



BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

October 10, 2022 | Hilliard Memorial Middle School

MEETING NOTES

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

A1 President called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

A2 Members present: Mrs. Crowley, Mrs. Long, Mrs. Murdoch, Mr. Perry, and Mr. Vorst

A3 The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

B PROGRAMS / PRESENTATIONS

B1 Embrace, Empower, Inspire Award Winners

I'm John Riley, Principal at Horizon Elementary School. I'm excited to be here to honor one of our teachers that my friend Carson nominated, along with his mom, Chris, who's over there. Carson said she's a great teacher. Carson and his mom stated that Mrs. Sauer is the reason Carson loves coming to school. We are thankful to have a teacher like Mrs. Sauer and that she truly embodies the embrace, empower, and inspired award, including all that she does in the classroom and being a leader in our school. She ran our Power Hour last year, and she's been with Hilliard for six years. This is her second year as a kindergarten teacher who helps her students grow no matter where they are without exception. I'm excited to present you with the embrace, empower, and inspire award.

Good evening, everyone. I'm Cliff Hetzel, Chief Operating Officer of the district, and I am here to present the embrace, empower, and inspire award to Crystal Wiegand. Crystal was nominated by a new coworker who struggled to learn how to go about her daily duties. Crystal was tremendous in her support of her. When I read the staff member's nomination letter, I knew it was Crystal. I hear this about her from everybody. She's a wonderful person, and we're very proud to have her as part of our team. Congratulations, Crystal.

C ROUTINES

C1 The agenda is correct as presented.

C2 The Board of Education adopted the agenda as presented.

C3 The Board of Education approved the minutes from the following meetings:

- a. September 12, 2022 – Regular Meeting
- b. September 12, 2022 – Meeting Notes
- c. September 26, 2022 – Work Session Meeting
- d. September 26, 2022 – 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.

NOTE: *The audio recording of the meeting was difficult to decipher due to background noise. You may see many unfinished sentences throughout the public participation.*

Owen Archer

Hello, my name is Owen Archer, and my preferred pronouns are he/him. Last month, a woman at the board meeting was talking about her radical agenda. And in doing so, she not only called all teachers but a student a pedophile. She called them not based on any fact or reason but rather because they believed in something different. They believed in the support of all students, no matter who you are. And while that woman got up here and bullied the student, the board failed to do anything. While I support free speech, there is nothing okay about a grown woman bullying a student. I hope this school board realizes that they enabled bullying and failed to do anything to stop it. I hope they make moves and bring an end to it.

Furthermore, I'm disappointed in the board, particularly three members. They broke the sunshine policy. Not only did they discuss and change the motion language without all board members' knowledge, they even discussed policy with outside members, which is not allowed. This corruption on our board must come to an end. Political agendas do not belong in our policy, especially not the hateful and harmful MAGA policy. I sincerely hope that the board makes the necessary changes to do better. Thank you.

Scott Merillat

I want to thank you for your time today. My name is Scott Merillat, and my pronouns are he/him. Last month, policy JEFB was approved, and I am very surprised. This month, there are two policies for which I could not find any content. I tried to come prepared, but I could not come prepared without that information. So, I'm simply asking you to post the changes before the meetings.

I know you're all overwhelmed with work, and you are here as servants for all of us. I humbly ask you to reject the Ohio State Board resolution to support parents, schools, and districts in rejecting the harmful course of burdens of gender identity policies. I'm asking because this is a public school. And the public school should be very representative of all the students, including my son and his friends. This policy will create inequality amongst our student body.

Additionally, removing Title IX protections creates and increases discrimination and promotes privilege amongst those within the approved group. And it will silence and further silence the minority groups, further polarizing our country, state, city, and schools. So I simply humbly ask you not to do that. And that will be all for this evening. Thank you for your time and your service.

Linna Jordan

Good evening. My name is Linna Jordan, and President of the Hilliard Education Association. I'm here representing members who have dedicated their working lives to the students of Hilliard City Schools and are striving to hold the values reflected in the district's commitment plan. It is the opinion of the undersigned HEA members that the following alleged actions reflect the absence of responsible leadership.

Flagrantly disregarding board policies, BDDDB, BDDC, and BF by adopting language that was not presented in policy committee, that did not receive a second or third reading, and was only shared with fellow members of the board and the community at large, mere hours prior to the vote. And for failing to uphold and enforce board policies AC and KGB when a student was heckled for sharing a personal experience, when district employees were vilified, and when all civility and decorum during the public meeting was abandoned.

I'm not going to read this whole letter because we're going to present it to you, but I am here to let you know that we have voted no confidence in Nadia Long, Beth Murdoch, and Zach Vorst. We are not confident that you are doing what is best for the commitment plan, the students, and the board. We have about 800 signatures so far and are still collecting more. When we have them all calculated and amassed, we will present them to you. I hope that as you listen to comments here tonight, you understand that you broke the confidence with us and that 1,270 of us work for you to help make things better for students. And we were hoping that you were on that same path with us. Thank you.

Maria Bruno

Hello, I'm Maria Bruno, and I use she/her pronouns. I'm the public policy director at Equality Ohio, a statewide organization dedicated to the lived and legal equality of LGBTQ. First, I want to continue to extend my gratitude towards the affirming adults who have continued to wear these badges that indicate that they are a safe person for LGBTQ youth to talk to and speak to. It's my understanding that this is still a point of contention. So, one, I wanted to make myself available. Second, I want to ensure that we are all working together as a community to ensure every student feels safe and comfortable in school. I also wanted to point out the value of that indication of proactive assertion of being an affirming adult.

We all have heard the stats about the increased risk of self-harm, isolation, anxiety, and depression among LGBTQ youth. I think we are also all aware of the attacks we have seen in different legislative forms against LGBTQ youth. So it's understandable that we wouldn't necessarily assume that every adult is ready to support a student who identifies as LGBTQ and that they might need an additional affirmative action to reflect that they are, in fact, someone willing to speak to that student with an open mind, allow them a non-judgmental space to be who they are and to be a good listener. This doesn't necessarily indicate any special training. The great thing about supporting LGBTQ youth is it's both free and requires no background of education or experience. It just means listening with an open heart and being a non-judgmental space for LGBTQ youth.

So, I continue to emphasize my support for these badges and the folks wearing them and proactively seek to support LGBTQ youth. I continue to make myself available if you all have any questions about the obligations and rights related to LGBTQ students in your school district and just ways to make them feel included. And I also want to note my objection to the state board resolution that I think a few folks have also mentioned. But I just wanted to focus on thanking the adults who have made themselves continually supportive of LGBTQ youth. It really counts for a lot, and I know it means a lot to other people here. Thank you.

Cyndie Sheets

My name is Cindy Sheets, and actually, I'm not going to read what I was going to read based on the audience that we have here tonight. First, I would like to comment on the person who spoke about people calling out to LGBTQ speakers and being offensive to them. I don't know what meeting you were at, but the conservative audience members said nothing. It was the LGBTQ supporters themselves who were

heckling and yelling, “times up.” It was not the conservatives. So, I'm disappointed they would come up here and say such things to you.

Again, I can't imagine the stress that you guys are under right now, but the bottom line is we have to deal with facts over fear. The lady who just came up here said that if we don't support these LGBTQ students, there's an increase in suicide, depression, et cetera. There are zero statistics to show that, and the statistics are zero because when you do that kind of science and data collection, they don't differentiate the sexual preference of that person. So, show me a study, and I'll happily read it. But until you actually have the data to make those claims, you shouldn't come up here and state such falsehoods.

The third thing I would like to say is I actually support our conservative board members. I hope you hold the line. This is an awful fight against the devil. Thank you.

Sarah Kamento

My name is Sarah, and for those of you who frequent these board meetings, you may remember my comment from last month. I stood up here and read what I can only describe as literary form from the book found in four Hilliard City Schools. After my public reading, I submitted a citizen's request for reconsideration form, detailing my concerns, and asked about the timeline for a reconsideration process.

If you're wondering what this form is, it's the way to initiate a review process as outlined by the district for a parent or community member to express concerns. I was informed that I would need to allow time for the title to be purchased and give the individuals within the process time to read it. Now, I found this a very curious response as question number two on the citizen's request for reconsideration form reads, “are you aware of the judgment of this material by a professional critic?” If you're confused, so am I. It's increasingly apparent that there is no true form of prior review of the titles or content being made available to our children, thus allowing anyone with a personal agenda to select materials which support their viewpoint. Yet, despite this reality, the district still attempts to deter parents from pushing back on these materials with the inclusion of this question. So, I am forced to wonder what constitutes a professional critic. A professional critic that remains anonymous to the public is hardly an equality review process. As the reviewer is anonymous, their credentialing is a mystery. Their decisions are not made publicly and appropriately challenged by the community over which they advise. Finally, no credit can determine what is appropriate for each child and family. As of today, I have yet to hear back regarding the status of this reconsideration for a 277-page book that is still available on the shelves of our schools.

Further, the financial decision to purchase more of these books in order to conduct a review illustrates just how poor this district is with its limited financial resources. Why not simply utilize the copies currently residing in the library and streamline this reconsideration process? As a board, it is incumbent upon you to ensure that the district has appropriate transparent processes in place to review explicit materials. It is apparent that this is not happening. When can we, as parents, expect transparency from you, the district, that you demand of us? It is readily apparent to the casual observer that the expectation of communication goes but one way. This is one of the reasons why our district's academic performance has plummeted. You need to make parents equal partners in this educational endeavor as mandated in the district's board-approved mission statement.

I look forward to further response on my review.

Brittany Alexander

Good evening, members of the board, I am Brittany Alexander, and I serve as the Vice President of the Hilliard Education Association. I wanted to just publicly say thank you to all of our building reps and all of our members who are working night and day and giving their all to our students. We really appreciate all that you do for all of us and this fabulous district. Thank you.

Brandon Ross

Good evening. As a 12-year nutrition and exercise coach, and a teacher of wellness, I build people up physically immensely. Each and every person I work with has their own individualized process of building and rebuilding themselves. Therefore, I utilize a three-phase framework of renovate, revamp and revive. Not only do I use this with my coaching business, I also apply this in my family's day-to-day lifestyle. See, this is not a one size fits all approach to how I do things professionally and personally.

The reason I mention my resume is because Hillard City School District is coaching every student, and their families are okay with secret Panorama surveys, pronoun questionnaires, and a bulletin board with inappropriate sex terms within the walls of its middle school. And again, every student and their families are okay. I make that clear. We have to make sure, which is part of transparency. I'm here/safe place badges provide inappropriate resources within five clicks—the videos about fingering, masturbation, jerking off, and fisting. This is a one size fits all approach. It's a disturbance that's creating unhealthy discord within the district. Have you ever seen an environment at home when there's conflict and unhealthy discord? It's not pretty. It's dysfunctional, and it perfectly depicts the current state of Hillard City School District.

It's not an approach to excellence with an education. It's an indoctrination of one ideology under the guise of social-emotional learning and diversity, equity, and inclusion. In my opinion, it sounds like the Hilliard City School District framework for student success is failing, and unfortunately, the scores of the district support my opinion.

The reason I'm here speaking, along with the angry mama bears, is because I want to help. But only if we utilize the framework that focuses on excellent education and we stop the one size fits all approach or indoctrination of one inappropriate ideology with the publicly funded school system. We can work together by a three-phase system or a three-phase framework I mentioned earlier, renovating the district's current system by focusing on transparency between schools, parents, and residents when it comes to teacher and student surveys and the results of these surveys—revamping the children of the district by utilizing these surveys and advice of parents and residents to create educational tools that prepare our kids for their futures. By renovating the school system and revamping the children within its walls, we now have revived every single child, parent, and resident within Hilliard City. We are now ready for tomorrow. Thank you.

Danae Gordin

My name is Danae Gordin, and I spoke last board meeting also. So, I'm going to talk about transparency. To be transparent means easy to perceive or to have thoughts, feelings, or emotions that are easy to perceive. I cannot imagine a better way to describe the ideal relationship between a school district and a community. Not just parents but children, grandparents, and stakeholders who all deserve and have the right to transparency. The entire relationship will thrive on transparency and will bring trust and clear path to working together for the best possible outcome for all of our children.

To achieve this goal, we need to have two very important things, a policy in place to outline the expectations and a district that is willing to adhere this policy. Not just because they have to but because they want to. We currently have a policy in place, but we are calling upon a district to amend the policy in several important ways. We support a requirement that the superintendent post district-wide survey results of teachers and students on a parent dashboard on the website. The idea behind this amendment is to bring transparency to parents and taxpayers so they could be more involved...and have a clear understanding of the goals of the district in regards to the work culture of our teachers and the health and well-being of students.

Second, we are asking for either an amendment or...of a policy that will require staff and teachers to have written permission from parents before engaging students in ongoing counseling sessions and private conversations, with the exception of the initial conversation brought by the student. We understand there's some gray there. And require that parents are to be contacted and to communicate with parents any mental health concerns, including sexuality and gender dysphoria. I personally did not experience transparency with my son last year, and to say it felt like betrayal was an understatement. I will not go into details here, but since history is the best teacher, these situations need to be talked about. I was told it was a hard call on how to get a handle on it and that they would use a situation as an example of how to do better in the future. I believe them, but lately, I'm having some doubts that we are learning from mistakes as I'm hearing more stories of parents being left in the dark with more serious issues. What justification is being said, I'm not going to quote this, but teachers have a say in what is safe or what is okay to be said to parents. This is not transparent, and there's no guideline for the opinion of safe from one person to the next. So the bottom line is that no matter what staff feels is the appropriate response, safe response, or the best response, the response is not up to them. It's up to the parents and how they want to respond to their children and what they're going through.

Withholding information pertaining to our children based on the concern of what may happen is unprofessional and inexcusable, and impossible to justify in any other profession. We can decide the best course of action for our children. Start by ensuring a partnership with parents today. Over and over, it was stated by this district that it was with the purest of intentions, but if intentions are pure, transparency would always be evident. This is a battle we're not going to sit idly by and watch. We'll continue to fight and advocate for our children...their future in the community. If you want to know how to make sure that every student is ready for tomorrow, start with partnering with parents today. Thank you so much, guys. I appreciate what you do.

Michael Smith

Good evening, everybody. My birth name is Michael Smith, but that need not matter. My real name is Eva Smith, and I use she/her pronouns. Many of my allies before me have remarked upon the simply grotesque policies presented. I am simply here to state the best course of action, both for you and my school district. The school board will fail these three bills in question. It'll back down on the tyrannical ideas. I am here. We are here. No one will ever take us down. This has been proved time and time again throughout history. To the loud and...minority; you know who you are. You cannot suppress truth and justice alone. As I am sure all of you are aware, just as a drop of blood in a shark-filled ocean, a few extremists in our state Senate have...hate and discrimination in our schools, causing ambitious frenzy, targeting the historically vulnerable LGBTQ+ community. I need not remark on the QR code again. Every QR code at my school has been covered up. So, there is nothing left to debate. I need not justify my existence. My outstanding mother gave me and taught me to achieve and strive to be the best being I can, along with my outstanding mom and dad.

So, I remark one more time about the most beneficial future for all of us. The school board will admit their mistakes, blunders, and errors. Nobody in this room is evil. Some, such as this loud group of homophobes who have spoken before me, are just less functional than others. You know who you are. Just please back down. Thank you.

Mr. Perry said nobody should be involved in name-calling. So please don't do name-calling of any speaker. Thank you.

Lisa Chaffee

Good evening. I'm Lisa Chaffee. Suicide rates are at an all-time higher amongst our kids. And right now, the district is engaged in a policy of withholding information from parents, specifically regarding children with gender dysphoria, based on the idea that if they're outed to their parents, the parents may beat them up or send them to conversion therapy. Sadly, I hate to say there might be some parents like that, but by not divulging to parents when their kids are having any kind of issues, you are literally robbing us of the opportunity to show our children unconditional love and support. I believe the majority of parents will do just that. God, if my son, if that happened to him and he said, Mom, hey, I want to be a girl. I'd say okay. I'm going to wrap my arms around you and love you. I'm here for you no matter what. But we have a few teachers in this district who have made the choice for the parents and decided, no, you don't get to know this about your child because I don't think you're safe.

Yes, I know sometimes it's based on what the child is telling them. But let me ask you, how many of you, when you were a teenager, said or did something probably really stupid and said, "oh my God, my parents are going to kill me?" Kids don't give all the information. The kids need the love and support of their immediate caregivers – their parents, grandparents, or whoever is responsible for raising them. And if you don't give us that opportunity, we can't love them and help them. So, we are calling upon you to make the amendments to the transparency policy that Ms. Murdock tried to introduce, requiring that staff notify parents immediately when there are any mental health issues with students.

And this is not an anti-gay thing. This is for all kids. We love all kids, and we want every single child in this district to be safe and happy. Please do the responsible thing and abandon the....you're using and pass a policy telling parents when their kids are struggling. Thank you.

Mrs. Long reminded everyone that comments must be respectful and professional in nature. If the continuing going back and forth goes on, we will recess and discontinue the rest of the public participation.

Jessica Smith

Thank you. My name is Jessica Smith, and I come to you today as the parent of a preschooler with concerns about my children's educational future in K-12 in this district. One of the reasons I'm concerned is because of the calls for teachers to "stick to the academics or the three R's." The district has been asking for community input of what we envision for our students of tomorrow, and my portrait of a graduate is that of a well-rounded individual who can do more than just read proficiently and do math. I am looking for another set of skills which I find to be as important or perhaps more important than academic prowess. Skills that I alone cannot teach and reinforce because, at some point in their lives, my children will spend more hours at school than they do with me. And because of these situations in which they need to utilize these skills, many of them will have them in school. These skills include empathy, tolerance,

compassion, perspective-taking, conflict management, critical analysis of information, and its origins, authenticity, valuing diversity and inclusion, a sense of civic duty, and a drive to strive for equity for all.

Teaching these skills requires teaching a wide array of histories and perspectives of this country and explicitly including and celebrating works by people of different races and the LGBTQIA+ community. I want diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts to be actively supported in this district and in my children's classrooms. And luckily, these DEI lessons can be beautifully woven into teaching the three R's by our account to teachers.

I also come concerned because I know my children won't learn anything, including the three R's, if they do not feel safe and affirmed in their educational setting. This brings me to the "I'm here" and "Safe Space" signage. These signs give me hope that my daughter can talk freely about her happily married uncles and that the books in her classroom will represent this different but equally beautiful kind of family. It gives me hope that my daughter is directly being taught about people who are different from her so that she can be successful in a world full of all kinds of people. And if either of my children end up identifying as a part of this beautifully diverse rainbow of community, I hope their teachers make it clear that they are safe people for them to be themselves around, because them feeling safe and seen will enable them to be in the head space and actually learn everything that is being taught.

And that, to me, as a straight woman reflecting on the safe space signage. Imagine how much more safe and more valued a queer parent or student will feel when they see those signs. And actually, you don't have to imagine because several of them have told you, last meeting and this meeting, how seeing those signs have made them feel and, in some cases, literally saved their lives. Please listen to their lived experiences and the research that has been presented at both meetings by several organizations to support how important these signs are. You can find some of these statistics at thetrevorproject.org. Please empower and encourage our students to be more than stewards of wrote knowledge and teach the whole child, every student, without exception, so they are truly ready for tomorrow. Thank you.

Emily Cole

Good evening. My name is Emily Cole. I use she/her pronouns. I am the proud mother of a kindergartner at Avery Elementary and a future Avery Gator.

I would like to take a moment to firstly thank Superintendent Stewart for his patience in navigating the politic this board has insisted on when protecting the rights of students and preserving the safety of the classes. We are so fortunate to have the amazing staff, teachers, and administrators we have in this district, and my family feels especially fortunate to have our kids go through Avery Elementary.

The worst part about our school district is the discord being perpetuated by some political actors in our community. They have shown exactly why we need "I'm here" or "I'm safe" badges. They themselves are unsafe for children who don't live in the image they want them to live in. And it is sad that some members of this board appear to act in the best interest of two city council members' political careers.

I hope you will take the time to reflect and realize your behavior is exactly why children and youth in our district need to know who is safe. Bullying emails to private citizens on their opinion and editorials from your school board member account is unacceptable and unethical behavior. I expect more, and I will encourage everyone to hold you to a higher standard. I beg you to finally put our children first. If parents are struggling with their communication and lack of transparency with their children, that is on them and their family. That has nothing to do with our schools or our school policies. I urge you to focus on the

educational wellness and performance of our children and not on the ability of some parents in this district to create honest and loving spaces for their children. Thank you for your time.

Mrs. Murdoch motioned, and Mrs. Crowley seconded to extend public participation for another 30 minutes. The motion passed.

Mr. Perry thanked everybody for remaining incredibly respectful during this meeting. And that's something we discussed beforehand about, you know.....and earned standard by the community. You've shown that you're capable of respectfully talking to the board. It's wonderful to see, and I'm genuinely impressed by our community, even though we may disagree. I hope that continues for the rest of public participation. So, thank you, seriously.

Terry Castor, MD

My name is Terry Castor. I have six grandchildren in the Hilliard School District; three of them are school-age. I would like to address the transparency proposal with special focus as it pertains to mental health issues. I was a primary care physician in Worthington, Ohio, for forty-six years until I retired three years ago. I am familiar with the transparency issue through my work in the medical field, and it's called informed consent. I would like to give my perspective from a knowledge and reasoning approach.

The definition of transparency is having the characteristics of being easy to see through or clearness. Applying this to the discussion regarding the relationship between the educational system and parents, I would suggest that transparency would mean clear communication, openness, honesty, and seeking to engage in dialogue. The opposites would be limited communication, hiding information, deception, and isolating the educational system from parents. I believe that educating our children and grandchildren involves a team approach between school board members, administrative staff, teachers, and parents. Education is a tremendous challenge neither the educational side nor the parent's side has all the answers, and each side has its own role to play with input.

Transparency would seem to be vitally important. While confidentiality may play a role in mental health issues, this should be the exception, not the rule. Unfortunately, from what I'm hearing and reading as I have delved into the current state of the education system, there seems to be an effort to isolate parents from the system. This involves suppressing information, undermining parental rights, and providing misinformation regarding the status and scope of the educational process in the Hilliard Schools.

In closing, I would like to ask the board members and superintendent Stewart to take a hard look at the information I just presented and ask yourselves if you can, in good faith, state that there's adequate transparency in the current system. If, like me, you believe there is a clear need for improvement, then I would ask that you support the proposal that I think has not yet been presented about what transparency would look like. I believe from my reading of it, that it is a huge step in the right direction. I and many others will be watching and hoping that you adopt this proposal.

Jon Osmundson

Good evening. My name is John Osmundson. I'm one of the pastors at Hilliard United Methodist Church. I use he/him pronouns and am the proud dad of four students in this district.

One of the important rules of the leadership of the school district, of this board of education, is to protect the integrity of Hilliard Schools and the safety of all of its students, every child without exception. All students, including my transgender child, who, by the way, is not part of a cult or a movement to lure any

other student to be something they are not, but who has a right to live their life with the full rights and privileges afforded every other student in this district.

People are talking about wanting to remove anti-discriminatory protections from my child. It's being debated in Columbus this week, and I'm counting on you as board members to ensure no policy passes that removes protections from my child. While at the same time, I know that, unfortunately, I can't count on the entirety of this board to do so. Hear me when I say that my child isn't some random unknown face, number, or boogiemán trying to harm or convert peers to some supposed LGBTQ agenda. The supposed agenda I've heard about since I was part of the anti-LGBTQ community for a lot of my life, but I've still never found that agenda. So, I hear the boogiemán's fears. I hear the fears that transgender persons are faking it to get access to bathrooms, locker rooms, and athletic teams.

As someone on this journey with my child, this isn't some light-switch choice, and boom, everything changes. This is a years-long careful journey that started with my child, who first felt like they could talk to a teacher through a simple act of a teacher having a sign in their class that made them feel trusted. Those teachers didn't make any choices for my kid, but those teachers listened because that's what great teachers do. They listened. They told my child to talk to us when they were ready because parents have to make choices. And after a couple of months, my child was ready to talk to us, and they knew that we were supportive, but they needed a safe, trusted adult to speak with without fear of outing or bullying.

My child is not a threat, but there are those in our community who are intolerant, bigoted, transphobic, prejudice, and wish to explicitly threaten my child's safety, well-being, and mental health. There are others who are ignorant, who have never sought to talk to a parent of a transgender child, and who are implicitly a threat to my child through encouraging, supportive policies that would remove protections for my child and others like them. It's the responsibility of this board to ensure every child, even those with whom you might disagree, is safe, respected, treated with dignity, and as a human being without exception. Every child without exception. Period. Full stop. Thank you for your time.

Denise Davis

Hi, my name is Denise Davis. I'm a resident and taxpayer in the Hilliard City School District. 70% of the taxes I pay annually come to the Hilliard School District. 70% of anything's a lot. I have two items that I briefly touch upon.

September 12th was the first school meeting that I have ever attended. Imagine my surprise and consternation. I expected to see and hear passionate people from both sides of the two issues being discussed. That was not what surprised and worried me the most. Immediately upon entering the meeting room, I saw two Hilliard City council members. By all appearances, and in my opinion, they were there to intimidate the board. One even ensured that a news station was present to help his cause. Kudos to those two gentlemen, as it seemed it had worked. I do not know what political aspirations each member of the board holds. That should be inconsequential to the issues reviewed and the decisions made by this board. The board should only be focused on what is best for the student body as a whole in their quest for a quality education and in their safety.

The other item I wish to bring up is the badges and the QR code. I know that the school district did not create the badges, and it appears that no one checked the website or the QR code references before they were handed out. That was an error on the board in the administration. As a retired payroll professional, I know that before a project is rolled out to the population, all avenues must be reviewed and checked to ensure that the project goals are met. We all know the internet can be a scary place. If you have ever

typed in whitehouse.com, you know what I mean. These badges indicate a safe place for all students, not just LGBTQ. I remember, and I'm older than everyone on this board, that school is a scary place sometimes if you are anything other than what is considered normal – whether you're too skinny, too fat, too smart, not smart enough, not athletic enough. You need to know there's a safe haven. The QR code has been covered by tape. So, I believe this issue should be dropped. Thank you.

Sarah Florimonte

Hello. My name is Sarah Florimonte, and I have two kids at Scioto Darby Elementary School. I wanted to speak today about the inappropriate actions members of this board have taken over the last couple of months.

Last board meeting with public comments, I was absolutely disgusted with how this board functioned. You were elected to act in the best interests of all the students in this district, and instead of listening to the wisdom of 16 of your employees, elementary school principals who work with students every single day, three of you voted in the best interests of yourselves, and what you see as best interest for your own political futures. There is zero justification in not listening to these principals.

Before that vote was taken, during public comments, all of you allowed someone from the crowd to scream “pedophile” at a student who was making public comments. When is this discourse going to be enough for you to speak out? All over social media, community members, who members of this board regularly are seen with, are comparing teachers to pedophiles. Not one of you has spoken up to say “enough.” I would have thought someone screaming “pedophile” at a student would have gotten us there but apparently not.

If you wonder why students need to know which community members, teachers, and administrators are safe people for them to talk to, it is because they are under attack. This student was verbally attacked, and you did nothing. Some of you are writing into the state board of education saying that sexuality and gender issues shouldn't even be talked about in public schools. We are still going to talk about boys and girls and heterosexuality, of course, so you're essentially saying these students don't exist or shouldn't exist. It is disheartening to me that members of this board have now become people that LGBTQ+ students feel don't stand behind them because you don't even think their existence should be acknowledged at their schools. You are the ones attacking them. You are the reason they need badges to show visually who will accept them as they are because it is no longer a given that everyone at school or the administration will treat them with kindness or acceptance.

You all talk about “parent choice,” but what about the choices of students to be safe at school when they're not safe at home? I am a parent. I pray to God that my kids feel safe coming to me with anything, and I try to cultivate that feeling in our home. But I also pray that if they can't or won't, there is someone somewhere they feel safe with that they can talk to at school.

Parents in our community do have a choice. They can choose to homeschool or to send their kids to private schools that may be more aligned with their religious or political beliefs. We cannot start erasing LGBTQ+ students from existence because it makes us uncomfortable. Please, I implore you to start listening to the educators in our schools that work every day with students. You have hundreds of employees that decided to devote their lives to education. Listen to them. Students' lives could literally depend on it. Thank you.

Ray Pyles

My name is Ray Pyles and I use he/him pronouns. I go to Darby and I'm not specifically trying to debate with anyone who's talked up here. That's not what this is for at all. I'm just kind bringing up my own opinions on a lot of the issues that are prevalent right now because I hope that it have a positive influence on future decisions.

So, I wanted to talk about how helpful the presence of like supportive, like graphics within the school are. Like badges that say that they're here for you. Things that say anyone is allowed in this classroom. It helps. And my sources, I'm trans so I think I know because when I know that a teacher is safe to talk to, I will talk to them and I get support from them. If kids at school are not comfortable enough to share at home and are comfortable to share with the teacher, that is a familial issue, and they should be allowed to be safe in schools. Because if someone comes into school and talks to the teacher about, like maybe they're trans or something, and they talk to their teacher about that and that gets told to the parents or they're out to the parents and the parents aren't supportive, nothing good happens in that situation.

Another thing I want to talk about is pronouns. I mean, everyone has them, but a lot of parents have been outwardly against their children being asked what their preferred pronouns are, and I think that's pretty ridiculous because if they aren't asked, then people are just going to assume and no matter what pronouns are going to be used in the majority of the English language. There's no harm in asking students what they want to be called.

Another thing I want to talk about is that the existence of gay people is not sexual. Nobody talks about sexual things when it comes to straight people, and stuff about straight people is taught in health classes. I know I've taken two of them. And the moment that gay people are brought into the equation, there's suddenly talk about how sexual the school district is becoming and how inappropriate this is for kids. And it's just ridiculous because it shows how heteronormative school district is.

I already talked about how like helpful it is to have resources and stuff in school, but I also wanted to talk about how it can save lives with education.

Trish Barker

President, Board, and Superintendent. Thank you for listening to the many people here today. I'd like to talk about the proposed referendum by the State Board of Education that seeks to validate the federal Title IX protections and school districts.

I'm specifically here to ask the Hilliard School Board to go with other local school districts to pass a resolution to denounce the referendum that targets equal protection for all students. I emphasize protections because, once again, we are here in these hallowed halls of education dedicated to education and knowledge, talking about the removal of protections designed to protect all students with information that is not correct, harmful, and not supported by science and the medical community. While some say gender dysphoria is a made-up mental health issue, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association disagree.

I'm not a doctor, but I trust doctors, just like when doctors told us to protect ourselves by masking and getting vaccinations during covid. The only people I personally know who died during covid did not mask and did not take vaccinations, and I loved those people.

The resolution also would put at stake the federal funding schools receive for many programs, including the free and reduced lunch program that many community members rely on. And yet the state school board would ask the state legislature to make up the funding gap. Ha. I saw the budget last month. Schools are already underfunded by the state. Where would they get the money to make up that gap? From us, the taxpayers that are already paying 70% towards schools?

I was a young child when Title IX was passed, but old enough to be denied the right to play certain sports because there were no rules that ensured girls could participate. Prior to Title IX, girls and women were denied access to certain educational programs as well. I might mention the majority of this school board are women and benefited from Title IX, whether you know it or not. Title IX gives equal access to educational and sports opportunities. Title IX does not take away from others. They literally ensure everyone's provided equal opportunities.

I implore this board to stand with our students and with our community in standing up for equality for all of your students. Thank you.

Mrs. Long stated on behalf of the board, thank you for taking the warning seriously so that we could hear from everybody. The board recognizes the value of public comments and educational issues and the importance of allowing the members of the public to express themselves on school matters and community issues. So again, thank you.

E CONSENT AGENDA

- 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 student trip requests:
 - a. Darby Choral Program, Los Angeles, CA – February 16, 2023

The Board of Education approved items E1 through E3, including certified and classified personnel matters. You can find the complete list of personnel matters as an attachment to the Minutes.

F REPORTS / INFORMATION / EXHIBIT ITEM

- F1 Policies submitted for a first reading
 - a. EBC – Emergency Management and Safety Plans
 - b. IGCH-R (Also LEC-R) – College Credit Plus
 - c. IGDJ – Interscholastic Athletics
 - d. IGDK – Interscholastic Extracurricular Eligibility
 - e. IJA – Career Advising
 - f. IND/INDA – School Ceremonies and Observances/Patriotic Exercises
 - g. JFCG/JFCH/JFCI-R – Tobacco Use by Students/Alcohol Use by Students/Student Drug Abuse (Offenses and Disciplinary Actions)
 - h. Actions)
 - i. LEC-R (Also IGCH-R) – College Credit Plus

F2 Committee Reports

Mr. Perry said that the only thing that some people who attended the policy committee in May might notice is that policy JFI is not on this agenda. That's just because we have a legal question that we'll work through and it'll be back in December.

Mrs. Crowley reported that she attended ISPTO in September, and we had a wonderful presentation from Superintendent Stewart about the strategic plan. We also spent time getting to know everybody at our first meeting of the year.

Mrs. Murdoch gave a quick update about HEF. They are trying to fill all their board spots. So, if anyone is interested in getting involved in HEF, I'm sure they would love to hear from you. Also, they were starting to spin up their committees for the year. So, there will be a lot of good work coming out of that organization over the next year.

Mr. Vorst reported that the superintendent's advisory committee met at the end of September, our first meeting of the year. For those unfamiliar with this committee, staff members get to ask Superintendent Stewart some questions directly. We had a great turnout of 25 to 30 people there. They had some great questions, and it went well. I look forward to the next meeting at the end of this month.

G **EXECUTIVE SESSION / ADJOURNMENT**

G1 The meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.