



MEETING NOTES

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. Members present: Ms. Arnold, Mrs. Crowley, Mrs. Murdoch, Mr. Perry, and Mr. Vorst.
3. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
4. The Board of Education adopted the agenda.
5. Construction Update

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

Mr. Stewart: We have four presentations prepared for you this evening. The first is an update on some of the construction projects. Our friends from Schorr Architects are here to share some of that information.

Mr. McDonough: We have two quick updates for you this evening that Rachel, one of our partners from Schorr Architects, will share with you. She also shared them with you at our last work session. You approved the Darby High School weight room contract at our last board meeting. Tonight, we have a proposed contract for the security vestibules on the agenda. She'll go through each of those projects, show you some visuals, and talk a little bit about each one, so I'll turn it over to her.

Ms. Eiferd: As mentioned, I'm Rachel Eiferd of Schorr Architects, and I've been working on the Darby weight room. You guys approved them, and Ferguson Construction won the award. So far, the zoning certificate and conditional use level B site plan applications have been approved. The project estimate was \$1.15 million, and our bid was under that at \$814,506.

Here's a site plan showing an aerial view of Darby High School. The red box shows the location of the new weight room facility. If this looks familiar, it's because Davidson High School has something similar. Again, our site plan shows the facility running parallel with the high school. The enlarged plan to the right shows a new sidewalk leading up to the entry. Next to the entry is a large roll-up garage door. Inside, we have a small office and plenty of space for all the workout machines. The building will also have windows and mechanical pads around the exterior.

This is a view of the rendering, which shows what your building will look like. Next, I've got a view from the opposite corner.

Construction starts in April, the groundbreaking happens in June, and the owner occupancy is in the fall of this year. So, I'm going to hand it off to my colleague Paul, who will give you an update on the secured entries.

Mr. Miller: Thank you. Good evening. I'm Paul Miller with Schorr Architects. We did the public bid process for the secured entries. Our estimate for that project was \$760,000. It came in a little bit higher at \$825,400. That's just about 9% over the published estimate. This project estimate was established

before all this tariff nonsense. And so, we're starting to see a little escalation in those costs because the market is uncertain. We are pleased that this is an awardable bid. We are limited to that 10% rule over the architect's estimate, so getting bids within that range is common. Rachel just shared that the weight room came in under, and here we're a little bit higher, so overall, it shakes out, but that's the cause of what we're looking at.

In terms of the secured entries, I shared with you previously that we're breaking up the work at multiple locations over many years so that this work can be carved out per summer. So, the priorities established for this year are the high schools, two middle schools, and Tharp sixth-grade school.

The main objective of this project was to create a secure vestibule so that you don't enter directly into the school but are directed into an office or into a secure area to check in. You run your safe ID scan and then enter the school. That manifests itself a little bit differently depending on how the school is laid out and the floor plan. Bradley gets a security upgrade to the hardware given its configuration. But Darby and Davidson will get a small addition, a vestibule that you would enter, and then enter the offices directly to the right. So, with these additions, we're cutting a door in the existing exterior wall that fits underneath the existing open canopy that becomes a closed canopy.

For the middle schools, we can make that a simple door being cut within the existing vestibule to cut into the office. That's directly to your left when you enter those. Of course, to make this work, we have to secure the exterior and interior doors. You'll see work happening on both sides regarding the door hardware. But we have the adjacency available to just cut a door there.

Tharp is prototypical of many elementary schools, so it was our first candidate to try this new configuration in the floor plan. If this is fitting, I think it will set the precedent for the elementary schools. But the issue is that the vestibule is up close by the door, and there's no direct access to the office. So, we need to elongate that roughly to the threshold. If you're familiar with Washington, that's where the door threshold is. Washington's more recent floor plan probably considers this. But many of our existing elementary schools have it up close, so this creates a zigzag configuration. So, in the image in the lower left, we remove the doors in the existing frame and extend the vestibule into the school. That allows you to continue into the office directly to the right. So, this is the cost-economical configuration for us to work with the existing infrastructure in that school and achieve the security requirements that we need for the traffic flow.

Like I said at Bradley High School, there are improvements. Those are door hardware only, so I don't have a reconfiguration. It's more or less the same geometry you're seeing today, but it is getting work done.

Construction is intended to start in June. We have two milestone dates for this. Bradley, Tharp, Heritage, and Weaver's owner occupancy is set for August 15, before students arrive. We need more time to wrap up the addition projects at Darby and Davidson, so we have set October 31st as the owner occupancy date for those buildings.

Any questions?

Ms. Arnold: Quick question on Weaver and Heritage. As the image you had there shows, there are some HVAC elements in there. Is that going to be replaced or just removed?

Mr. Miller: It is being replaced. In both locations, a cabinet unit heater serves that vestibule. We're going to a ceiling-mounted unit to open up that space and cut into the office.

Mr. Vorst: So, was it Darby and Davidson that won't be completed until Halloween?

Mr. Miller: Yes, for the additions themselves.

Mr. Vorst: Will that affect the traffic flow, and how will we handle that?

Mr. McDonough: We will operate as business as usual until we complete that. It's all about the lead times, so we're trying to get that done so we can hopefully beat that. But until that time, it'll operate as business as usual.

Mr. Miller: And our thought on that as well. During the summertime, we can complete the messy construction work, such as cutting up the concrete to get footings, and cutting the door into the building. That work that needs to happen when schools are out will take place over the summer by the first threshold milestone date. We will be wrapping up more finish types or working within that confined area for construction for the second milestone date.

Mrs. Crowley: I wasn't going to rave about the ISPTO bus tour at this meeting. I was going to wait until the next meeting. But it was so helpful to go to those sites and see the plan for the secured entrances. So, if you're having a hard time picturing it, hop over there because Mike and his team did a great job explaining what it will look like. It was very helpful.

6. Commitment Plan – EOY Review

Mr. Stewart: Okay, next, Jill Abraham will give us our yearly update on the commitment plan's work.

Mrs. Abraham: Good evening. I'm excited to share our work on the commitment plan with you this evening. If you remember when I spoke with you earlier in the school year, we were introducing a new three-year plan. And so this evening, I hope to remind you how this work is connected to bigger bodies of work, revisit the three-year goals, highlight the progress within our first year, and then give you a little insight into where they will be headed next year.

It's great when you're continuously improving, and all the dots connect. We feel like this plan did do all those things. We started when we made the plan by first looking at our students. And even though you would think that our number is pretty consistent, the needs of our students change from one year to the next. This year, we saw a higher number of homeless students, more students from economically disadvantaged homes, and students enrolling where English was not the first language spoken in their homes. So again, different students bring different opportunities for us and our support.

We also connected the work to the strategic plan, which lets us know where we're headed. The commitment plan helps us define how we're going to get there. So, if you think about the presentations that you've been having, especially since the winter break, those have all been actions that were defined in the strategic plan. And you'll hear me reference them again tonight, but there's a tight connection between that and this plan. Of course, the portrait of a learner includes the competencies identified by our community. ODEW (*Ohio Department of Education and Workforce*) has clearly defined for us in terms of academic readiness and what they expect in terms of proficiency. Also, the college career workforce and military readiness components, which Mark has talked to you about, are something new.

We frequently talk about every student without exception. When we say this, we really mean 100% of our students. What does it take to get 100% of your students to achieve these goals? We spent a lot of time in conversation, problem-solving, and honest reflection on what works well and maybe what isn't moving some of our student groups.

If you remember, our goals were all identified as 100% goals, and they were three broad categories: academic readiness goals. So, at the end of this three-year plan, our intention is that students in grades K through two are on track in reading, students in grades three through 12 are proficient in literacy and math, and students in grades eight through 11 are proficient in social studies and science, again as defined by the expectations of the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

Similarly, the second set of goals is around integrated learning and career readiness. It's our intention that pre-K through 12 students will be able to access experiences that integrate curriculum, careers, and interests. Finally, you've heard us talk quite a bit about this. Something that Mark has worked towards this year is that students in grades seven through 12 will have an opportunity to earn 12 industry-recognized credential points and demonstrate proficiency in the core subject areas, which would result in a rating of four more stars on the college career, workforce, and military component of the state report card.

Our last goals are almost like bookends. There's attendance and graduation. We believe firmly that for our teachers to have an impact, our kids have to be at school. So, we continue to monitor and push towards 100% of our students maintaining an attendance rate of 95% or better. Ultimately, if we are able to reach our other goals, our students are most likely to meet the state requirements for graduation within four years, which has been a continued area of focus for us.

We've made many plans and done much reflecting, and this is what we've done in this first year. One of the things that we have focused on is looking at the data a little bit differently. So, in the past, what we may have done is if I were a fifth-grade reading teacher, I might have looked at one year, and I had 77% of my students who were proficient. And in the next year, 80%. And I might've celebrated having 3% more of the students who met that benchmark.

But in reality, when you follow groups of students, you sometimes see a very different story. So, let's take the same students that I had in 2024. In 2023, when they were in fourth grade, they might've had 65% of them meeting proficiency. But during my time with them, we were able to get to 80% proficiency. So there's a big difference between seeing a 15% growth and a 3% growth. In fairness to our kids and our teachers, it's most helpful to follow cohorts of kids and how they're evolving over time.

The same thing happens when you look at the third grade. This is just another example of third-grade math compared to fourth-grade math. If you look, it would've just been a 1% difference. But looking across the years, you can see it was 7%. So, we've been very focused on looking at cohorts of kids, and that's what we will follow. Again, the ultimate goal is that in three years, those cohorts will have made it to a hundred percent.

Some other things we did this year as part of this commitment plan, we changed our windows for STAR testing, which allowed us to intervene earlier in many ways. So, for example, we did our typical start of the year, September testing, and we tested again in December as opposed to January, which allowed buildings to give the assessment and, in some cases, have conversations about it even before winter break or as soon as we got back. Then, teachers could step in again and intervene with the kids. In the

past, when we gave the star assessment in January, it could have pushed a response out maybe till February. And so this gave them more time. Similarly, we've usually given it at the end of the school year, in the month of May. This year, we moved it up to March. Again, it's allowed us to get an earlier read and still be responsive to our students for the rest of the year.

We have also shifted and are focusing more on the scaled score rather than the percentile rank. For that reason, we can follow the scaled score across grade levels. Again, as we're trying to follow cohorts of kids and compare their likelihood of passing the state tests, we're hopeful it is a more valuable score for us to focus on.

Some of our teachers have done some unique goal setting with their students. Some teachers have done it for their kids, and they're holding that number in their minds as to what they're shooting for. Others have engaged kids and know what their STAR scores are, where they hope they will be at the end of the year. But for some of our teachers, that's new. And for some of our kids, that's new. So, we're hoping that when they understand the value and that people are looking at the scores, their performance on the STAR test will also be positively influenced.

Then, especially at the secondary level, our interdisciplinary teams began collaborating and looking at the reading and math data. In some of our buildings, especially where our science and social studies teachers are teaming up with their ELA colleagues to say, "How can I help with doing some different reading within this content area?"

Lastly, again, we're looking at each of our students' proficiency trajectory. It's unreasonable to think we will get to 100% in one year. Some people would say it's unreasonable to think we will get there in three years. But it's a lot easier when you look at a cohort of kids and say, 80% were proficient last year. It would be much more manageable if I could pick up how many percent between now and in three years. And this year, I know many of our principals encouraged teachers to just think about it in terms of if you can move a third of your kids in this year and get them to proficiency and help other kids maintain their place, it becomes maybe a different manageable goal.

Some other things that we did as part of the commitment plan work were reviewing schedules, especially bell schedules, in relation to curriculum and resource expectations. One of the things that we realized was that the difference in minutes that we had in sixth grade for our ELA classrooms in comparison to our math classrooms was out of balance. So, we moved those closer together. We are sitting at 96 minutes for ELA and 46 minutes for math. And as we move into next year, both subject areas will have 65 minutes. Hopefully, that will help support our kids in their math learning as well.

As I mentioned, we've also talked a lot about the interdisciplinary teams and our ability to share the responsibility of helping support our students as readers within different content areas. Again, some of our secondary teams have begun to introduce how we build that into our day. Additionally, there have been staffing decisions at the secondary level to ensure that there is a staff member available at each period moving forward into next year who can provide additional support in ELA and math.

We are also working through after our special ed audit. One of the recommendations that we are moving forward with is to move to a co-teaching model to support our secondary ELA students. Again, it's about giving our students access to grade-level curriculum and then being able to support their unique, individualized needs.

The EL audit pointed out that teachers needed continued professional development to understand the unique learning journey of our EL students, especially those who are working on acquiring the language skills necessary for their success in school. We will look forward to next year and see what support our teachers need to better support our kids and their increased needs.

Similarly, Cori, her team, and Jamie have looked at specific resources supporting the intervention needs. Elementary has been very focused on ensuring all resources align with the science of reading for the last few years, and we have similarly purchased resources to support the MTSS process for next year that align with that research.

We've repurposed positions, and that's where I referenced being able to have somebody throughout the day who can provide reading and math support. We've also—I'm going to talk about it again in a little bit—repurposed our capstone coaches so that they will be graduation and pathway coaches next year. Again, that will help us work towards that graduation goal and help kids identify what they want to do as they move forward beyond Hilliard schools.

We've also tried to know and respond to students' needs more quickly. I talked about getting the data more quickly, but our elementary teachers jumped in from the second week of school, and in many cases, we're supporting students based on their STAR data from last spring. And again, I call it a boot camp in the sense of getting in there and giving them some support before we get the STAR data in September. Every minute that we can pick up is an advantage to our kids. And so elementary did that, and we hope that we can also have our secondary staff be more knowledgeable of the data that we gather both here in March and the state data, and they can intervene more quickly as we go into the start of the school year.

Lastly, we've had a very different focus in terms of class placements, course placements, and building schedules. Again, with those three years in mind, we are thinking about how we can put kids together in classrooms that allow students to provide support so that we can reach those three-year goals.

This is a lot of Mark Tremayne's work. But as we've moved from academic readiness and really thought about the college career workforce and military readiness expected of us, Mark has had two broad areas of focus. One is to create meaningful engagement around future readiness. He's done that in two ways. He has expanded the understanding of current careers among staff and especially secondary teachers through World of Work Tours. Similarly, he has worked to expand our K-12 experiences. He thinks of it in terms of bands, where PK through five is about career awareness. Six through eight is about exploration, and grades nine through 12, we want our students to be planning and doing in careers of interest.

He's also worked closely with other districts to create partnerships in different industries. As you can imagine, connecting kids to different industries can be a lot of work. I often have to say to Mark because he'll say to me, "Gosh, there were only thirty-five kids who wanted to go to that." Maybe only 35 kids want to go to that, and that's okay. But when you combine that with other districts, it makes it more worthwhile with our community partners as well.

I also want to show you this. I'm not going to go through all of these, but this is just the depth and breadth of the experiences. He's talked about a K-12 continuum, so you can see the vertical opportunities for kids. His goal, especially as he looks to year two, is to make those broader within each grade band.

One area that has grown significantly this year is in grades six through eight. A partnership with Wexner Medical has allowed some of our kids to benefit from their areas of expertise. However, we also have the middle school career and lifestyle fair for seventh-grade students. That is connected to the Find Your Grind platform that Kara had a chance to try out, and we've had over 40 community partners who want to be a part of that day. We're really excited about what that will mean for our students.

The other thing is that at Hilliard U, our middle school teachers who do not teach ELA or math will be earning their career tech credentials. That will allow us to do two things: one, we'll be able to get more funding for our career tech experiences, and two, it gives teachers credit for the conversations that they're having with students. So, for example, if you're a physical education teacher and you are talking about different careers within physical education, this credential, this background, again, helps to be considered as growing our kids towards their career cluster.

When we discuss credentials, this is where it always gets a little bit confusing, so I'm going to flip to the slide to make it a little bit easier for you. Our goal is that all our students have the opportunity to get 12 industry-recognized credentials because that's one path to graduation. This column lists ways kids can easily pick up the credentials to reach 12. Over here, these are more specific to specific career fields. So, if someone were going to pursue a business career, these are different credentials that would be earned in the classes they've had.

We're trying to build a way for seventh and eighth-grade students who start with this first course to earn their first three credentials, and then it becomes very easy. So again, that's just one pathway for students to get to graduation. In addition to that, our team has gone through and looked at multiple industries and again identified the different ways that students can earn those credentials. So, this is just another way to look at it. But again, we're excited about what this means for our students.

Lastly, we have developed a course audit tool that allows us to take a course and determine whether it contributes to graduation requirements and post-secondary readiness. Is it part of a career cluster? Is it connected to the commitment plan and the portrait competencies? Have kids weighed in? This could happen in a variety of ways, including that they're requesting this course and staying enrolled in it. We also look at SchoolLinks. That's how we find out a lot of what they're interested in. And then there are other considerations. This is a tool developed this year that they will use as they move forward.

Lastly, it's just in terms of relationships. I picked this as a broad category because the way that it's defined in the commitment plan, it's not just about interpersonal relationships, but it's about the relationships of seeing learners and seeing community, and recognizing those specific needs. So, some things that we've done this year are that all our PK through 12 staff are now trained in restorative practices. We finished up with preschool and elementary. In many of our buildings, our elementary teachers had a different focus on PBIS to provide our students with skills for emotional regulation within the classroom.

We've done the two audits that I've referenced, and again, they have illuminated our students, our current programming, and resources, and identified gaps that we need to consider. We've also expanded our community partnerships in the ways that I highlighted through Mark. Then, we've included students and their voices in many different ways. So that could have been something as simple as our three or 4-year-old preschool students who contributed to the preschool course of study review and provided their perspective on what they wanted in their education, all the way up to our EL students who have served on panels and been in front of our audit committees and such. Finally, there

is ParentSquare, a communication tool that Stacie and Rich will discuss. But it's just a way to allow us to be more connected—all of our families to be connected. And that is a big goal for us.

So, looking ahead to year two, the work that will come from all of those different structures and things that I've talked about is the hope that we will be able to intervene with our students early and often, implement a new bell schedule in sixth grade, and utilize the repurposed positions that I referenced using new curricular resources. Preschool has a new resource, the secondary MTSS EL curriculum for newcomers. Then, EL, ELA one, two, and three have a new curriculum. And then continuing to implement readiness assessments in ELA and math so that we know where our students are.

We'll also continue to support our teachers and those who will be working the co-teaching model for secondary ELA, further PD around supporting our EL students, and how we respond to the student data that's in front of us.

We'll continue to expand the students' career interests, so Mark will work both vertically and horizontally to make that happen. We'll then continue to work and implement restorative practices and PBIS, and, as always, our attendance will continue to be a focus.

So, it's a lot of information. Do you have any questions?

Mrs. Murdoch: I just want to say that these are always some of my favorite presentations. I geek out over the data. I love what I'm seeing here. Based on what you showed, I feel confident we will achieve or move the needle towards some of these goals. What would you say are some of the biggest risks to our plan? It looks like you've covered so many bases. What could be left?

Mrs. Abraham: Obviously, when you say 100%, that's a risk. But I also think it's a risk when you don't say 100% because the question is, who do you see that isn't going to get there? And, we often ask ourselves, do we want it to be our own child? And we don't. Of course, the risk when we say 100% is that we continue to have the support because it takes a lot of work, a lot of time, and minimal distractions to focus on the needs of kids.

The other unknown right now is who will show up? Who will we enroll this year? Things have changed for us in the last couple of years, and we must ensure that our teachers are supported in different ways, whether through PD or the resource, based on the kids who show up. And this year was a different year again.

Again, I don't know if there are risks; there are things that we think about. We also think that we learned a lot in this first year, but we didn't implement all of those things. We've watched and rethought, and now we've got an idea of where we want to go. So, the results for year one: Will we hit the first-year target in our buildings? And if we don't, then where do we start in the second year so that we can get after that second-year target?

I will miss the work because I like it a lot. It's exciting work. Those are things that I think people have to keep a level head about.

Mrs. Murdoch: Yeah, you can tell an amazing amount of thought has gone into this. An amazing amount of work will come to all of you to execute on this. So, it's much appreciated. And like I said, I can see the clear path to how we will improve based on this. So, thank you.

Mr. Vorst: Is this your last presentation at a meeting?

Mrs. Abraham: I said it today when I had to practice with everybody in cabinet, and Dave said he would find another one. And I'm going to say that's okay. I'm going to let somebody else.

Mr. Perry: I just wanted to mention that there are many things, internal and external, that are constantly changing. One of the risks, I think, is being too locked into our own mindset, but having that flexibility allows us to adapt. One of the biggest things we are doing here, which we talk about all the time, is early intervention. We're really going to focus on that. I'd love to see what that's built into this plan over and over again because we all know that, intervening early, you get the biggest bang for your buck later on down the road. It also helps you identify where we are with things changing to know where we're going in the future. So that's awesome that we're really focusing on that. So, thanks.

7. Strategic Plan – Communications

Mr. Stewart: Okay, Jill referenced this, but as part of the strategic plan work, one of the goals was to look at how we interact with families and communicate. And so, some work has been done, and some exciting changes are coming. Stacie Raterman and Rich Boettner will share this with you.

Ms. Raterman: Hi. How are you guys? I'm not used to doing formal presentations with you, so bear with me.

As everybody mentioned, we will talk about our communication strategic plan. This communication tool we're rolling out isn't just one goal; it's in every fabric of our strategic plan. But to point out a couple, goal one, student learning, we're committed to building a cohesive system of support that's clear and concise for not only students, but our teachers, our staff, and our families.

The second goal, family engagement and wellbeing, is also a no-brainer. We know that school-to-home relationships are key. They are a priority, and we must reach out to our parents where they are, whether for parent-teacher conferences, extracurricular activities, or a staff member who wants to touch base with a kid at home. We need to move forward with a system that actually works.

Then, in goal four, technology, we also aim to engage the broader community. This is where we want to reach our business community and our constituents. We know that the students in our district come from a small percentage of our population. I can't think of the number now, but I believe 80% of our district population doesn't have kids who come to our schools. So, we need to find ways to reach everybody where they are.

We all know our current challenges, right? We've got a million different ways for our parents and families to find information and for staff to communicate back and forth with parents. We have things like School Messenger, Safe Arrival, and Talking Points. We also have many different apps that teachers, coaches, and performing arts staff use. And at every school and every level, we hear from our parents that it's confusing. They want one system. And that's really what we're looking at. So right now, the systems that we have in place are just not working for our staff or our families.

So why Parents Square? It was interesting in our committee, and I'll put the committee names up after this. It was a unanimous decision by far for this platform. We met with several companies, and this provides one secure, centralized platform for all communication, and it will take us more than a minute to get there.

But this could be for all communication with parents. As I mentioned before, it'll improve engagement with our parents by meeting them where they are and by what means they want to be talked to. Whether it's an email, a text, an app, or a web-based platform, whatever it is, parents will be able to choose how they communicate with us. And if they don't choose at all, because some parents don't always choose, they will still receive the information from our staff in an email. So, they will always have options.

So, what's going away? The things that the district pays for that will be going away this summer are School Messenger, Safe Arrival, and Talking Points, because this system will do all those for us. This will also replace things like Remind or Team Snaps for athletics, so that our coaches can have this platform and communicate directly with parents and students who opt into this platform.

So, what is it, and when can we see it? We're going to start seeing it this summer. It does everything we need, such as alerts, emergency notifications, and classroom updates. It has a calendar feature and event information. Permission slips and signups can happen on this platform. Our principals won't have to use a Sign Up Genius. They can do signups here for their events and parent-teacher conferences. It will also help with attendance reporting and tracking. It works as an app, an email, a text, a phone call, and on the web. So again, what I think is important about this is parents don't want to download another app or don't want to do that, then they certainly don't have to.

The two-way messaging is what's exciting, I think, and makes me nervous. But we know staff are texting with families, and this will protect everybody, keeping it safe, keeping public records requests in order, and that no one will have to give out their personal cell phone number. Parents don't have to give it out. And our teachers, principals, and coaches don't have to give out their personal numbers. It can all go through Parents Square, where it's safe and secure. We did a staff survey last spring, and this was probably the number one thing we heard from our staff: they want two-way communication.

This is an explanation of it. So, if it's on your phone, the great thing with our EL families is that teachers will write in their native language, and the families will write in their native language, and it will automatically translate for them. This is why it will be a useful tool, like Talking Points was, and this is how we will communicate with parents when they want an app. I know Lena was a part of the process, too. I know she was excited about it for our staff and the teachers.

Mr. Boettner: So, just going back to that real quick. When a teacher sends a message out, they're writing in the language that is their primary language, but when the parent receives it, they will receive it in the language that is marked as their primary language. Then, if the teacher or principal has turned on reply, and if the parent replies with a question, they can write in the language they're comfortable writing in, so that the teacher will receive it back in the language they receive or speak, and then write it. So, it's amazing. There are 190 languages in this solution. Similar to Talking Points, they use multiple translation tools. Every tool is a little different; no tool is perfect, but every tool does different languages better than others. And so, this tool allows for that.

On the security and compliance component. Obviously, over the last three to four years, security and compliance have become extremely important in the way we handle data and how we protect that data. Parent Square is doing it right. It's a fairly modern system, which is part of the reason why it's so good.

It's easy to use, and it's well designed. It uses all the greatest standards. In addition to that, it's Sysnet compliant, and it's SOC 2 certified. They've already signed the Ohio DPA, which is important to us now

that state law changed in October around compliance with state laws around security. Lots of good things there. You may not know all those terms. Just know that's a good thing that they have approved all those, and they're compliant with those things.

As we start with our implementation plan, we hope to pilot the platform this summer, during summer school. We have a small cohort of students, parents, and staff members who can begin to practice this and use it with a small group of people to get it right, get it all figured out, and work through the bumps. Then, the plan is to go district-wide in the fall, at the beginning of the school year.

So, principals will be able to begin their school year by sending messages out, and then very quickly, we will do teacher training during those startup days at the beginning of the school year. Teachers will be able to begin using it. They'll be able to take advantage of groups, like extracurricular groups, sporting groups, or their classrooms, and many different kinds of groups with which they can communicate.

As we enter the fall, we will begin training and practicing with the band and performing arts staff. We don't want to start with them at the beginning of the school year since many are practicing and communicating with parents in June. We don't want to try to make them do that when we're still working out the kinks. So, we'll bring those groups on later and transition whenever works best for them. We'll provide ongoing training, support, and feedback on the plan and our implementation as we move through that.

How will we measure success? One is people's involvement, response, and access to the information. We have a lot of statistics and a lot of data on the use of our previous systems. We should see measurable bumps in that, particularly when we're providing a system that is modern and easy to use and translates into a language that they might need.

All of these things should be beneficial. We can monitor that. The system provides amazing reports, and that's literally the tiny tip of the iceberg as to how to monitor whether people are contactable, whether they're receiving those messages or not, whether they're opening those messages or not. There are so many details that will help us, so we could say, hey, we're noticing you're not getting email messages anymore. Did your email change? Can we help you get that adjustment made? Something to that effect.

Ms. Raterman: This is a list of everyone who participated in it. We're excited about this. This will be a big shift, but from our parents' perspective, we don't think there will be a lot different for them on their end. They'll enjoy how simple and easy it looks and get what they want. And we really believe this will ensure greater communication between all community stakeholders.

Do you have any questions?

Ms. Arnold: I'll just comment. I saw this preview last week with the PTO and booster group. Generally, folks were excited, but there were some pointed questions about how that would work for our PTO and booster groups. But overall, it will be a good thing anytime we can reduce the noise and get the signal through. I'm always going to push for our PTO and boosters to get the full access that they'll need down the road. But again, like Rich talked about last week, talking about those circles as we expand out, making sure we can do it right here first and then move it on out. So, I think we'll be good.

Mrs. Crowley: I'm excited.

8. Five-Year Forecast Assumption Discussion

Mr. Stewart: Okay, moving on. Perhaps the trickiest job in Ohio right now is the treasurer. And so, as you know, in May, Melissa will need to deliver a five-year forecast to you. And that forecast is driven by a set of assumptions. So, Melissa will talk about how she will generate those assumptions. And then next month, you'll get the actual forecast.

Mrs. Swearingen: I thought I'd start by handing out dartboards and magic eight balls. That's what we're dealing with right now. But as Dave mentioned, I will have the five-year forecast on the May 12th agenda for your approval. We must have that approved by the end of May, and that is our only board meeting next month. So, tonight, I just wanted to walk through the forecast process, the state budget process, and some other items that factor into our assumptions.

The five-year forecast is an essential planning and management tool for school districts. A district's financial forecast projects its financial position at a specific point in time using the best data available. Forecasts are inherently subject to change due to dynamic factors like legislative changes, economic shifts, and unexpected expenses. They are a snapshot of the data available at the time of their preparation.

The May forecast gives the board and administration a clearer picture of the district's financial health going into the next year. The May forecast has more complete and accurate data for the current fiscal year than what was available and known in November. Perhaps most importantly, the May forecast update should not include legislative budget proposals that are not final. The forecast should address the current law as is, and our forecasting tools do allow us to see what can happen if state guarantees are cut or property tax changes lower our ending cash balance faster than expected. There is a big difference, however, between modeling what-if with the forecasting tools and preparing a five-year forecast with what is currently known and verifiable.

As we proceed this evening, we will review the proposed state aid and property tax law changes. These what-if graphs will outline the volume and risk of proposed legislation and demonstrate what they could mean for Hilliard City Schools if passed. The November 2024 forecast is our starting point for the May forecast update. We will discuss what has changed since November, our current knowns and unknowns, and the impact of these items on the May forecast.

So, our first half 2024 tax year property tax settlement payments were received this spring, which included collections from the newly approved operating levy. When the November forecast was approved, we did not yet have the 2024 tax year abstract with updated values for the 2024 tax year. We do now have that information. Our state funding can be updated now through April with current state funding payment reports from the state, as well as actual enrollment numbers for the school year.

In November, we made assumptions about the state budgets in fiscal years 26 through 29, which again have not been approved. Our expenditures, including salaries and benefits as well as purchased services, supplies, and other expenses, can now be updated through the actual expenses in April and the end result, with our proposed revenue and expenditures, and our cash balance. In November, we projected a fiscal year 25 ending cash balance of \$89.6 million, or 36% of our expenditures.

What we know is that we must approve and file a May forecast. We have the tax abstract 2024 values, our first half tax collection receipts, actual salary benefit payments, and other expenditures. We estimated a 25% increase in our electricity costs for fiscal year 26. It now looks like that will be closer to

35%, with the information we have received from our consultants. So, we will definitely make that update.

Our unknowns are the state budget beyond the current fiscal year, our bargaining unit agreements since we are currently in negotiations with both of our bargaining units, and future medical insurance increases.

I thought now might be a good time to review the state budget process. The governor has presented his version of the budget, House Bill 96. The House has passed its version, which is Substitute House Bill 96. We are awaiting the Senate's proposal. May 16th is the deadline for their amendments, and we expect the Senate rollout on June 3rd. Then they'll potentially make a second round of changes. And on June 12th, they are expected to vote. Following that, there will be a conference committee and then the governor's approval, which, if it's anything like the past couple of cycles, will happen at the 11th hour on June 30th.

So, with the proposed legislation, the governor's budget includes the continued phase-in years five and six of the fair school funding plan, but does not include an update to base costs, which means that districts like Hilliard would lose money because the funding formula would not account for inflationary increases in those base costs. We are not currently on a funding guarantee, but the result of House Bill 96 proposes to freeze the base costs at those 2022 levels, while increasing our local wealth to the 2024 levels pushes us onto the funding guarantee in fiscal year 26, which is at least a full year earlier than our previous funding scenarios would've predicted.

At the same time, House Bill 96 reduces the amount of the 2020 guarantee funding to 95% for fiscal year 26 and 90% in 2027. The House-passed version restores the annual state funding restrictions proposed by the governor, but abandons the fair school funding plan and places districts on a temporary model, which also fails to update the base costs. Under this proposal, we would receive the same state funding as in fiscal year 25. However, the House version also restricts the school district's cash balance, capping the carryover at 30% of the prior year's expenses.

So now we're going to move into some visuals. This slide only looks at state funding. It includes the restricted and unrestricted portions but does not consider any cash balance. It's just strictly that state revenue. The dark gray or middle line is our November forecast, as we approved and filed with the state, in which we were projecting a slight decline in state funding for fiscal years 26 and 27, as we move towards that funding guarantee and because the slight increase in the base cost that we were projecting or hoping for still does not quite keep up with inflation. The light blue or top line is the House version as passed, which essentially continues our funding at the fiscal year 25 level with a guarantee of no less funding than in fiscal year 25. The dark blue line at the bottom is Governor DeWine's approved budget with no increase in the base cost and the reduction and phase out of the guarantee. Again, the purpose of this slide is to look at the state funding component only. It does not include the proposed House version of the cash balance cap.

So, now we will shift and walk through a couple of graphs that show the impact of the cap on our current ending cash balance. A couple of things to keep in mind. We have a board policy related to cash balance, which indicates that the board believes maintaining a cash balance reserve of 20% of operating expenses is necessary in the interest of sound fiscal management. Any indication of a cash balance of less than 20% at any point during our forecast triggers a discussion where the superintendent and treasurer will propose options that the board may consider. 20% is the minimum and allows us to

continue operations when funding payments are delayed, enter multi-year agreements and contracts, and maintain our bond rating.

We were just on the ballot and very clearly communicated our current cash balance and why we opted to be on the ballot when we were. Building a cash balance at the beginning of a levy cycle is normal since the tax revenue collected from the levy does not increase with inflation, but our expenditures do.

This graph shows our calculated cash balance as a percentage of expenditures. That's the orange bars there. The blue line represents a 30% cash balance expenditure cap. You can see that in fiscal years 25 through 28, we are projecting a cash balance in excess of 30% of expenditures. In all five years, we will be above the 20% required by board policy.

This graph looks at the cash balance cap a little bit differently. It provides a comparison of the forecasted cash balance at the end of each fiscal year in the forecast. The gray line represents a 30% threshold on district cash balance. The blue bar is our forecast without reduced revenue, and the orange bar shows the reduced revenue if a cap existed.

A cap is currently proposed in Substitute House Bill 96, which would reduce our property tax collections beginning in calendar year 2026, which would impact collections in fiscal years 26 and 27. Once this reduction occurs, our cash balance will drop below the cap for fiscal year 27 and beyond. Note that the cash balance in fiscal year 29, which is the last year, drops below our 20% required by board policy.

Next week, I will update the forecast model with the actual April financial data we'll have as we close the month. Then, we'll incorporate any other changes that would impact those assumptions. And then I will have that forecast ready for your approval on May 12th.

Any questions for me?

Mr. Perry: Where in the general assembly is the current proposed bill for the cap? Do we know if that's in committee or if it's in what stage?

Mr. Stewart: It's out of the house.

Mrs. Swearingen: Passed through the house after they originally proposed it at 25 and it passed out at 30.

Ms. Arnold: You had mentioned you were hearing some chatter amongst folks about flipping, where instead of the cap, there's potential to look at it from the other direction, where it was a floor.

Mr. Stewart: So that's more me, assuming rather than hearing. I probably should be clear. I think that would also be bad policy. But I think from a constitutional standpoint, it would be a little bit more defensible to talk about when districts can go on the ballot in the future rather than looking backwards. But there have been no proposals along those lines at this point.

Ms. Arnold: Again, the constitutionality of how they're opposing this is something to be desired.

Mr. Stewart: Correct.

Mrs. Crowley: We've had a resolution on the agenda. I know personally, I've called and sent emails to the House and the Senate. I know you guys have done the same thing. Is there more we could do to stop this from becoming this way?

Mr. Stewart: Melissa's been working on another call to action for our community. So hopefully that'll get a response much like it did the last time.

Mrs. Crowley: That's great.

Mrs. Swearingen: We're trying to get ahead of the Senate proposal.

Mrs. Crowley: We've talked to tons of people. I feel like we call and email, and it's difficult. Thank you for that.

Mr. Vorst: Thank you.

9. The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

AWARDING CONTRACT FOR THE DISTRICTWIDE SECURED ENTRY PROJECT TO B MARTIN CONSTRUCTION, LLC

The Chief Operating Officer ("COO") recommends the Board of Education award a contract to B Martin Construction, LLC ("Contractor") for the Districtwide Secured Entry Project (the "Project").

Background:

1. The Board has identified a need for the Project
2. In compliance with applicable law, the COO and Treasurer solicited bids for the Project based upon design documents prepared by Schorr Architects, Inc. ("Architect").
3. Two bids were received for the Project. Bids were opened and read aloud on April 14, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. with the apparent low bid submitted by Contractor in the amount of \$825,400 (the "Low Bid").
4. After review of Contractor's bid submission and a scope review meeting with Contractor, the Architect recommends the contract for the Project be awarded to Contractor as the lowest responsible bidder. The COO and Treasurer concur with the recommendation and request authority to negotiate and sign an agreement with Contractor in an amount not-to-exceed the Low Bid.
5. Additionally, to avoid Project delays, the COO and Treasurer request the Board authorize contingency funds for the Project in the amount of \$82,500 (the "Contingency Funds"), and authorize the COO and/or Treasurer to sign change orders for the Project, to be billed against the Contingency Funds, in a total amount not-to-exceed the Contingency Funds. Change orders in excess of the Contingency Funds, individually or in the aggregate, will be brought to the Board for its approval.

The Board resolves as follows:

1. Based on the information provided, the Board selects Contractor as the lowest responsible bidder.

2. The Board authorizes the COO and Treasurer to negotiate and sign an agreement for the Project with Contractor in an amount not-to-exceed the Low Bid, and to sign any associated documents consistent with the intent of this resolution.
3. The Board also authorizes the Contingency Funds and authorizes the COO and/or Treasurer to sign change orders for the Project, to be billed against the Contingency Funds, in a total amount not-to-exceed the Contingency Funds. Change orders in excess of the Contingency Funds, individually or in the aggregate, will be brought to the Board for its approval.
4. No property interest in the Project will be created until all required documents have been submitted by Contractor and the agreement is executed by the designated Board representatives.

10. Policies submitted for a first reading

- a. BCE – Board Committees
- b. BD – School Board Meetings
- c. DECA – Administration of Federal Grant Funds
- d. DID – Capital Assets
- e. DJF – Purchasing/Payment Procedures
- f. DJF-R – Purchasing/Payment Procedures
- g. EDE – Computer/Online Services
- h. GBH (Also JM) – Staff-Student Relations
- i. IGAI/IGAH – Family Life Educations/Sex Education
- j. IGBA – Programs for Students with Disabilities
- k. IGBLA – Promoting Parental Involvement (New Policy)
- l. IGCH-R (Also LEC-R) – College Credit Plus
- m. IJ – Guidance Program
- n. JECBB – Interdistrict Open Enrollment
- o. JEFB – Released Time for Religious Instruction
- p. JFCK – Use of Electronic Communications Equipment by Students
- q. JGE – Student Expulsion
- r. JHC – Student Health Services and Requirements
- s. JHCA – Physical Examinations of Students
- t. JHCD – Administering Medicines to Students
- u. JHCD-R – Administering Medicines to Students
- v. JHF – Student Safety
- w. JHG – Reporting Child Abuse and Mandatory Safety Training
- x. KBA – Public’s Right to Know

Mr. Stewart: You have a list of policies submitted for first reading. No board action is required for that. So, if there's nothing else, I'll take a motion to adjourn to executive session.

11. At 7:32 p.m., the Board of Education convened in executive session to prepare for, conduct, or review negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of employment.

Mr. Stewart: I don't know how long the executive session will be, but I do not anticipate any board action following the executive session.