.
3. The Board is a member of META Solutions (“META”). META is a Regional Council of Governments established under R.C. 167. As a result, the Board, as a member of META, can participate in contracts procured by META, subject to the requirements of R.C. 167.081.
4. META, partnering with INCompliance Consulting National Purchasing Consortium (“ICNPC”), a national association of political subdivisions under R.C. 9.48, administered a “best value” procurement process for construction manager at risk services in accordance with R.C. 9.33 et seq. and Chapter 153:1-6 of the Ohio Administrative Code, and selected Ruscilli as the “best value” construction manager at risk as a result of that procurement.
5. Accordingly, Ruscilli executed an agreement with META and ICNPC so that Ruscilli may offer its services to members of META and ICNPC (the “Consortium Agreement”).
6. Ruscilli was previously selected by the Board as the “best value” construction manager at risk for the Capital Improvements Project.
7. Ruscilli provided a proposal for GMP Amendment No.1 in the amount of \$_____ (“GMP Sum”) based on the unit pricing established by the Consortium Agreement in accordance with R.C. 167.081.
8. Given Ruscilli’s prior performance, the COO recommends that the Board authorize the selection of Ruscilli for the Project in accordance with O.R.C. 167.081, as a member of META and ICNPC, and based on the Consortium Agreement.
9. The COO requests authority for the COO, Superintendent, Treasurer, and Board President, with the assistance of legal counsel, to negotiate and execute the CMR Agreement and GMP Amendment No. 1 with Ruscilli in an amount not to exceed the GMP Sum.
10. Additionally, to avoid Project delays, the COO and Treasurer also request authority for the COO and Treasurer to sign change orders and contract amendments on behalf of the Board in a total

amount not to exceed 10% of the GMP Sum. Change orders and 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 granted in O.R.C. 167.081, the Board selects Ruscilli as the construction manager at risk for the Project and authorizes the COO, Superintendent, Treasurer, and Board President, with the assistance of legal counsel, to negotiate and execute the CMR Agreement and GMP Amendment No. 1 with Ruscilli in an amount not to exceed the GMP Sum.
2. The COO and Treasurer are also authorized to sign change orders and contract amendments on behalf of the Board in a total amount not to exceed 10% of the GMP Sum. Change orders and contract amendments in excess of that aggregate amount will be brought to the Board for its approval.

Mr. Dudgeon: This resolution will allow us to use a cooperative purchasing method to award a renovation project for Heritage and Weaver. This project is a total renovation from front to back of the front office suite and the counseling suites.

G REPORTS / INFORMATION / EXHIBIT ITEM

G1 Committee Reports

Mr. Perry: We did have the insurance committee on May 6th, and there are a couple of highlights we're looking at, potentially adding a couple of programs. One of these would be for chronic skin conditions, which would come with a handheld device. Another one is for women's heart health. What we learned from that is that actually, we're a little low on our adherence to heart failure medications. So, if you have heart failure, make sure you're taking your medications.

Mrs. Byler: Tony and I met with Molly Walker with the Wellness and Belonging Committee. It was our first meeting. We plan to meet quarterly, hopefully. Our first one was basically an overview of her position and some of the district's wellness and belonging initiatives. She meets monthly with counselors, nurses, and mental health staff, and we just talked a little bit about those positions, what they do, and some of the initiatives in our district and what we're doing in those areas. We were just educating ourselves and seeing what we could do to support those efforts.

Mr. Moog: We had our last PTO booster for luncheon of the school year. Mike gave a nice little update on the construction we had heard about previously. And Shelley, I expect to see you at a booster club meeting next year.

Mrs. Crowley: ISPTO met at Bradley High School on April 21st. It was their final meeting of the year, and they held officer elections and had some great conversations about their end-of-year wrap-up and transitioning from one PTO to the next.

The communications committee, Sarah, and I have three events scheduled. The first one will be here in early June, so look for a sign-up coming out for the board. And our new handout materials have arrived, so we're super excited about those.

I also met with the curriculum committee. I met with Mr. Warfield and Erin Dooley. We had a wonderful discussion about secondary education. I'm very new to the world of secondary education. I've taught elementary school my entire life, and I have a new seventh grader. I guess he's been-- He's almost an old seventh grader now. But this is just a brand-new world to me. Erin was so patient with all of my questions and talked me through a lot of the different things in sixth grade, middle school, and high school. We talked about their new bell schedule. We talked about the transition to inclusion that Jamie mentioned. We talked about some of the new curricula and how they were going. They talked about some of the preparations that they're already doing for next year. Debbie Cochran said that a lot of the things for next year are already being planned. And I know that Erin is new to that role, and she's fitting in beautifully. It was a wonderful discussion. I really appreciated it.

G2 Policies submitted for a second reading:

- a. DID – Capital Assets
- b. EBDE – Procurement and Administration of Overdose Reversal Drugs
- c. EDEC – Artificial Intelligence (new policy)
- d. EFD – Misbranded Foods and Cultivated-Protein Food Products (new policy)
- e. JEB/JEBA – Entrance Age (Mandatory Kindergarten) Early Entrance to Kindergarten

H **EXECUTIVE SESSION / ADJOURNMENT**

- H1 At 8:11 p.m., the Board of Education caucused to executive session to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official.