



BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

December 8, 2025 | Avery Elementary

MEETING NOTES

Meeting Notes are not official until the Board of Education votes on them at its next Regular Meeting.

- A1 President called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- A2 Members present: Ms. Arnold, Mrs. Crowley, Mrs. Murdoch, Mr. Perry, and Mr. Vorst.
- 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 Meritorious Budget Award Presentation - Jim Rowan, Executive Director of the Association of School Business Officials International

Mr. Stewart: Our first presentation tonight is by Jim Rowan, who is the Executive Director of the Association of School Business Officials International.

Mr. Rowan: Thank you very much. It's truly an honor to be here this evening and present this special award to the school district and Melissa. ASBO International has a meritorious budget award, which demonstrates exemplary budget practices and the board's commitment to financial transparency and open communication with its stakeholders. This is a very special year because it is the 20th consecutive year the Hilliard City School District has received this award.

Interestingly, while looking at the plaque, a couple of other things stood out to me. I'm from Ohio. Melissa was involved in my hiring with Ohio ASBO and was a past president of Ohio ASBO. This certificate is also signed by Ryan Spec, who is from Ohio, the immediate past president of Ohio ASBO, and currently serves as the president of ASBO International.

I'd also like to congratulate Melissa for her commitment and dedication. She also received the School Financial Operations SFA certification back in 2022. These accomplishments reflect not only individual excellence but also the collaborative spirit and standards set by Hilliard City School District. Once again, congratulations.

Mr. Stewart: Thank you, Mr. Rowan, for being here. I want to congratulate Melissa, but it goes beyond Melissa. Anita is here tonight. Her entire team is outstanding, and I think Melissa would say this award reflects that. So congratulations.

- B2 Avery Elementary second-grade teacher, Mrs. Boyden, and her students will share how their daily math fact fluency work supports learning through games, small groups, and individual practice.

Mr. Stewart: Next up, Mr. Landon is going to introduce some special guests.

Mr. Landon: Good evening. Welcome to Avery Elementary. I used to say it was the best-kept secret in Hilliard, but I think word has gotten out. We are excited to host everyone tonight. I will say there is a little bit of stress with hosting these board meetings and not knowing exactly what to share, because obviously, you want to let everyone know all the amazing things that are going on. On November 6th, I had the pleasure of sitting in Mrs. Boyden's classroom for her three-year OTES observation. This year we have a huge focus on math intervention. We have 30 minutes dedicated every single day to not only working on math facts, but also math fluency. If we don't know our math facts, we won't be able to do math. And so we have dedicated time every day to not only work on fun math fluently, but also learn our facts. I had the opportunity to sit in on that day and watch this amazing teacher have 20-some kids working effortlessly, having so much fun playing games, yet knowing their goal. I knew right then what we were going to do for our board meeting. The hardest part was convincing Mrs. Boyden. And I will say she is amazing for kids, but it took a lot of coaxing to get her up here. So what you're going to see tonight are students who not only know what they're good at, they know what their next goal is. Mrs. Boyden is going to talk about our math intervention, and these students are really excited.

Mrs. Boyden: Thank you, Mr. Landon. He is right. I do get nervous about these things, but I am so proud of my second graders. Just got a small portion of my class. They're going to show you and do a wonderful job. But throughout the year, our students are frequently assessed on their math facts. The goal at the end of second grade is to add and subtract numbers fluently up to 20. So to increase their fluency, students play games with each other during their block time to practice their skills whether that's adding doubles like five plus five or applying a strategy to solve more difficult problems like nine plus seven. But honestly, I think that the fact that the block is our most enjoyable part of the day because it never quite looks the same and it's constantly evolving and it's depending on what the kids need. Some days students are playing games where they can roll dice and mentally add or use those strategies to solve their addition, subtraction problems on a game board. Some days students are challenging each other with digital centers on their iPads. It's so fun and rewarding as a teacher to hear the mathematical language they're using and also how they help each other or use a strategy to solve the problem. So, it really is one of the most engaging and focusing parts of our day. Students are assessed frequently and they use a tracking tool that holds them accountable. They use this to know exactly what facts they're working on. So once they've matched the facts, they can color in the bar and it's really exciting to see how proud they are of themselves.

So I'm so proud of all the hard work that they do each and every day, and I can't wait to see what we do in the future. So there are some of my students who are so excited to share what they work on in our class each and every day.

(Each student stated their name and the math facts they know)

B3 Embrace, Empower, Inspire Award Winners: Chelsey Steiner and Dave Carter

Mr. Stewart: Our last presentation is our Embrace, Empower, Inspire award winners. Mr. Carter was not able to be here tonight, so we'll recognize him next month. I believe Holly Meister is here to share this month's winner.

Ms. Meister: I'm excited that you get to meet our school social worker. This is Chelsey. She is so deserving of this amazing award for helping run our food pantry out of her room, small groups with students getting classroom lessons...*(unintelligible)*...I'll read her nomination by our kindergarten teachers. "Chelsey has

gone above and beyond this school year. She makes sure that all of our students and staff feel loved and supported. When we had a high need for social skills and behavioral support, she started preschool life skills groups to help our students build those missing skills. She's a team player, a listener, and a problem solver, and this year she's truly become a part of our crazy kindergarten team, and we couldn't be more grateful.

Chelsey, this award is for you. And thank you so much for recognizing her.

C. ROUTINES

- C1 The agenda is correct as submitted.
- C2 The Board of Education adopted the agenda.
- C3 The Board of Education approved the November 2025 Report.

Mrs. Swearingen: Nothing that stands out for this month. As we get further into December or January, we will begin working on the forecast that will need to be approved in February this year. So, for now, just continuing to keep an eye on everything.

- C4 The Board of Education approved the minutes from the following meetings:
 - a. November 10, 2025, Regular Meeting
 - b. November 10, 2025, Regular Notes
 - c. November 24, 2025, Work Session
 - d. November 24, 2025, 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.

Annette Singh

I have been hearing about the data center coming to the Darby Glen neighborhood, so I wrote a letter to the superintendent and would like to read it. I'm writing to express my concerns regarding the proximity of Beacon Elementary to 20 gas-fired fuel cells that will be constructed starting next month. The fuel cells are natural and capable of generating electricity to power 2,500 homes, and less than 4,000 feet away from the school, 2300 feet from my house, and again, 1,000 feet from the Darby Glen park.

As you know, facilities of this type raise questions of air quality...*unintelligible*...Many parents want to understand the specific steps in place for the school district to monitor conditions in case anything happens. Both the City of Hillard and Norwich Township submitted public comments to...*unintelligible*...about safety concerns last week. The Norwich Fire Department stated publicly that they have not had coordination plans to ensure these can be managed safely.

Can the Hilliard City School District be prepared to handle the impact of the construction of a power plant? I have a few questions I'd like to ask and am hoping for answers. I'm looking to hear assessments and evaluations of these issues and how they impact school safety and air quality. There is no...*unintelligible*...And then how will the district communicate any of these changes or concerns from parents, and in the future? Again, transparency and communication are essential to maintaining trust and keeping our school community safe. Please consider submitting public comments that are similar to what Norwich Township has done.

Again, this is not about tax revenue. This is not about politics. It's really about school safety. I have one child, I have one preschool...*unintelligible*...Sorry, this makes me nervous. I can only control what happens in my backyard, but this is happening in all our backyards. Thank you.

E. CONSENT AGENDA

The Board of Education approved the consent agenda, items E1 through E3. Action by the Board of Education in "Adoption of the Consent Agenda" means that all E items are adopted by one single motion unless a member of the board or the Superintendent requests that any such item be removed from the consent agenda and voted upon separately. Employments, where applicable, are contingent upon 1) Verification of education, 2) Proof of proper certification, and 3) Positive results from a criminal records check.

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 the following trip requests:

- a. Bradley Varsity Wrestling, Buckeye Local HS – January 30, 2026
- b. Davidson Competition Cheer, Richmond, OH – December 20, 2025
- c. Darby Varsity Wrestling, Medina HS – December 28, 2025
- d. Darby Varsity Baseball, Sweetwater, TN – March 30, 2026
- e. Darby Varsity Softball, Pigeon Forge, TN – March 28, 2026

Mr. Perry congratulated and thanked the following retirees for their service:

Certificated Personnel Retirements:

- Phyllis Brown has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/24/1992.
- Robert Ransom has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/29/1994.
- Kathryn Walker has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/29/1996.
- Douglas Weygandt has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/31/1990.

Ms. Arnold: I want to note that Kate Walker was my son's kindergarten teacher many, many years ago. Bless her for dealing with my son.

Mr. Stewart: I want to point out that in that consent agenda you just approved, Nikki Johnson is the principal for J.W. Reason Elementary. Typically, Nikki would be here tonight, but tonight is also her first PTO meeting. So, I wanted to explain that.

F. ACTION AGENDA

- F1 The Board of Education approved a Lease Agreement with Huntington Technology Finance for a cash vault (SmartSafe).

Mr. Vorst: You guys got any details on that?

Mrs. Swearingen: We have one other SmartSafe in place. Basically, our cash deposits are placed in the safe, and Brinks comes to pick them up. This is the second one for Aramark specifically to use. They're actually paying for the safe, but since it's located in Bradley High School, we are responsible for the lease agreement.

- F2 The Board of Education established the date, time, and location of the Organizational Meeting for the calendar year 2026. Regular business meeting to immediately follow:
Date: Monday, January 12, 2026, 6:30 p.m., Weaver Middle School.

- F3 The Board of Education appointed Mr. Perry as president pro tem for the first Board of Education meeting of 2026.

Mr. Stewart: Before I turn it over to you for committee reports, I want to acknowledge that tonight is Beth and Zach's final meeting on the Board of Education. I think anyone who answers the call for service deserves a huge thank you. I want to say to both of you, on behalf of the entire district and the community, thank you for your service. It's funny, I vividly remember the first time I met with both of you during your campaign, you weren't even on board yet. And to think that was probably four and a half years ago blows my mind. But you both came onto the board at what had to be the most chaotic time in any of our professional lives. And we've come through that and landed at a point of peace and stability. And I think a lot of that is due to your leadership. And I want to thank you for that. I think the culminating award, getting to that place, is the passage of issue 39 that you both will be able to point to, being on the board that passed that issue. It will benefit the students of Hillard for literally decades to come. So congratulations to both of you. Thank you for your service, and I have a little gift for both of you.

Mrs. Murdoch: Just wanted to start by saying serving this community has been a great privilege, and I'm so proud of what we've accomplished over the last four years. Coming out of the COVID lockdowns, we've celebrated graduations, expanded our preschool, developed a long-term strategic plan, run a successful levy campaign, and have begun executing a really exciting master facilities plan. It will definitely shape our district's future. All of this was accomplished by keeping students and their families at the center of everything we did, even when we disagreed. David, Melissa, and the entire team at Central Office, thank you so much for your steady leadership and unwavering commitment to this district. To my fellow board members, past and present, thank you for your passion and partnership in all that. To our educators and staff, you are part of this district, so thank you for everything you do every day. To parents and students, your voices make us better. And finally, to our students overall, keep dreaming big. This community believes in you. And as I step away, I hope that you all continue to strive for excellence, respectfully disagree, and enthusiastically support every child without exception.

Mr. Vorst: I'll try not to be too repetitive. I made a lot of cuts to this. I've got it down to about 40 minutes, so I appreciate you guys sitting tight. I'm just kidding. First of all, thank you to David. You've always been answering my questions. You've always engaged in thoughtful discussion. I don't know if everyone truly

appreciates how hard you work. I've told David that sometimes I'll send him an email on Tuesday night at 9:12 pm, and by 9:17 pm, I'll have a response. It can wait until tomorrow. It's okay. Go to sleep. But thank you. We all appreciate how hard you work. Melissa, I see hiring you as one of the best decisions we made as a board, and we had further evidence of that earlier tonight. We're really grateful for your experience and expertise. And you're a shining light in our district, and we're really proud to have you as part of our team. Rich Boettner, stand up. Rich is our IT guy. So when I first sat up here, I got mobilized with the Army and was gone for a couple of months. Rich always made sure I was connected for meetings and kept me in the loop on a lot of things. I'll never forget that. I really do appreciate it. I think you're gonna be retiring in the next couple years, right? We're grateful for all you do, and I really appreciate it. Mark Tremayne, is our ace in the hole. He does some things that not every other district does, and he's super innovative and looking for other ways to help our kids grow and experience educational opportunities that aren't available everywhere else. So we're really grateful for all you do, even though you're a Michigan fan. We are truly grateful to the principals who engaged with us, the parents, supporters, and every one of our team members. Everyone who works here is what makes our district great. And we're lucky to have everyone in all those different roles. And finally, to my dear friend Beth Murdoch. Thanks for always lending an ear to me, for having my back, and for telling me when an idea was dumb before I ever said it out loud. I look forward to visiting you in Aruba. I'm grateful to all of you. I hope that you continue to serve our community well. As a group, I'm proud of all our accomplishments, both when it was easy and when it was hard. It's no secret that I'm up here because of the COVID policies. I ask everyone to do what it takes to help our kids win and engage members of the community. But when it's easy and when it's not, please don't be guided by what is convenient, popular, or just by doing what everyone else is doing. Please don't let societal or cultural trends guide your decisions; go boldly in the direction of academic success, safety, and responsibility, thus continuing to make our schools a place that we're proud of. It's been an honor to sit in the people's chair, and I really do wish everyone the best. Thank you.

Mr. Perry: I truly have enjoyed serving with both of you. The two of you have truly challenged me personally. You brought a unique perspective to this board that I think benefited us in the long run. I'm so happy I served with you. You will be missed.

Mrs. Crowley: I will not speak because I'll cry, and nobody wants to see that. You know how I feel.

Ms. Arnold: Thank you for your service.

G. REPORTS / INFORMATION / EXHIBIT ITEM

G1 Committee Reports

Mrs. Crowley: I have one. We had ISPTO in November. We had a wonderful presentation by Jamie Lennox. Very informative. I took an entire page of notes and then didn't bring it here today. So I apologize because Jamie did such a wonderful job. The parents there were so appreciative of the information that you shared with them. I know a lot about schools and special ed, and I still learned, like I said, a whole page of information. Thank you for your time and for showing up at that meeting. It was a wonderful, you did a wonderful job.

We also updated our fundraising and events list, which I think is really cool. At my workplace in Southwestern, we don't have an ISPTO. So we live in our own little bubbles, but here in Hilliard, it's amazing that the PTO comes together to share all their assemblies, fundraisers, and what they do for spirit

night. It builds such a community, and you hear what works and what doesn't. I look forward to that every year, even though it's a longer meeting. It is well worth it, and the schools benefit greatly from it.

Ms. Arnold: I don't have a committee report, per se. We recently attended the OSBA Capital Conference for three days of sessions that we could all attend and choose what interests us and what our passions might be. I took 17 pages of notes, and we're going to go through each one page by page here. I am not going to do that. One note really jumped out at me, and it was a recurring theme across many of them. We know that a group is seeking to eliminate property taxes. They have a petition going around. If that petition is successful in being put on the ballot, and should it actually pass...One of the speakers at luncheon, Bill Sykes, a former legislator, you may have heard of him, had one glaring note if that were to occur. To make up the difference from property taxes, we would either need a 10% flat income tax or a 20% sales tax to recoup what is lost through property taxes. If you're not aware, the latest legislature passed at 2.75% flat income tax in Ohio. So, 10% would be a significant jump. These are sobering statistics and numbers that we should all think about in educating those folks out there about what property taxes do and how the state should be funding us. Thank you.

EXECUTIVE SESSION / ADJOURNMENT

H1 The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.