



BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

September 14, 2026 | Darby High School

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 No presentations

C ROUTINES

- C1 The agenda is correct.
- C2 The Board of Education adopted the agenda.
- C3 The Board of Education approved the August 2026 Treasurer's Report.
- C4 The Board of Education approved the minutes from the following meetings:
 - a. August 10, 2026, Regular Meeting
 - b. August 10, 2026, Meeting Notes
 - c. August 24, 2026, Work Session
 - d. August 24, 2026, Meeting Notes

D PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Brian Kennel, Tabitha Quiros, and Bob Courtney

Good evening, Board members. My name is Brian Kennel, and I am the Vice President of OAPSE Local 310. I am here tonight with other classified staff members to express some concerns about the hardships our employees are currently facing and, more importantly, concerns about where we may be headed if we do not address employee recruitment and retention.

As I am sure you are aware, open enrollment is approaching. Every year, employees understandably wonder what will happen to their health insurance costs. This year, the overall medical insurance premium is increasing approximately 9.2%.

At the same time, the employee share of the premium is increasing from 16% to 17%. Because both increases are occurring at the same time, the actual amount employees with family coverage will see deducted from their paychecks is expected to increase approximately 15 to 16 percent.

The estimated employee cost for family coverage will be approximately \$293.17 per pay, an increase of roughly \$40.53 every paycheck. I think it is important to put that into perspective. Many of our classified employees work approximately six hours per day for 185 days per year, with their earnings divided into 24 equal paychecks throughout the year. For an employee on that schedule, a \$1-per-hour raise equals \$1,110 for the entire year. Spread across 24 pays, that is only about \$46.25 more in gross pay per paycheck. If that same employee carries family

insurance and their insurance deduction increases approximately \$40.53 per pay, only about \$5.72 of that \$1-per-hour raise remains before retirement contributions, taxes, and other deductions are considered. In other words, an employee can work another year, gain another year of experience, receive a raise, and still see little to no meaningful increase in their take-home pay. That is very concerning to our membership. A raise should help an employee move forward financially. It should not simply be absorbed almost entirely by an increase in the cost of their benefits.

But insurance is only part of the larger issue we want to discuss tonight. School districts throughout Central Ohio are competing for the same classified workforce. We are seeing districts respond to staffing shortages by increasing wages outside of normal contract negotiations, adjusting wage schedules, offering hiring incentives, and making other changes intended to attract and retain employees.

Hilliard also needs to look beyond starting wages. Recruiting someone is only the first step. Retaining an experienced employee depends heavily on what that employee can expect to earn after five, ten, fifteen, or twenty years of service. When surrounding districts increase their wage scales and particularly their top-out rates, Hilliard can fall behind even if our starting wage remains competitive. That creates a serious retention problem because the employees most likely to notice those differences are often the experienced employees we can least afford to lose.

A signing bonus may help get someone through the door. Competitive top-end wages, benefits, and working conditions are what encourage that employee to build a career here. We are already seeing the effects of staffing shortages within our district. Transportation is one of the clearest examples. Covering all of our bus routes has become a daily puzzle. Mechanics are being asked to drive buses. Dispatchers are driving. Supervisors are driving. Drivers are being moved from their regular assignments to cover open routes, while other drivers may have to cover multiple routes from one school before continuing on to their next assigned building. There are days when, instead of simply completing a high school route and then an elementary route, a driver may have to complete two high school routes before beginning their elementary route. I also want to make it very clear that our Transportation supervisors deserve recognition for what they are doing. Day after day, they are taking a difficult staffing situation and finding a way to make it work. They communicate changes to drivers and schools, reorganize routes, solve problems as they arise, and when necessary, they get behind the wheel themselves. Most importantly, they are making sure our students are transported as safely and as timely as possible.

Transportation is an easy example because the staffing shortage is very visible, but this is not only a Transportation issue. Across this district, classified employees in every department are stepping up. Custodians, maintenance employees, secretaries, educational assistants, food service employees, technology staff, transportation employees, and other classified staff are taking on additional responsibilities, covering vacancies and absences, helping coworkers, and doing what is necessary every day to keep our schools operating. Our classified workforce continually finds ways to get the job done, even when staffing is stretched thin. We are proud of that. But we also have to recognize that asking good employees to continually do more with fewer people is not a long-term retention strategy.

That brings us to the question we would like the Board and administration to seriously consider: What is Hilliard City Schools' plan to retain the classified employees we currently have and to remain competitive when recruiting the employees we will need in the future? Are we routinely comparing not only our starting wages, but also our mid-career and top-out wages with surrounding districts? When neighboring districts make wage adjustments outside of contract negotiations because of staffing shortages, how will Hilliard respond? Are there recruitment or retention incentives that should be considered? Are there ways to lessen the impact that increasing insurance costs are having on employees? And what can the district and OAPSE Local 310 do together now, before staffing shortages become even more difficult and expensive to solve?

We are proud of the work our classified employees do for Hilliard City Schools. We want Hilliard to remain a district where people want to come to work, where experienced employees feel valued, and where someone can build a career and afford to stay here. We are not here tonight simply to point out problems. We are asking the Board and administration to work with us on solutions. Thank you for your time.

Maxine Irvin

Thank you for listening to my statement. My name is Maxine Irvin, and I have been a resident of Hilliard City School District for thirty-five years. Both of my children graduated from Hilliard Davidson High School. Tonight, I am wearing my alumni T-shirt from Cleveland Heights High School, one of the initial school districts that recognized the catastrophic destruction that school vouchers are doing to public education in Ohio, and they did something about it.

Along with several other public school districts, they filed the Vouchers Hurt Ohio lawsuit, and the expanded EdChoice Voucher Program has since been found unconstitutional in the courts of Ohio. Since then, half of the school districts in Ohio have joined in to support the lawsuit. Here is a list of the over 330 districts that have joined in the lawsuit.

I need all four sheets in order to list them. Two columns on each sheet why isn't Hilliard City School District on the list? It costs a mere \$2 per student per year to join, with the potential of reclaiming millions of taxpayer dollars to educate our children. You say you want more community support before joining the lawsuit. However, most of our elected officials at the state level don't want anyone to know that they are grabbing our tax dollars for their campaign donors, and that they are doing their best to destroy public K through 12 education. The same way they are destroying higher education by eliminating DEI collective bargaining, and now college students cannot even use sidewalk chalk at Ohio State University to express their views and opinions.

I don't think any of you want to see the destruction of education in Ohio to continue. So how are we to educate citizens in Ohio of how destructive EdChoice vouchers are for public education? We all must fight back together during this, against this disgusting behavior by those elected officials who are not doing the will of the people in our state and are violating the Ohio Constitution. I alone do not have the social platform to get the word out about the harm of EdChoice vouchers. This is not the time for Hilliard City Schools to sit on the sidelines and to let other school districts fight this battle for us. Hilliard City Schools is one of the largest school districts in the state. What a revolting outcome if Hilliard City Schools watches the destruction of public education, does not join in the fight, and thereby betrays its students and its families. Thank you for listening to me.

Debbie Cochran

Hello, I'm Debbie Cochran, and I would like to thank you all for your time and service to our students and schools. You're very much appreciated. Thank you for publicly holding a discussion about the Ohio Voucher Program during the July board meeting. Here are three of my takeaways from your discussion.

Number one, each of you publicly acclaimed that EdChoice vouchers hurt public schools. You disagreed with taxpayer dollars going to support private schools. Number two, each of you separated your beliefs about the vouchers hurting Ohio public schools with the decision about joining the VHO lawsuit. Number three, your oppositions for joining the lawsuit at this time are individual. Common themes are concerns with the district's financial commitment and a need for additional stakeholder input, including district leaders, the board, HEA, and community feedback. To counter those oppositions, I offer the following response.

To your concerns about financial commitment, you're right. Joining the lawsuit is a meaningful financial commitment. But regardless of the accumulated value, joining the lawsuit still represents zero point zero, zero, zero, zero, nine percent of Hilliard's annual budget. As to additional stakeholder input, over the past year, numerous district administrators have told me how they have appreciated my advocacy and have encouraged me not to give up. I strongly urge you to conduct a survey among district administrators to gather their formal input. During the July meeting, Kara indicated that HEA supports the board joining the VHO lawsuit. If you listen to each other in July, every board member stated that EdChoice vouchers are wrong and hurt Hilliard schools unanimously.

And finally, about the community, Kelley said, "Vouchers are not popular with the people. People want their public dollars spent on public goods." Brian said, "They, the community, don't know what's happening, and they truly

don't." Kara said, "I wish taxpayers knew more about this issue. I wish they had begged us to join, but we don't hear from them."

Tony said, "Wish we heard from them more." With all due respect, I believe you have heard from the community. Our community has spoken to you loud and clear. Including a majority of people in this room and the majority of people in this community, cast a ballot with your name on it. Those votes put you in these seats. We voted for you because we had a common set of beliefs and values, including that our tax dollars need to be spent on public schools. We voted for you because you made a commitment to the people in this community to defend and stand up for all students attending Hilliard Schools. We voted for you and trust you to make the decisions that represent us. Join the VHO lawsuit.

Cindy Rieman

My name is Cindy Rieman, and I am a former teacher in the Hilliard district. My two daughters graduated from Davidson High School, and now I have two young grandsons going to Avery. So I've been invested in the school district for many, many years. First of all, I'd like to thank you for your time in July when you spoke to the public.

I could tell that you had really thought about this. I know Tony spent a lot of time researching it. Brian spent time meeting with other people, and you all came out, as Debbie had said, we all agreed that the vouchers are not a good thing for our school system in Hilliard or in Ohio. I was thinking back on how I've worked on school levies before. And when I worked on school levies, everybody got involved, the teachers, the administration, the school board, and we had a plan going forward, how we were going to tell the community why we needed this levy. And the vast majority of the time, it worked, and people voted for the levy. I believe that even if you don't get on the lawsuit, that it is our duty as educators to let the public know what this voucher system is. I think you can do that with basically no money at all. I believe that the PTOs should be informed either by people such as myself or school board members. Go to one board meeting, school board meeting. Excuse me, not school board meeting. Also, I think that the teachers union should all-- every teacher sitting there should really know how this is going to affect the children and them in the future when it comes to their retirement.

I think that we need to get everybody on board. We need to have a plan. Part of my plan would be to get the administrators to put something about a voucher fact, maybe in, ask the teachers to do that in their weekly newsletter. I think that we can gather around everybody. We can get the word out. The principals can network with each other in other districts. Superintendents can network with each other across Ohio, and I think that we could get the people in Ohio to vote this down, especially the people in Hilliard. So I would like you to think about that, and it won't cost you any money at all or very, very little.

Also, I have in my hand an electronic, it's printed out voucher petition. There are over three hundred thirty signatures on this. I believe that we could get three times this if I had to. If that was what someone told me to do, I'd stand out by the library every single day with a petition and see if we couldn't get together on this.

E CONSENT AGENDA

The Board of Education approved the consent agenda, items E1 through E3.

- E1 Approved the following Certified Personnel actions – See attachment to the Minutes.
- E2 Approved the following Classified Personnel actions – See attachment to the Minutes.
- E3 Approved contracts for certified staff: See Attached Document.

Mr. Perry: I don't have any discussion, but I do have a couple of retirees that I'd like to highlight here. Starting with Pamela Gilmore, who's been with us since 2001. We have Woodrow Harris, who's been with us since 1995. Laura Santagana, who's been with us since 2003. Lisa Stolly, who's been with us since 1993, and a few of our classified folks as well, I believe. I'm not sure if any of them are here today, but, Theresa Dunlavy, who's been with us since 2008, and Laurie Fair, who's been with us since 2003. So thank them all for their many, many years of service.

F ACTION AGENDA

F1 The Board of Education approved the following 2026 Summer Graduates:

Bradley High School

Fares Feras Rabi

Ana Elisa Semprun Sandra

Darby High School

Sophie Mason Byers

F2 The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

**DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT BUSINESS
RELATED TO THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT – PHASE I**

The Chief Operating Officer recommends that the Board authorize spending authority up to the Owner Contingency and Construction Manager at-Risk Contingency (“Spending Authority”) for the Capital Improvements Project – Phase I (the “Project”) and request authorization to approve and execute amendments to the architect agreements, consultant agreements, and construction change directives and change orders to the construction manager at risk agreement in an amount not to exceed the Spending Authority. The Chief Operating Officer further recommends that the Board authorize easement and permit authority related to the Project.

Rationale:

1. The Board has entered into architect, consultant, construction manager at-risk, and easement agreements for the Project (collectively, “Agreements”).
2. During construction of the Project, there may be changes to the Work that impact the Scope of the Work, Contract Sum, and/or Contract Time of the Agreements. These changes may come in the form of bid day alternates, owner-requested changes, contractor claims, and design-related issues, among others. These changes are documented via Amendment, Construction Change Directive, or Change Order (“Modifications”).
3. Modifications required to modify a contract or agreement that involve a change in Contract Price and/or Contract Time must be approved and executed on behalf of the Board. To avoid Project delay and its related costs, it is important that the Board authorize a representative to approve and execute Modifications required to modify the Agreements.
4. The Chief Operating Officer requests authority, in consultation with other District administrators and legal counsel, to approve and execute Modifications required to modify the Agreements, in an amount not to exceed the Spending Authority for the Project.
5. The Chief Operating Officer, working with other district administrators and the Board President, as needed, additionally requests the authority to grant various utility and ingress/egress easements (“Project Easements”) and seek various permits and approvals and pay any costs and fees associated therewith from Authorities Having Jurisdiction over the Project (“Permits”).
6. The Chief Operating Officer requests this authority to be able to conduct business related to the Project, as required between Board meetings.

The Board of Education resolves as follows:

1. The Chief Operating Officer in consultation with other district administrators and legal counsel, are authorized to approve and execute Modifications required to modify the Agreements in an amount not to exceed the Spending Authority for the Project.
2. The Chief Operating Officer and other district administrators are authorized by the Board to make related Project decisions, as required between Board meetings.

3. The Treasurer is authorized to issue purchase orders and sign any related documents required to finalize any Modifications approved and executed under the authority delegated in this resolution.
4. The Treasurer and Board President, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer, are authorized to execute any necessary Project Easements
5. The Chief Operating Officer is authorized to seek Project Permits, and pay any costs and fees associated with the Project Permits.
6. The Chief Operating Officer will bring to the Board for review all Modifications approved and executed under the authority provided by this resolution at a future Board meeting following the approval and execution of any such Modification. Any modifications in excess of the Spending Authority will be brought to the Board for approval.

F3 The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

AUTHORIZING SALE OF 2016 BLUE BIRD VISION SCHOOL BUS
OWNED BY THE BOARD AND NO LONGER NEEDED FOR SCHOOL PURPOSES TO THE UNION LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD
OF EDUCATION

The Chief Operating Officer requests authority from the Board to sell a 2016 Blue Bird Vision Bus, VIN 1BAKJCPA7GF322336 ("Blue Bird Bus") no longer needed for school purposes to the Union Local School District Board of Education.

Rationale:

1. District administrators have determined that the Blue Bird Bus is no longer needed for school purposes.
2. Disposal of the Property is exempt from the auction requirements of ORC 3313.41 as the Blue Bird Bus is being sold to another political subdivision in accordance with ORC 3313.41(C).
3. The Blue Bird Bus will be sold for the agreed upon price of \$9,500.
4. The Chief Operating Officer requests authority for the Chief Operating Officer and Treasurer to take steps necessary to sell the Blue Bird Bus by bill of sale to the buyer in an as-is condition with no warranties and no liability to the Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board that:

The Chief Operating Officer and Treasurer are authorized to take steps necessary to sell the Blue Bird Bus by bill of sale to the buyer in an as-is condition with no warranties and no liability to the Board. The Board ratifies all action taken to date by District administration to dispose of the Blue Bird Bus.

F4 The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

AUTHORIZING SALE OF 2014 IC CE300 SCHOOL BUS
OWNED BY THE BOARD AND NO LONGER NEEDED FOR SCHOOL PURPOSES TO THE UNION LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD
OF EDUCATION

The Chief Operating Officer requests authority from the Board to sell a 2014 IC CE300 School Bus, VIN 4DRBUAAN7EB357793 ("IC Bus") no longer needed for school purposes to the Union Local School District Board of Education.

Rationale:

1. District administrators have determined that the IC Bus is no longer needed for school purposes.
2. Disposal of the Property is exempt from the auction requirements of ORC 3313.41 as the IC Bus is being sold to another political subdivision in accordance with ORC 3313.41(C).
3. The IC Bus will be sold for the agreed upon price of \$5,000.
4. The Chief Operating Officer requests authority for the Chief Operating Officer and Treasurer to take steps necessary to sell the IC Bus by bill of sale to the buyer in an as-is condition with no warranties and no liability to the Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board that:

The Chief Operating Officer and Treasurer are authorized to take steps necessary to sell the IC Bus by bill of sale to the buyer in an as-is condition with no warranties and no liability to the Board. The Board ratifies all action taken to date by District administration to dispose of the IC Bus.

F5 The Board of Education approve the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Education of the Hilliard City School District, Franklin County, Ohio, that to provide for the current expenses and other expenditures of said Board of Education, during the fiscal year, ending June 30, 2027, the following sums be and the same are hereby set aside and appropriated for the several purposes for which expenditures are to be made and during said fiscal year, as follows:

001 – GENERAL FUND	\$274,206,309
003 – PERMANENT IMPROVEMENT	\$ 6,502,000
200 – STUDENT ACTIVITY	\$ 525,000
401 – AUXILIARY SERVICES	\$ 1,364,687
516 – TITLE VI-B	\$ 4,054,124
536 – TITLE I SCH IMPROVEMENT	\$ 166,727
551 – TITLE III LEP	\$ 345,931
572 – TITLE I	\$ 2,851,732
584 – TITLE IV-A	\$ 295,413
587 – PRE-K IDEA-B	\$ 90,691
590 – TITLE II-A	\$ 506,408
599 – MISC FEDERAL	\$ 176,907

Melissa Swearingen: This is just to align our general funds appropriations with the forecast that you approved last month. And then we had one small adjustment in the PI fund for this year, and some student activity budgets that have come through, and then just adjusting for some of our revised grant allocations for the year.

G REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS

G1 Policies submitted for a first reading:

- a) DJH – Credit Cards
- b) DJH-R – Credit Cards (new regulation)
- c) DJI – Purchasing Cards (new policy)
- d) DJI-R – Purchasing Cards (new regulation)
- e) JED – Student Absences and Excuses

- f) JEDA - Truancy
- g) JHCD – Administering Medicines to Students
- h) JHCD-R – Administering Medicines to Students

G2 **Committee Reports**

Ms. Arnold: I have a quick update on facilities. We had meeting on September 2nd. You can take a look at the full meeting minutes there, but just a brief recap. It was a recap of our summer '26 permanent improvement projects, the usual locker rooms, flooring, renovations. We also reviewed a few building or facilities and grounds forms with respect to some tables and furniture that were requested. I am very happy about the movement of bike racks for Bradley and Memorial now that we have pathways heading that way, because I did have a student request from one that bikes there every time for our commission meetings out there.

Also, I applaud our folks, especially Mark, taking a look at the national gas. We normally do that through the consortium meta, and we'll be moving away from that to capture the best price possible once this contract has come up. So our folks are constantly looking at ways to keep us on track for the budget and save money.

And then we also had a preview of what we're looking at for projects for summer of '27, because it never stops. If you want to take a look at the meeting minutes, you'll see all the fun details.

Mrs. Crowley: ISPTO starts tomorrow. Superintendent's Advisory and Curriculum Committee will both start next week, I believe and then we had a communications committee event this weekend that got rained out.

Mr. Moog: Sarah and I met with Molly about a week and a half ago about the wellness and belonging. She provided us a very nice outline of what's been going on regarding attendance, Hope in Action, Rox, Handle With Care, which is a new joint partnership with first responders to help with students that may have been involved with an incident that would involve first responders, so that they can come back to school and at least the staff will know that they were involved and can maybe provide them a little bit of extra assistance when they come back. Access and then student behavior. So doing a great job there and appreciate the updates that she gave us.

Mrs. Byler: I didn't get to attend HEF this month because I was at the Davidson Open House, but they have just started a new initiative, it's called Five to Thrive, and the goal is to have \$5 per student in our schools donated to HEF to help with their grants for teachers. It's giving more teachers their-- the resources they need to bring bold, creative ideas to life and ensuring every student has the opportunity to thrive. So we encourage you to look into that donation and more to come from them, as far as their event in February.

Mr. Perry: I attended the Insurance Committee meeting; recommendations moved forward with unanimous consent.

H **ADJOURNMENT**

H1 Adjourned at 6:57 pm.