



# MEETING NOTES

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

1. The meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. Members present: Mrs. Crowley, Mrs. Long, Mrs. Murdoch, Mr. Perry, and Mr. Vorst
3. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
4. Honoring Peggy Johnson, Bus Driver

Unfortunately, we lost a member of our Hilliard family last week. As her students knew her, Miss Peggy was a bus driver for us for twenty-six years. She was a beloved member of our Transportation Services Department and was a driver at the Britton Norwich Campus for the last ten years. We offer her family our condolences and wish them the best.

5. The Board of Education adopted the agenda as presented.
6. Commitment Plan Update – Academic Team

We are excited to be here to share our 2022-2023 Commitment Plan with you. We will discuss our development process and break down the components of the work we will be doing this year. For those joining us tonight, the board has a copy of the plan, and we will present an overview.

Our process of creating this plan began last year. Kudos to the academic team because they designed a three-year plan. We have entered the second year and knew it was important to build upon the strong plan developed a year ago. We also learned that we needed to dig deeper into the work we had begun. We used the data and teacher feedback from the first year to design our next iteration of this plan. Part of our focus was to ensure we brought clarity and balance to the student experience, focusing on academics, interests, and mindset. Throughout this process, we reviewed our evidence of progress and captured changes in how we monitor our progress in response to the State evaluation system changes. Finally, in preparing for the portrait of a graduate, we focused on planning for every student without exception.

### **Progress Monitoring**

During the 2021-2022 school year, building teams met with district leadership three times for a rigorous process to monitor the plan and review student data. This allowed the plan to stay at the forefront of what was happening and not get lost in the day-to-day. We don't have time to go into all of the data, but we will provide more details later when the report card comes out. Some quick highlights:

- We saw a lot of successes in our K-3 literacy scores. We improved at each grade level, with the highlight being a 13% improvement in our kindergarteners over the previous year.
- Students in grades 3-12 improved on 18 of the 20 state assessments.

- We met our incremental subgroup goals on the state tests in language arts and math. This doesn't mean all students are proficient, but they are heading in the right direction. The subgroup piece allowed us to take an in-depth look at different students' achievement gains and experiences.

### **Feedback and Reflection**

In addition to the student achievement data we analyzed, we also gathered evidence in other ways. So, we engaged with several stakeholders, including parents, staff, principals, and teachers. We also studied and received professional development to reform our practices. For example, you may remember that we surveyed more than six hundred parents through our curriculum review process, asking them to describe what's important to them for their child's curriculum. We used that information in the design of this plan. The parents' overwhelmingly responded that they want to be ensured their children will be ready for tomorrow (i.e., the next grade level, the next course in a particular content area, or what's beyond high school). Critical thinking skills and personalization were two additional parent themes reflected in our instructional practices.

We also conducted focus groups with our students. More than 250 students described what's important to them in their classes and educational experiences. Some of the common themes from the student focus groups were:

- Students want to feel connected to what they are learning.
- Students want to see themselves in what they are learning (through experiences, lessons tied to their interests, and real-world problems).
- The resources they utilize illustrate aspects of who they are as individuals and learners.

The academic team engaged in professional development and studied what it means to develop a culture of deep thinking and learning and the importance of establishing learning partnerships with students. This helps us employ these practices every day in our classrooms. In addition, we were able to deliver this professional development to teachers at their summer retreats.

Finally, we surveyed our school staff and principals (931 teachers and 40 principals) for feedback on the impact the commitment plan had in their classrooms last year. We learned what they felt needed to be prioritized and supported this year. It was reaffirmed that teachers and principals prioritized assessment feedback and reflection as a strong focus area for this year. You will see that reflected in our instructional priorities this year.

So, that was all of the thinking that went into the plan. Now, we will address the feedback, data collected, and how we plan to expand on year one of this plan.

As you can see, every student, without exception, will be ready for tomorrow. We will be resolute in this commitment. We want to personalize education through innovative approaches to develop our students' academics, interests, and mindset. We want our students to thrive well into their futures. It is with intent and purpose that we chose the words "every student will be respected and reflected in this commitment plan." The commitments will embrace, empower, and inspire our students to set lofty goals and work towards them along their journey. It will support our team of educators in meeting the needs of every learner.

Committing to every child without exception means providing access to rigorous curriculum designs by differentiating and personalizing instruction, modifying curriculum, and providing accommodations that

level the playing field for our students with disabilities, such as giving extra time. Also, intentionally designing learning environments, such as variable seating and learning spaces, that support students' learning strengths and primary learning modes.

How do we engage in learning experiences that integrate their strengths and interests? In grades PreK-6, through the work of our innovation and discovery specialists, we do this through interest surveys with our students, conversations with classroom teachers, and our innovation discovery specialists are designing inquiry-based experiences in the learning zones of our innovation and discovery centers. In grades 7-12, through the work of our educational technology coaches, we continue to work with classroom teachers focusing on lesson design to provide experiential learning opportunities for all students.

Finally, every student will have the skills and mindsets to connect and contribute to their community. Students will develop academic and durable skills, such as critical thinking and empathy, as they navigate their school day. They will see themselves and see they can add value to their community.

We believe if we focus on these commitments, we will see evidence of their impact. With the state's change in the accountability system (adjustment from letter grades to stars), you'll see an adjustment in our multi-year goal. Our new goal is that students will raise all district component grades to four stars or higher, as indicated on the state report card, by the end of the 2023-2024 school year. Each building will have its yearly evidence of impact. They will monitor student data points, such as student achievement, and talk with student focus groups. We believe having access to experiences and opportunities will help us meet these goals.

Recently, Mike Abraham met with our nurses, health care staff, and counselors to review the commitment plan and their role within it. These frontline staffs work daily on building relationships with students and staff that affect the classroom community. It's a known fact that students will do better if they like and trust their teachers. They will help to turn classroom communities into evolving partnerships to help students become innovators, critical thinkers, and problem solvers. The key is learning how to apply these skills to learning and understanding, not just learning about content. Finally, being responsive to our students' experiences and implementing personalized instruction based on every student's strengths, needs, and interests.

As we work with principals and teachers on identifying instructional needs in the classroom, we center that around six broad areas we think are important. First, we will provide principals and teachers with professional development so they can recognize quality instruction in the classroom and grow that instruction.

As you view the slide, you can see that our priorities are anchored to best practices around building supportive relationships with students, designing engaging lessons, responding to student learning, and focusing on assessment feedback and reflection. We believe these priorities will help us focus on being reflective in our teaching practices, creating learning environments where all students feel supported, measuring the impact of our instructional actions, and using evidence to determine the next steps.

Once we identified our commitments and were anchored in our instructional practices, we identified strategies we will use to approach this work.

### **Our Strategies**

- School environments are developed and sustained as places where all are cared for, valued, and respected.
- Rigorous learning opportunities, educational resources, and social support are accessible to all students.
- Evidence- and data-based systems of academic, physical, social, and emotional support are used to meet the individual needs of each student.
- Substantive, specific, and timely feedback is given to support every student's learning.
- Student needs are met by analyzing student learning and thinking, anticipating obstacles, and personalizing instruction and intervention.
- The instructional design reflects students' experience, culture, and developmental characteristics and provides engaging opportunities for students to demonstrate learning and thinking.

We are focusing on “all,” which refers to staff, students, families, and community members. We want to ensure everyone feels cared for, valued, and respected. Once those communities of learners and partnerships have been established among all stakeholders, we want to provide access to high-quality teaching and learning for all students without exception. By rigorous meaning, the quality of thinking and learning rather than the quantity of work a student may be assigned. This process was formed by the analysis of collected data such that instruction interventions are student-centered and equitable to provide all students the support they need. To grow in one's thinking and ensure active participation in the learning process, we will equip our staff with practices that provide substantive, specific, and timely feedback for each learner in support of their individualized learning goals. This allows learners to think more deeply and employ a growth mindset toward learning and experiences beyond the school day.

We know that students have their unique way of learning, and we want to honor that by providing instruction and intervention services that reflect students' experiences, culture, and developmental characteristics. As we continue to build awareness, we want to shape that into a learning partnership that creates a classroom setting where everyone sees that they belong to build intellectual capacity and grow our brains.

In looking at the final two pages of the commitment plan, you can start to make connections – you probably heard “every child” a couple of times. If you look at the broad categories on both pages (below) – Assessment, Feedback, Reflection & Designing the Student Experiences and Environment – it points back to the feedback we received from staff and leaders. Our principals can identify how they will measure impact through the school year. The evidence will allow us to see if our students are hitting our target.

<i>Assessment, Feedback, Reflection</i>		
Guiding Questions	District Action Steps	Evidence of Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ What do I need to know about my students?</li> <li>❖ Who are my students as individuals?</li> <li>❖ What do I know about each student as a learner?</li> <li>❖ What do I know about each student's thinking?</li> <li>❖ How do I know this about my students?</li> <li>❖ How do I use feedback to communicate relationship, rigor, and support?</li> <li>❖ How do I create time for students to work on using the feedback to improve their work?</li> <li>❖ What do I do when a student doesn't master the content?</li> <li>❖ How do I create opportunities for enrichment and extension?</li> <li>❖ How do I utilize the RTI process to support students?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Assessment, feedback, and reflection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The District will provide ongoing support to principals and staff in utilizing disaggregated data to analyze the progress of student groups and identify instructional priorities to move students forward in their learning.</li> <li>❖ The District will provide ongoing support to principals and staff in designing and implementing effective feedback practices to support student growth and create intellectual and social relationships with students.</li> <li>❖ The District will provide ongoing support to principals and staff in meeting the diverse needs of students through intentional instructional design.</li> <li>❖ The District will provide ongoing support to principals and staff in consistently implementing the RtI process throughout all schools.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Required For All Buildings With Grades 3-12:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Increase the percent of students who achieve proficiency or above on each Ohio State test by 5%.</li> </ul> <p><b>Required For All Buildings With Grades K-12:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Increase the percent of students on benchmark on the STAR Early Literacy/Reading/Math by _____% from fall to spring of the 2022-23 school year.                      &gt; *suggested 10-15% or other, justified by your data</li> </ul> <p><b>Choose up to TWO additional Evidence of Impact from the <a href="#">Options Menu</a> based on your student data:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Additional data measure to be monitored.</li> <li>❖ Additional data measure to be monitored.</li> </ul>

<i>Designing the Student Experiences and Environment</i>		
Guiding Questions	District Action Steps	Evidence of Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ How do I design an intellectually and socially safe environment?</li> <li>❖ How do I integrate content with student strengths and interests to design engaging instruction?</li> <li>❖ How do I integrate students' academic, personal, and social goals in the design of instruction?</li> <li>❖ What practices do I use to engage my students to master standards and skills?</li> <li>❖ How do I ensure that all students see themselves in the curriculum?</li> <li>❖ What are my students doing, and what am I doing?</li> <li>❖ How do I include all learners?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The District will provide ongoing support in developing inclusive communities where all members feel safe, valued, seen, heard, and positively contribute.</li> <li>❖ The District will provide ongoing support in developing practices and routines that reflect a culture of learning in which all learners experience high expectations and high support.</li> </ul> <p><b>Engaging Experiences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The District will provide ongoing support to principals and staff in designing high-interest experiences that provide students with opportunities to apply deep thinking and solve real-world problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All staff will establish an environment with students that is respectful, supportive, and caring.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All staff will demonstrate consistent regard for student perspectives, experiences, and culture.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Each school will utilize student focus groups to understand the student experience and perspective.</li> <li>❖ Other data measures to be monitored</li> </ul> <p>❖ All students will have access to and engage in rigorous experiential learning activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ All 6-12 students will utilize career &amp; interest resources in SchoolLinks to increase awareness, explore areas of interest, and provide support in future planning.</li> <li>❖ All K-5 teachers will regularly integrate opportunities for career awareness and exploration in a variety of professions. Students will see themselves reflected in these career opportunities.</li> <li>❖ Other data measures to be monitored:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepared for Success Metrics - 12 pt. Credentials, Honors Diploma, Remediation Free ACT/SAT, AP (3 or Higher), CCP (3 + Credits)</li> <li>• PSAT 10 Data</li> <li>• Participation Rates - IDC Metrics; Arrow; AP; CCP; Honors; Innovation Campus; Pathway Programming - ex. PLTW, EDU, Mentorship, etc.; Afterschool Enrichment; Tolles, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Lastly, we have a set of guiding questions that signal that inquiry is a key goal of education. They help to clarify and prioritize our expectations as a district. They provide transparency for all stakeholders, encourage and model metacognition, and provide opportunities for greater and deeper connections to

the work. We know reflective educators are hungry for better answers and ways to support students. Good questions help us figure out what matters, where the opportunities are for better learning experiences, and how to make those opportunities happen. We use guiding questions to do a lot of the work, starting with engaging with principals and teacher leaders by asking how we create and sustain a culture of thinking and learning in our buildings. The guiding questions we have here are intended to help all of us who support students.

**Guiding Questions**

- What do I need to know about my students?
- What do I need to know about my students' thinking?
- How do I include all learners?
- How do I integrate students' academic, personal, and social goals into the design of instructions?

That's the end of our presentation. Do you have any questions for us?

Mrs. Murdoch mentioned a goal for ELL students in last year's plan and asked if it was carried through to this year. Mrs. Abraham replied we asked principals to review the data and find out what that data says about groups of students in your building. Based on the data and evidence, that is where they will do their more focused work. We haven't given up anything from last year's plan regarding what we worked towards. What we have changed is that what works for our ELL students will also work for our kindergarten through high school senior learners. We will be focusing on the proper practices that will impact all students.

Mr. Vorst asked if there have been any hiccups or what do anticipate might be an issue at some point. Mrs. Abraham said that the team had worked diligently to ensure every staff member could see themselves in this plan, including our nurses, teacher leaders, and operational staff. Everyone has an impact on student learning. Regarding where she anticipates challenges, there is a lot to do here, and our day didn't get any longer. We will continue to weave the pieces together by providing the necessary professional development for our teachers, so they can feel confident in bringing this work into their classroom.

Mr. Stewart added that when the academic team practiced their presentation this morning, he tried to get them to give themselves more credit. He explained that the monitoring of the commitment is a very rigorous process. At three different points during the year, a team of district leaders goes to each building, which takes several weeks to complete. First, we meet with the building principal or administrative team to discuss their progress. Then we go into classrooms to see the plan reflected in the learning going on at the school. We then reconvene with the building principal or administrative team to give them feedback. We are going to focus on providing better feedback this year. Although this is a rigorous process for the academic leadership team, it is also a thorough process for the building principals and teachers who have to enact it. Hopefully, the result is this is not a plan we wrote in September and did not look at again until the following September.

Mrs. Murdoch stated the team should take credit for all of the improvements made based on the measurements from last year's commitment plan. She hopes to see those posted on the webpage soon. Mr. Stewart replied that a team is working on it now and will be posted soon.

Mrs. Crowley said the thing she likes best about this plan is that she can see it from the administration to the teacher's perspective. She sees how it works together, communicates, and evaluates. It's a clear guiding light for teachers. This is incredible work.

Mrs. Long added that since serving on the dyslexia task force, she appreciates that it is addressed throughout the commitment plan. Hearing and meeting the needs of each child is what the task force wanted. She also mentioned the commitment plan is the compass of the district and asked if they feel everyone is buying into the plan. Mrs. Abraham said she thinks people are buying into the plan because it is very practical for teachers. In addition, it clarifies what we are working towards for our new teachers. We wanted to create a plan that everyone could use, not just some staff for some students.

Mr. Stewart added that reflection could be what went well, but it can also lead to where we can do better. We identified staff and jobs that would have trouble seeing themselves in the plan or that we hadn't been deliberate enough in communicating where they were in the plan. As Mr. Abraham mentioned, he met with nurses and school counselors to review the plan. We are being more intentional about communicating the plan to staff. Mrs. Abraham gave the example that she and Mr. Hetzel went through the plan, and he could see where the operational staff were included. Mrs. Long noted that the bus drivers are the first and last staff members to see students daily. It's great they understand and see where they fit into the plan.

Mr. Perry thanked the team for the tremendous work put into this plan. He loves that the plan includes specific measurables for the goals. We are seeing results from the plan's first year, which is amazing. He appreciates the plan's differentiation – diversity, equity, and inclusion. We have diverse learning abilities, and this plan provides them equity and inclusion in learning. He asked if the preschool students were included in the plan. Mrs. Abraham replied that they were in the plan. The preschool principal was included in the work we did with principals. The difference is sometimes they don't have the same metrics but are similarly involved. We want all students to feel safe and valued in their classrooms.

7. Hiring Process Overview – Roy Walker, Executive Director of Human Resources

Mr. Stewart noted that this presentation is in response to Mr. Vorst's inquiry about the long lists of personnel actions at each board meeting. He stated he would like to understand more about our hiring process. Mr. Walker's presentation will focus on the hiring process for our certificated employees. This will give you a sense of how many layers and filters there are before board action.

Mr. Walker explained that he would take you from the application stage to the recommendation for board action.

**The Application Process**

- An applicant applies at Hilliardschools.org. Every employee completes the same application with varying questions specific to each position.
- We have administrators review applicants who have submitted their applications weekly to verify the following:
  - The applicants completed all areas of the application
  - The applicant uploaded at least three reference letters
  - Listed information regarding licensure
  - Verify the application questions are answered thoroughly, using appropriate writing skills

- Verify the TeacherInsight assessment through Gallup is completed and that the results fall within our criteria. TeacherInsight is an assessment we use with teacher candidates. We get information from Gallup that tells us the type of teacher they will be with results around Achievement, Classroom Management, and Student/Parent Relationships.
- If the applicant completes all the application areas, this applicant is moved to our Gatekeeper interview process.
- If the applicant is missing information, they will receive an email from Human Resources stating what they are missing and complete the application and resubmit fully.
- If the applicant does not meet our requirements, the applicant is sent an email stating that they will not be considered for employment with Hilliard at this time.

### **The Central Office Gatekeeper Process**

- Applicants who are moved forward will go through a Gatekeeper Interview. Many of our Central Office administrators have been trained to interview the candidates.
- Human Resources will notify applicants of their Central Office interview.
- Groups of 6-10 candidates are interviewed by a Central Office administrator and another district administrator as an observer.
- Applicants are together as a group, and either Roy or Greg starts each interview to discuss the process, provides introductions, and asks an icebreaker question to help put everyone at ease.
- The Gatekeeper interview asks each applicant a detailed question about their application. Our administrators spend a lot of time reviewing the applications to ensure they know the applicant as well as possible.
- The applicants are broken into smaller groups, and we go over a case study provided to the applicants before the interview. Applicants discuss the study in their smaller groups, and then we have them report to the larger group and have open conversations regarding the article. In the past, articles pertained to homework and year-round schools. Finally, we have the applicant defend a specific position on the topic. This process shows us how the applicant works in a smaller and larger group.
- The applicant is then usually asked a follow-up question and is then released.
- This interview usually lasts about one hour.
- The two administrators then discuss each applicant and place them into one of the following categories – Highly Recommended (Green), Proceed with Caution (Yellow), and Do Not Consider (Red).
  - Green means this candidate would be a great addition to our team.
  - Yellow means we liked the candidate, but we should follow up with further questions
  - Red means this candidate is not ready to join the Hilliard team.
- Human Resources then takes this information and communicates it to the applicants. Then, finally, we email the applicants, letting them know they are being moved forward or they are not being considered for employment at this time.
- Applicants are then put into one of three folders in the application database.



### **The Building Interview Process**

- All positions are posted internally, and principals can review applicants at this time.
- Principals review applicants via our database and call applicants for interviews. Mr. Walker showed a picture of the application in the Gatekeeper database. The principals can view comments entered by the administrator who interviewed the candidate. Principals are also able to enter their statements for any possible future interviews.
- Internal staff can apply for the open position via an HR100 or HR100T (T is for tutor) form. Per the HEA negotiated agreement, we guarantee every teacher who applies for an open position will be interviewed. For tutors who apply for an available job, we recommend our principals interview them but there is no guarantee.
- Principals gather some current staff to assist with interviews.
- If the chosen candidate is an existing teacher, this teacher is transferred, and we then post the newly created vacancy.
- Once an external applicant is selected for a position, the principal has the applicant complete a public records request for each previous employer in a public setting. Not all districts have applicants complete the public records request, but we believe it's an important step. It allows us to see their personnel files, evaluations, and disciplinary actions.
- The principal conducts reference checks by calling references. At least three references are completed for each prospective staff member.
- Principals submit an employment memo to HR along with the completed references and public requests and make a contingent job offer based on references and public records.

### **The Hiring Process**

- Human Resources reviews the completed Employment Memo to ensure everything is correct, including a vacant position, years of service, and referral sources. Then, we begin the process of hiring the applicant.
- Human Resources reviews the references and submits the public records requests as they arrive.
- Human Resources looks up the applicant on the ODE website to verify their licensure and to ensure nothing is being held by the Office of Professional Conduct.
- Applicant obtains their BCII/FBI background check if needed.
- Human Resources enters the new hires into the system and prints the Intent to Hire.
- Roy or Greg meets with the new hire in Human Resources and reviews the Intent to Hire. The applicant reviews their application we printed, and they sign a statement verifying that the application is theirs and the contents are true and accurate.
- Human Resources examines the Intent to Hire with the applicant to discuss requirements for the position, such as agreeing to attend induction and the new teacher workday. We also explain that hiring them is contingent upon their references, background checks, and board approval.
- Applicant and Administrator signs the Intent to Hire. This creates the action item sent to the board for possible approval.
- The applicant gets their photo taken to obtain their ID badge.

- The applicant's information is sent to the BOE for processing via the Consent agenda.

#### Data

- For the 2022-2023 school year, we hired over 75 certified and 30 classified staff members.
- Human Resources processed over 200 internal transfers from one position to another for this school year.
- You review many items on the consent agenda: hires, resignations, retirement, leave of absences, coaching contracts, stipends, contract renewals, and changes in positions.
- We processed around 400 applicants through our gatekeeper interview this past year.
- Hilliard generated over 1,400 new applicants this past year. This is a minimal amount. I've been here for twenty-one years, and there were times early in my career when we had more than 7,000 new applicants. Although 1,400 is low, it is higher than many other districts.
- Hilliard currently has about 3,600 applicants in our database, with roughly 800 currently through the gatekeeper process and ready to be interviewed by our principals.

Mr. Stewart said that the overall point we wanted you to see is the rigor it takes to get to a board agenda for your approval. There are about three levels of screening before an applicant even interviews with a building principal.

Mr. Perry thanked Mr. Walker for the presentation. It was incredibly thorough and clarified the process from start to finish. He was intrigued by the Gatekeeper interview, where applicants are given a prompt to advocate for, such as do you believe in homework? What are you looking for? Mr. Walker replied that we are assessing their reasoning skills, but we also let them voice their personal opinion on the topic. It's helpful having an observer in the interview who can watch all of the applicants. Body language can tell you a lot about a candidate. How does this process look if we have someone currently in our district who is interested in an open position? Mr. Walker replied they needed to complete the HR100 form.

Mrs. Murdoch also thanked Mr. Walker for the presentation. This is clearly a rigorous process. She has worked for organizations that have had rigorous processes and some with not-so-rigorous processes. But, the caliber of applicants and hires we had from the rigorous processes were much higher. So, I am confident in what you bring to us. She is especially intrigued by the TeacherInsight that you mentioned. She knows Gallup has many great tools. Can you tell me a little more about that process? Mr. Walker said it's part of the whole application system. When an applicant enters the position they are applying for; they are automatically forwarded to that process. Gallup develops the questions.

Mrs. Murdoch also asked if the district communicates with the applicants about where and how they are doing through the process. Mr. Walker said that we do communicate with them through the process. For example, for applicants who don't make a particular cut, we tell them what they need to do better to be considered in the future.

Mr. Vorst asked if the Gallup scores were accurate. Mr. Walker replied they were dead on. Mr. Vorst also wondered if the background check tools are adequate, or has anyone snuck through the system? Mr. Walker replied that he had never seen any applicant sneak through the BCII/FBI background check. If a background check comes up mailed, we do some research to determine what type of violation an applicant has on their record. Mr. Vorst asked if the search extends beyond state lines. Mr. Walker

replied they do. Mr. Vorst commented that sometimes in health care, a person goes to a different state, and their board file doesn't necessarily follow them. He's glad we have tools to guard against that possibility.

Mrs. Crowley asked if the Gallup program was open to diverse candidates. Mr. Walker states that all racial biases have been removed, according to Gallup. That's great news since we are trying to attract more diverse candidates. Mrs. Crowley also commented on how vital this vetting system is for hiring teaching staff for our children. It's essential for the success and safety of our kids.

Mrs. Long asked how a substitute becomes part of our system. Mr. Walker said that they were hired through the ESC. We have what we call the "ESC West office" because we have to do it ourselves. We recruit our substitutes, review their paperwork, and complete the BCII/FBI background checks. We have found that if we put in the time with them, they will work primarily for us instead of other districts.

8. The Board of Education approved the July 2022 Treasurer's Report.

Mr. Wilson referenced the conversation last month with Mr. Vorst and Mrs. Murdoch. Mr. Vorst noted the general fund cash balance was larger than we thought it would be. Mrs. Murdoch pointed out that the expenditures for supplies and materials were slightly lower than anticipated. At that time, I thought it was due to a timing issue. However, in this report, the supplies and materials expenditures are up dramatically because of the purchase of iPads.

9. Policies submitted for a second reading

a. JEFB – Released Time for Religious Instruction

Mrs. Murdoch said the first thing she noticed after rereading this policy is that it has many changes. She compared the recommended version with the OSBA sample and the NEOLA policies. In her opinion, the differences between the amended version and the OSBA sample are almost entirely cosmetic. A long block of language is moving up into the numbered list except for four items. For example, OSBA said "written request to the principal," which we changed to "give consent in writing." I think this was a good change.

Mr. Stewart stated the changes that have been added are what's in law. So, those things do not become untrue if they are not in the policy. We felt it was important to have it all in one place.

Mr. Perry asked if we are specifying who should receive the written consent. Mr. Vorst requested who typically receives written consent. Mr. Stewart said that's one of the challenges. We don't have a practice in place. It was amended so that if the board adopted this policy, we would have to develop the practices. Mr. Vorst said this is determined at the operational level, not the policy level. Mr. Stewart said that is correct.

Mrs. Murdoch said she wants to make sure that these are the changes we want to move forward. The second change we made was from "private entity" to "sponsoring entity." I believe we got that language from NEOLA.

Mr. Vorst noted that we have varying feelings about this policy. We don't all agree, and that's fine. I'm proud to support this policy and go to bat for it. I want to remind everyone that this is entirely optional.

No student will be coerced or compelled to participate in religious release time. I think there are huge benefits to character development and other good sides to religious instruction. I believe there is a considerable demand for this option. My inbox is just as full as yours, and a vast majority of those support this policy. My wife and I got to Rock City in Hilliard, and the kids' rooms there are packed. Part of that is because parents want a break from their kids, but there is also a huge benefit and demand from our community to have religious instruction. I know that not everyone can't afford a religious school, but there are benefits to this option. Some people may take advantage of this and do it only once a week. I have the same logistical concerns that I believe all of you have. But, I believe it can be worked out. I think the school district holds all the cards. Nobody will come to our doorstep and say we are taking your kids. We will work through this and figure it out for all students, not just those participating in release time for religious instruction. We have received a lot of stuff from LifeWise. Nine local school districts participate in this program. I don't think we should do it because all of them are doing it. I think the fact that they can do it proves that we are capable of figuring it out as well. If you have any concerns, please feel free to bring them up.

Mrs. Long asked for a summary of the changes to the OSBA sample policy. Mrs. Murdoch replied that the majority of the addition to the list came from the red-line section below the list. We broke them out to make them more clear and easier to read. The relabeling of private to sponsoring entities matches the language in the NEOLA policy. Rather than stating "the district is not responsible for transportation to and from the place of instruction," we chose to say "the sponsoring entity, the students, and/or their parents/guardians are solely responsible for all transportation to and from the programs." We got a little more specific and stated a positive rather than a negative. The last change is "students will not be released from any core curriculum subject to attend" instead of "the student is not absent from core curriculum subject courses."

Mrs. Crowley stated that she has a different viewpoint from Mr. Vorst. When we spoke about this in the spring, I was against it, I'm against it today, and I'll be against it in two weeks. I think it's good practice to list the specifics of a policy before we adopt it. I don't think we should adopt a policy and work out the specifics later. I don't think that's good practice. The most important things I value for our students are academics and safety. In my opinion, this policy is a violation of both. Item four states, "the student assumes responsibility for any missed schoolwork." I don't know how many of you here teach kindergarten besides myself, but those students will not be responsible for their missed schoolwork. You said that we could be gatekeepers for which religions can participate. Still, I don't consider myself a religious gatekeeper to determine which churches can and cannot participate. Within our district, there are thirty-nine churches and one mosque. If we allow access to one program, we should allow access to all.

Mr. Vorst said that he doesn't think he stated this is something only certain religions would be allowed to participate in. He contacted a local Muslim school a couple of weeks ago. This was not on their radar, but the director plans to get back to me. He will gladly email every religious institution in the district to let them know they can participate if they go through the proper steps. He agrees that it should not be for one group of kids. Everyone should have access. He believes we have not done a good job communicating with everyone about the possibility of this program. He didn't think it would be a good idea to say, "hey, we are thinking about this." He would prefer to contact them once we know what will happen.

Mrs. Crowley added that she believes many community members are confused about this policy. She contacted a few people on the list you emailed that people signed. One person didn't know what she

was talking about, and another said she thinks LifeWise is a great program. Mrs. Crowley explained that this is not a LifeWise policy, but LifeWise would benefit from this policy. She didn't understand the difference and said she thought LifeWise was really cool. Mr. Vorst noted that this is something we can clarify for the community.

Mrs. Crowley also said, considering the number of religious institutions in Hilliard, she is concerned with shipping students to many different destinations and people we don't know. We just heard how extensive the interview process is for getting a teaching position in HCSD, and you want us to put our kids on shuttle buses to people we don't know during the academic school day. I think this is a liability. I know they have liability insurance, but that would weigh on my conscious. I believe an after-school program would be great. I cannot imagine which core subject they would not miss during the academic day. The schedules you sent had our core time down to three hours or less, but my schedule is over five hours of academics during the school day.

Mr. Vorst responded that those were not suggestions but examples of how other districts have implemented this policy.

Mr. Perry noted that this would be considered an option for some folks but would not be an option for our teachers. It will interrupt their day, especially if you're an art or music teacher. I wonder about the message it sends them about their class not being as valuable as a core class. Mr. Perry also mentioned safety; if we don't feel it's safe, we don't have to let the kids leave. He's not sure this policy allows us that option. Once we open this can of worms, I'm not sure we would be able to deny an organization that we don't think is properly vetted. For example, a group of students rode on buses owned by a private company, and there was an accident. We do background checks on all bus drivers, but we have no control over a private company. It would be the same with an outside organization. Mr. Perry thinks this would be better as an after-school program. Why is it necessary to do it during the school day?

Mr. Vorst said religious organizations had noticed a significant drop-off in participation because kids have other after-school activities, such as sports. Parents can't always shuttle their kids from place to place. For example, my son goes to a daycare in Hilliard. A soccer team comes to the daycare and holds practice during the school day. That saves us a trip back and forth. People are busy. This is an option for parents to fill their child's spiritual bucket. It's not worshiping time; it's religious education. So, I'm afraid I have to disagree that this program is not academics. State standards do not test it, but it is academic coursework.

Mrs. Crowley added that we are a public school, not a daycare. Mr. Perry agreed that it is educational but not public education. He doesn't believe that anyone who values religious instruction can't find a program outside of the regular school day.

Mrs. Murdoch said she liked what Mrs. Crowley said about considering the policy separate from the implementation. Still, I wonder what specifics you think should be added to the policy. Mrs. Crowley said she would like it to be after-school.

Mr. Vorst stated he understands the public-school day is for academics. I view this as an academic option, and it's not the district's place to be in the role of a parent. Mr. Perry agrees that this is a parent's choice issue. You're right. This is a legal option for public schools. However, Mr. Perry worries about conflating parent choice with what happens during the school day.

Mrs. Murdoch addressed the safety issue. She believes as a parent, it is her responsibility to make sure that anyone I release my child to during the school day, whether it's a babysitter, a carpool, or a relative, has been vetted by me. I know that's not on the school. I have to be responsible for that, and I believe that is part of the written consent the policy would require. We must clarify that it is the parent's responsibility to vet any organization they choose to release their child. Mr. Perry agrees that parents determine the level of risk for their child. Mr. Perry's concern is the constant revolving door of students leaving and returning to school and ensuring each student gets on the correct bus or shuttle. This puts additional pressure on our teachers and office staff. Mrs. Crowley added that she also agrees that it's the parent's responsibility to vet whoever may pick up their child. She believes that many times parents are not going through that process. If it happens during the school day, they trust that the school has vetted and believes in that program.

Mrs. Long noted that she and Mr. Stewart had been contacted by another religious institution interested in participating. I suspect there will be many more coming. This is not a decision about LifeWise. It is a decision about our policy regarding instruction during school hours.

Mr. Vorst said that if we approve this policy, the plan is to try it at one school. So we don't have to rush into any of this. Mr. Perry replied that he likes the thought process, but the policy does not limit participation to one school. The policy is district-wide.

Mrs. Murdoch asked if everyone was comfortable with voting on the policy as presented by the policy review committee. All members seemed prepared to vote at the next meeting. Mrs. Long said that the policy given tonight would be on the next agenda for the third reading and possible adoption.

10. Mr. Perry moved, and Mrs. Murdoch seconded that the Board of Education caucus to executive session to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, promotion, or compensation of a public employee or official. Time: 7:59 p.m.

There will be no action following the executive session.