



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 6:30 p.m.

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

B PROGRAMS / PRESENTATIONS

B1 Embrace, Empower, Inspire Award Winners

Brian Hart, Principal of Hilliard City Schools Preschool, presented Mark Huston with the Embrace, Empower, and Inspire Award. Colleen Gifford, one of our intervention specialist teachers, nominated Mark and is here to say a few words about Mark.

So, Mark has gone above and beyond. We opened eight new classrooms. He started us off this year. The classrooms are immaculate, and he has ensured that everything continues to be that way. Anytime we had a problem, he was up to it. For example, one day, I needed a wagon, and the wheel fell off the wagon. I asked Mark if he could look at this tomorrow, but he had it fixed within 10 minutes. My students needed that wagon, and he hopped to it. And that's just one example of what he does every day. I appreciate everything he does for us at the preschool.

Mr. Hart shared another story about Mark. He quickly won over the teachers and also our students. Mark befriended a special student that really needed someone to make him smile. And on Mark's last day, when his long-term assignment was done, Mark brought this student his own maintenance/custodial shirt. This little gentleman has seen Mark a couple of times since then, and they still have that really tight relationship. So, it was above and beyond just keeping our building clean. He built relationships with our staff and our students. So, congratulations, Mark.

Katherine Hueter, Principal Weaver Middle School, presented the Embrace, Empower, and Inspire Award to Angela Davoll, Band Teacher. We are very fortunate that a community member took the time to celebrate Ms. Davoll because we see this daily at Weaver Middle School. She's one of our band teachers. For those who may not know, teachers like Ms. Davoll have one of the highest caseloads, with class sizes of around 40 to 60 students. And that number alone does not stop her from building intentional connections with her students. When you walk into her space, you can feel her excitement for band, but more importantly, her excitement for her students. She takes the time to maximize her students' potential every single day with high expectations and support. And once again, I feel truly fortunate to work with Ms. Davoll. So, thank you for all you do for Weaver Middle School, and it's an honor to celebrate with you today.

Mr. Stewart added that he knew about the teacher's appreciation for Mr. Huston's work before he was ever nominated. He couldn't go to the preschool without somebody grabbing him to talk about how amazing he had been with the addition and an eventful start to the year. The day we surprised Ms. Davoll in her classroom, another administrator walked out of the room with me and chuckled and said she remembered when her daughter was in middle school and had Angie. While in the car one day, her

daughter learned she was leaving one middle school and going to another. Her daughter immediately burst into tears and sobbed the entire way home because of her love for Ms. Davoll.

So, here are a couple of anecdotes about them, and thanks to both of them.

C ROUTINES

C1 Additions or deletions to the agenda

Mr. Perry motioned, and Mrs. Crowley seconded, putting item F2 back on the agenda. Mr. Perry explained that his reason for this motion was in the interest of transparency. We released this agenda item to the public on Friday, and I read the email sent to me on Sunday afternoon, which included your reasoning for removing it (*having questions about the resolution*). That's fine, but I would like to vote to table it in public so that we can discuss the reasons behind tabling it or not. I think that that would be beneficial to the community. I guess my confusion is that this was a presentation we had in January for about half an hour. The language has not changed from January to the present, and it certainly hadn't changed between the time this was released on Friday to the public to Sunday when it was pulled. So, I don't understand if the language hasn't changed; why has your opinion on it changed, and why did it change between Friday and Sunday? I think that's something I just had a couple questions about and would love to discuss. I saw your reasoning and think it was fine. I would be happy to discuss it, but we should discuss tabling it publicly if we want to table it.

Mrs. Crowley stated she agreed with everything that Brian said. We're trying to have open communication with the district and make sure that we are being transparent. And I was confused about why this item was pulled. As Brian said, the language has not changed in the 30 days since we saw the presentation. So I feel you had plenty of time to get clarifications and ask questions, and I was surprised to see it pulled off at the 11th hour privately.

Mrs. Murdoch asked if there was any other discussion. Mrs. Crowley asked if she wanted to share why this item was pulled. Mrs. Murdoch replied that she wanted to vote for this but could not vote because she had questions. So, she would end up abstaining.

Mrs. Crowley then asked if she felt those questions were just questions you had this weekend or if they were questions you had 30 days ago when we saw the presentation. Mrs. Crowley said she was confused about how it got on the agenda on Friday and was pulled on Sunday. Mrs. Murdoch said she had questions on Friday.

Mr. Perry stated that having questions is okay. I'm not saying that we don't have questions or that we don't question this. I'm just saying if we have questions, let's talk about it now, and then we can move to table it if we still have questions. We can have those questions and decide to push this down the road if we want to, but let's discuss that, I guess, is my point.

Mr. Vorst stated for the public's clarification; item F2 is a resolution to approve the K-12 health and wellness course of study. This was originally on the agenda for today. After some discussions over the weekend, a decision was made to pull it from the agenda to have those questions answered. So, Mrs. Murdoch and I have questions. I talked to Cori Kindl, who presented this to us, and after reading this, my questions just begot more questions. I don't have any suspicion of any nefarious intent. I think all of us

trust and appreciate the hard work that Cori and her team have put in. I just told her, hey, I'm going to send you an email.

Let's set this up. And then we have a work session in two weeks. And I don't see any reason why we couldn't have those questions answered and then vote and most likely approve this in two weeks. So, I don't want to be in a mode where we discourage each other from asking questions. I know the timing is not ideal. It was one of those things that, once I read it a little more closely, I had questions. I appreciate all the work that Cori and her team have done. They've done a great job, and I think this will go forward with no problem. There were just questions to be asked, and I don't discourage people from waiting to vote until their questions have been asked.

Mr. Perry wanted to clarify that he's not discouraging anyone from asking questions. I wish that we could've put this on the agenda, and then we could've, at that point, discussed those questions and said, well, we still have questions as a board. The majority says that they have questions, and we vote to table this so that we can answer those questions. I think that's my point, is I would've left this here once it was released to the public and then say, well, let's talk about this. Let's move to table it rather than having a unilateral action to table it by removing it from the agenda once it's been released, that that was just the mechanics of it for me. I would've liked to see it done differently. But yeah, ask questions all day long.

Mrs. Crowley stated she agreed with Brian. I'm not saying that you can't ask questions, but we had a wonderful public presentation. We had 30 days to review that public presentation. It went on our public agenda on Friday. If we're talking about being transparent with the community, I think the community wants to understand why it was pulled on Sunday afternoon in the 11th hour again. If there are issues with it, what are the issues, and how can we address them? I think it should be public knowledge. There's no problem with the questions themselves. I still don't know why this was pulled, and I'm just wondering why we're doing things at the 11th hour again.

Mrs. Long asked for clarification on the motion. Mr. Wilson explained that the motion was to add item F2 to the agenda. Mrs. Long then said she also heard in the discussion there was a motion to postpone it to the next meeting. Mr. Perry replied no; I said if we choose as a board to postpone to the next meeting, I would like to vote on that postponement rather than have it not on the agenda at all and unilaterally postponed. So I'd like to agree as a board to postpone this. If we should so choose to do that by putting it back on the agenda, then making a motion to table, that would be my suggestion.

Mr. Vorst then said so what you're saying is to make a motion to suspend a vote until our next meeting in two weeks. Mr. Perry replied that he was motioning to put this back on the agenda. If we don't vote to pass it, we could say we're motioning to table it instead. We would vote it down, and then we can pass it later at the next meeting. I think that discussion should happen in the open. That's my only point of discussion – let's do it out loud rather than having it on the agenda and then not. I guess I'm still confused. This could have been taken off the agenda from the beginning, and I would've had less of a problem. I still would have had a problem with it, but less of a problem than if we had put it on and removed it. So once it's on there, I think let's vote on it. And if we want to say, let's push it to the next meeting, then let's do that.

Mrs. Crowley said that since it was on the agenda, someone could have moved to delete it from the agenda, and we could have voted on it so that it's the consensus of the board and not just the personal decision of one person to strike it from the agenda.

Mrs. Long then said, so the motion that has been brought to the table is to move F2 back to the agenda. Mr. Stewart replied, correct. Mrs. Long then says If that fails, we can move it to the next meeting. Mr. Stewart replied that If it fails, it's not on the agenda. It's just not on tonight's agenda. So, this vote is only about whether or not to place it back on tonight's agenda. Mrs. Long said this is about the curriculum for our health and wellness course of studies. Mr. Stewart replied, correct. Mrs. Long further stated this is the foundation of our district. So, we can ensure that we all have done our homework and are comfortable with appropriate...(inaudible).

The motion failed 3 to 2.

C2 The Board of Education adopted the agenda as presented.

C3 The Board of Education approved the January 2023 Treasurer's Report.

Mr. Wilson explained that there are a couple of variances in the report concerning the general fund with the unrestricted and restricted grants (state funding). January of last year was the first month that ODE finally gave us the new numbers for the state funding formula. So, there was a...(inaudible)...month of January. That number will still be close to what we received the prior year. It's going to grow slowly over the course of this fiscal year. If you remember the five-year forecast, our state funding's essentially flat for the next several years.

On the expenditure side, the variance is in the "other" category. Our ESC, Educational Service Center, deductions all flow into one account, and we allocate those expenses over the course of the year. Part of these charges...(inaudible)...a timing issue related to School Age Childcare.

C4 The Board of Education approved the minutes from the following meetings:

- a. January 9, 2023 – Organizational Meeting
- b. January 9, 2023 – Regular Meeting
- c. January 9, 2023 – Meeting Notes
- d. January 23, 2023 – Work Session
- e. January 23, 2023 – 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. Due to the unavailability of the public participation forms, some names may be misspelled.*

Mrs. Murdoch stated that since we have more than thirty minutes worth of requests, we have randomized the forms.

Mike Mathy

Good evening. My name is Mike Mathy. I'm a Hillard resident and a parent to two daughters in Hilliard Crossing Elementary School. I'm here today to urge this board to take a stand against the frivolous and nonsensical federal lawsuit that was filed against the district recently.

Before I explain my reasons why, I'm going to give you some background, which will, hopefully, give you some perspective. I'm a nonprofit association professional. I have over 17 years of experience working with boards of directors for the medical society, trade associations, and international, national, state, and regional associations. So, for me, I'm a garden mission-driven person, and I think that's kind of something that drives me in everything that I do. I'm also a certified association executive from the American Association of Association Executives.

One of my key functions as an executive director is to make sure my board is laser-focused on the mission of the organization and that everything we do advances the mission of the organization. Without that, you have dysfunction. And while I've had the privilege of working with many great boards, I've also worked with some who were highly dysfunctional through my career. It comes with the territory.

The function of the board (to get a little nerdy here, and please allow me nerd out) is to set the organization's direction. So, that's really strategic planning and setting the vision and mission of the organization. It's ensuring the organization has resources to do its job and fulfill its mission. It's providing oversight as a board to make sure that everyone is doing what they're supposed to do. That programs and services are performing as they're supposed to. And of course, as board members, as you should know, you have a duty, several duties really. And the fiduciary responsibilities – your duty of care (making informed decisions), a duty of obedience (being faithful to your mission), which is ensuring that every student is ready for tomorrow, and of course, duty of loyalty (showing undivided allegiance to the mission of our schools when making decisions that affect our schools and students). Mostly that involves leaving your personal politics and ambitions at the door when you walk in and putting the students and the school district first.

So, that really kind of leads me to my point, which is this. I've seen some troubling signs from this board in recent months, and I felt compelled to come here before you for the first time to kind of share that perspective with you. I've watched the school needlessly revise the Pledge of Allegiance policy really to prop up in advance a candidacy of a city councilman seeking higher office. Clearly, that's not the mission of the organization. I've seen this school board also allow time for students to leave school for religious education. Clearly, it's not the mission of any public school district in America to promote religion or religious education. That's the job of churches, synagogues, mosques, et cetera. I guess these actions kind of coupled with the politicization of the board, have really kind of, in my opinion, set a tone from this board to the rest of the community that has kind of empowered and emboldened extremists.

Trish Barker

Hi, Trish Barker. Thank you, school board and superintendent, for your time tonight. I wanted to speak in the context of what Mike just spoke about on the lawsuit that has been brought against the district and to thank you for filing for a dismissal. It seems many, if not all, of the concerns, have been addressed in the past, and I appreciate the district filing the request to dismiss. I'm also concerned with this cost to the taxpayers in both internal staff time and resources and the use of outside legal counsel. We have not heard formally from the board on their stance on this lawsuit, and I'd like to understand where the board stands. Thank you very much.

Brittany Alexander

Good evening, Brittany Alexander. I'm speaking on behalf of HEA this evening. And I just want to say how very thankful we are for the fabulous, amazing educators that we have in this district.

To those educators helping students at lunch, we see you. To those of you hosting help sessions after school for students, we see you. To those of you making sure students see themselves in their lessons and in their books, we see you. To those of you bundling students up for their bus or walk home, we see you. To those of you packaging food for students to take home on weekends or long vacations, we see you. To those of you offering extra conferences with parents, we see you. Everyone who is sacrificing their family and their personal time for the endless ways we support our students, we see you and thank you. We are so grateful that you chose Hilliard and that you're here. Thank you.

Christina Munos

Hi. I'd like to use just 30 seconds of my time so that we, as a community, can mourn the third high school student in the last two years that have passed. *(30 seconds of silence)*

Thank you. I have a quick question. I believe all elected leaders should practice transparency to all their constituents. So, I want to ask each elected board member, you can answer yes or no, whether you support the recent lawsuit filed by the eight Hilliard parents or concepts within that lawsuit.

Mr. Vorst replied yes, he supports the district fighting the lawsuit.

Mrs. Murdoch said she would repeat the statement Superintendent Stewart made and the entire board stands behind, saying that we live in challenging times with many complicated issues for students, parents, teachers, and school administrators. And I assure you, we are all united together to prepare students so that they're ready for tomorrow. And we do this in partnership with students and their families. And we will continue to do this for every child we serve without exception.

Ms. Munos said Mr. Stewart is not in an elected position. You guys are. That's why I would like each of you to answer. Mrs. Murdoch noted that in this statement, he collaborated with the board and spoke for the district.

Ms. Munos said, okay, so you don't want to answer. Mr. Vorst stated that he speaks for us through the statement. Mrs. Crowley said she would make a statement. She said she would make a statement at the end of public participation this evening, but she fully supports our school, staff, and students in the aggressive fight against this lawsuit.

Laney Osborne

Hi everyone. I'm here tonight to continue the long fight for social and emotional learning in schools all around the district. I also want to speak about mental health awareness.

Very recently, the Hilliard community experienced the third student suicide in the past two and a half years. This community needs to stand behind all of us kids and continue to encourage social and emotional learning through programs such as the Hope Squad, which I'm a senior at Darby, and I'm a member of it, the Why You Matter initiative, and clubs such as GSA. I want more and more community members to stand with my peers and I as we navigate through academics, social issues and emotional development. Everybody struggles with mental health issues, whether you realize it or not. I, as well as all

of my peers, have support systems in emotional health. But when you are in a crisis, you are in a fight-or-flight state of mind. You don't think about who you can go to or what you can say or do to calm yourself down. You can't always deploy the best coping skills to ensure the safety of not only yourself but others as well. Social and emotional learning being taught in schools will change the way that everybody stigmatizes mental health.

If you are fighting for this cause, please don't stop. To all of the teachers who support my peers and I, thank you. To all of the teachers and administrators in this room right now, fighting for my peers, I thank you on behalf of all of us. We appreciate your support endlessly and again, thank you.

Dr. Asim Farooqui

Good evening; I'm Dr. Asim Farooqui. I'm representing the Muslim Parental Rights Advocacy Group (MPRAG), which is a grassroots-level effort introduced during the last month's school board meeting.

Respected school board members, the president, parents, and teachers; greetings. Today I would like to share an important reminder with our respected teachers and school board members. I've been a teacher myself for over 30 years. I've taught medical students and residents at Ohio State University and still teaching nurse practitioner students. A teacher is uniquely gifted with the talent of taking a malleable mind of a student and enriching it with knowledge, but not just any knowledge. It's a knowledge that in the Quran called (in Arabic)...means it is that knowledge which eternally benefits humanity. There is another type of knowledge that does not add to the beauty of the orchestra of life. It only creates aesthetic noise that distracts and may even hurt the melody of life. So, in exchange for the unique gift the teachers are blessed with, they have a heavy responsibility to sift the wheat from the jaff (?) and only feed these malleable minds trusted to them with beneficial knowledge and not clutter their minds with unnecessary distractions.

So, my message is back to basics, focus on academics, improve performance. Even a cursory look at our school district's report card shows us that we are not in an enviable position as far as our students' proficiency is concerned. Each year we push a large number of students onto the next grade. Folks, the recess time is over. Let's get back to the classroom. Let's get enthusiastic about the core academics, and let's improve proficiency rates.

The presence of 3,200 Muslim families brings about \$48 million annually to the district if my math is correct. Isn't it reasonable then to expect better results? School levy is approaching fast or will be approaching fast, and there are lots of things that are hanging up there untied, unresolved. Thank you.

Dr. Aisha Khan Afghan

Thank you so much once again for letting me come here and speak my heart. First of all, I really want to thank the DEI department and the board for accepting my offer to entertain the training program by Michael Abraham, who will be coming from Minnesota and will be training the teachers here at Hilliard about how to engage Muslim students in public school. So, I really appreciate the board for taking the time and enrolling in that program and taking the training, which is going to be a seven-hour training. And I think that is a first step to kind of bridge that gap that we need to do.

Having said that, I would also say that as a first-year parent, being a homeschooler, I have experienced a lot of things which I've brought to the concern of the board. Starting with my son and how things happened with him, there are two things that I really want to talk about. First, of course, I was very naive. I did not know much, but now I know a whole lot more because I'm going and reading the policies and the

job descriptions of different people. What are they supposed to do? Like on the other day, I was reading the job description of Mr. Superintendent. What is his job description? Okay, he's supposed to make policies, and what else is he supposed to do? He is supposed to actually implement those policies. Now, when I was going through those policies, I actually found that a lot of policies are not even implemented. They exist, but they're not implemented. And I, as a person, I am a living example, that one of the policies was not implemented by one of the persons in the curriculum department, Mr. Jacob Grantier.

I was not given an exception as a parent when I asked for an alternative assignment, which I thought was a discrimination right there. I felt it. My child felt it. My child had to be in that classroom despite the fact that he didn't like it, but he was just forced to. And at that time, I felt this is not what they talk about all the time. They talk about DEI. They talk about inclusion. They talk about equity. Where is inclusion? Where is equity? I felt bullied by a district officer, which I think is not good. And why did I feel that way? If I would've known the policy, I would've stopped him right there. But just because I did not know my right, I was clueless. But I'm so thankful that now I know what it is.

The other thing that I want to bring to the attention is the portrait of a graduate. Now, when I was reading about it again, it just slipped out of my mind. I was looking at it, and like, it doesn't make sense to me. It just flew above my mind because the things that I saw there, it said CAGE. So, C is communication, collaboration, adaptability, and, I don't know, global, whatever. And then empathy. So, empathy. What kind of goals are these that we are investing \$80,000 for our children? What are the metrics to measure these...(inaudible) ideas? And if we talk about empathy, then empathy should first come from the curriculum department toward parents, which is not happening. Thank you.

Brandon Ross

I'm actually going to piggyback off Aisha. \$80,000 in the results from four days of a portrait of a learner competencies – resilient learners, critical thinkers, purposeful communicators, empathetic citizens, and self-advocates. I would like to highlight two competencies in the five competencies that the committee determined were important to us within the Hilliard City School District.

First one, self-advocates – bullet point – Recognize the importance of physical, mental, social, emotional, and digital wellness. Focus on building a healthy self-image and healthy self-esteem that allows for pursuit of individual goals. Keywords within this competency and its bullet point, self-advocate and recognize. These keywords sound like a punt on first down and five from the 15 individuals that convened to determine the five final competencies and their bullet points. It's up to the district to strengthen the other four competencies, but it's up to solely the student to self-advocate when it comes to their wellness. This makes absolutely no sense. Therefore, it sounds like a punt on first down and five. Yes, I know Stewart mentioned that this isn't final, but in my opinion, his comment was a pivot to calm the waters from those of us who have a few concerns.

Like I've said at previous board meetings, I'm a 12-year veteran within the realm of nutrition and exercise. The benefits of improving one's wellness drastically improves many things—for example, the four other competencies within the portrait of a learner. Matter of fact, I believe that the four other competencies are worthless if one's wellness is subpar. We are making a very big mistake with this very important competency. I have offered my services to the district, and the offer still stands today.

Now, the second competency that I would like to quickly highlight is empathetic citizen. Its bullet point is to demonstrate global awareness and respect and act with concern and compassion for the unique perspective, experiences, and cultures of all. In my opinion, in this room and everyone within the district

has been and continued to fail on this competency. As of today, we are not equipped to help students of Hilliard City School District strengthen their empathetic citizen competency. Why? I've come to realize that teachers are not comfortable with the current work environment. For that reason, I recommend an anonymous survey for teachers to participate in to understand what they're experiencing. And students, well, they've been witnessing that unhealthy discourse between us stakeholders. To sum up my point, we all need to have a round table discussion and figure things out for the betterment of Hilliard City School District children. Thank you.

Lisa Chaffee

Good evening. First, I would just like to give kudos to Mr. Warfield and Mr. Cort Hamilton over at Bradley. Without, of course going into details, they have been a champion for my son and all of the students there, and I wish we could clone them and have more like them. So, I hope someone will nominate them for that award too.

What I would like to address is a follow-up on what Aisha said. We've got policies that have been in existence since 2001 that are not being implemented, they're not being followed, and they're being blatantly disregarded by some administrators and teachers. And I have a copy of the board policy, student and student achievement. And just a reminder, we know the purpose of a school board is to establish policies and programs that create the foundation for students' academic achievement. You're supposed to be leading through policy and lead others to think big about how to drive student achievement—the true work of school boards.

The board is accountable to the public to show the school district is working in the best interest of the students. So, I'm asking you, we've got some key issues that we have policy in existence that can help solve some of these issues if we just start enforcing them. And I hope that you will embrace the community as a whole so we can have a true representation of the community so we can all work together. Because no matter which side of the aisle on any issue, at the heart of it all, we all want the best for our kids. And policies help enforce that. Thank you.

Sarah Kamento

Hi. I've been thinking a lot about the accusations being thrown at myself and my fellow parents for simply daring to express concerns regarding content made available to our children within the schools. Now, whilst I think it's disingenuous to assume that based on my concerns, I'm not able to parent my children and that the scenarios utilized with other parents' teenagers is able to readily be applied to my six-year-old. Those issues aside, I did spend a lot of time working through the First Amendment argument. Researching and reflecting, and whilst I understand the fundamental argument, I think there needs to be further evaluation. If eliminating sexually explicit material from our IDCs is the equivalent to removing their First Amendment rights of our students, then as our schools are gun-free zones, are we violating their Second Amendment rights?

If an educator searches a locker, are we violating their Fourth Amendment rights? And if a student is in a discussion with an educator, are we allowing them to plead the fifth? I think that we can all agree that, yes, these rights are important and need to be protected. However, we as a society have determined that minors are not afforded the same constitutionally protected rights as their parents, but instead, they'll age into them.

As we can all agree, the Second Amendment right, which is to bear arms; although it does not carry an age restriction, it would be ridiculous to allow a five-year-old to exercise. Funnily enough, as I further

evaluated who is arguing the freedom of speech aspect, it seems to be the same voices speaking out against the religious release time, which spoiler is also a right provided within the First Amendment.

Furthermore, we need to even look, is this a freedom of speech issue? We all know that if a student went up to another student and, in great detail, described how they masturbated into a peach, that student would be in the principal's office facing corrective action up to and including suspension. So there clearly is a line that cannot be crossed pertaining to every student's freedom of speech within our schools.

With all of this in mind, I'm here to notify the board that I am appealing the committee's decision to allow the title "Looking for Alaska" to remain in our IDCs and staff personal libraries pursuant to policy KLB. It's now in your hands. It's your job to advocate for the parents that elected you and to help us protect our children.

Christy Klise

My name is Christy Klise, and I am here simply to say thank you to all of the educators in Hilliard City Schools. My son is a sophomore in college, so I've been involved for 20-plus years, and my kids have had some phenomenal educators. I am so thankful that they've had that opportunity, and it has helped them so much. So, thank you.

The other thing that I want to say is that I wish we would spend some time thinking about the high schoolers, especially those that have gone missing or have left or those that have chosen to end their lives. That is a tragedy and something that hasn't happened in this community as long as I've lived here.

Jake Poling

Hey guys. Thank you very much for having me. Good evening, everybody. My name is Jake Poling, and I represent the organization Turning Point USA here in the state of Ohio and Indiana for our high school program. For those unfamiliar, we are a 501c3 nonprofit organization, which means we can't endorse or support any political candidates. We focus on ideas that include free markets, civil liberties, and overall pro-American and constitutional values. Our student-led groups are all about promoting civil discussion and bringing ideas together. Many students need to be better with this, and we as adults need to be a lot better about leading by example on that front as well.

Now, I'm not here today as a talking spokesperson from some faraway land representing some big corporation or organization. I'm from right here in central Ohio and actually Hilliard, Ohio myself. So, this is my stomping ground. I really enjoy the community, and I really want to see this community thrive, especially see the young people thrive in the community and be given a voice of their own. I've had numerous conversations in the past couple of months with numerous parents and students here in the district about how things are going in a typical school day. They have trusted educators telling them that their opinions are invalid and that their beliefs are less than other students. I can't fathom how certain school districts can call things safe spaces when those safe spaces are represented by a pride flag. You need to have one all-inclusive symbol, and what I believe an all-inclusive symbol is, no matter what your personal beliefs are, is the American flag.

If you want to truly be an all-inclusive school district, which I know you want to be, there is only one flag or symbol that'll legitimately be inclusive, and that is the American flag. The last line of the Pledge of Allegiance reads with liberty and justice for all. Our nation was founded on that principle, and it seems like there's a woke mob of self-righteous attention seekers in this district and all over the state that plan on bearing that belief. We are a beautifully diverse nation, and we need to respect every background and

point of view. The display and education of the American flag and its unifying qualities need to be taught in respected as our only one true all-inclusive symbol.

When I was in middle school and elementary school, really K through 12, I said the Pledge of Allegiance every day to the American flag in the classroom. I've asked parents and students in the district if there's a flag in every classroom and if there's the option to say the pledge every single day. So, I would like to know if that is something that's done in every single school throughout the district. That would be a wonderful thing to know. It's okay for students to believe in pro-American values. And at the end of the day, just be transparent. Thank you.

Kerry Beth Bryant

Hi, Kerry Beth Bryant. I have some quick questions. So, in all of this talk about teachers and good and bad and all the positive and negative and whatever. I want you to know that I appreciate our experience here. We've been here for four years. All of my kids have had amazing teachers who seem to really be focused on the love of learning, belief in self, respect of fellow classmates, adults, and all the things.

So, things I'm hearing about other teachers. I don't have personal experience, right? I can just tell you my experience. So, in hearing all of this hubbub coming from all sides, I have started to familiarize myself with policies and the union contract. I've been close to unions in all of my public service. I've never been a union member, didn't think it applied, and didn't think I needed it. So, I don't have experience from that side, but I'm starting to learn about what's going on in my community, around the kids, around the people who are serving our kids.

I have some questions about performance evaluations and policies. And I know we have a policy committee coming who's going to start meeting often, which I appreciate. I'm curious who does performance evals for all of the staff. What seems to be not as clear is who does your performance eval (*superintendent*) and what is it based on? Well, the board does, but what is it based on? Is it the job description? Are there other things that have been made clear to you, to the teachers? I'm not going to get that answer today. I understand, but I wish that were more obvious. Easy to find.

I understand that we have coffee with the superintendent coming next month. So, I am looking forward to getting to know your leadership style. I had met Mr. Marschhausen, and though we didn't always agree, I appreciated his leadership style, and he was very strong and very community oriented. He sat down and listened to all of the parents, and then I didn't even hear him give his opinion ever. It was always, here is our policy; here is why, and if you don't like it, let's keep talking. Or, however, he would have respectfully said something about it. So, I am also curious about the policies, who's looking at them, how often, why, and who's enforcing them.

And sort of side note to this, we hear all the time about teachers using their own money in their classrooms. Right. I was a part of a school supply team at our elementary school, and that was kind of put a stop to. So, I understand that the kids' supply lists have been limited. I would like to know very specifically from the board, are the teachers allowed to ask parents if we offer, for the supplies they need for their classroom? Thanks for your time.

Mr. Stewart informed Mrs. Murdoch that it's been 30 minutes. Mr. Vorst motioned and Mrs. Crowley seconded the motion to extend public participation time. Mrs. Crowley said there were eight more participants. The motion passed 5 to 0.

Jon Osmundson

Good evening. I am a parent of children across the district, but I'm speaking specifically as a parent of an eighth-grader. And let me first say that my child chose not to attend this year's DC trip. Part of the rationale in our discussion was their own concern around being a transgender child and not wanting to have to out themselves or have someone else out them or their anxiety around roommates.

I'm sad to hear there's a lot of fear and fear-mongering around transgender children in our schools. I was sad to think my child excluded themselves from an experience with their friends because they were afraid that adults might act like children. And I'm sorry, they've been proven right. I can't fathom that somehow there are folks who believe that parents like me and kids like mine want to assault or harm other students at school or anywhere else. In reality, my kid wants to live their life for who they are, be accepted and loved for who they are, and become the best version of themselves that they can possibly be. Unfortunately, there are those who don't believe this, don't want to believe this, or are willing to flat-out lie and score cheap political points.

I recently became aware of concerns around forms for roommates and such, as this year's DC trip is about upon us. And I'm thankful that leaders are seeking to ensure the safety of kids like mine and their friends and supportive friends and their families while at the same time protecting everyone's privacy. I'm thankful that leaders are making space for all kids and families. I'm thankful that families like mine have an opportunity to ensure the well-being of their children in terms of who they're rooming with and traveling with. Now, look, I realize that much of the negative reaction is out of fear and misunderstanding, feeling like teachers are going to pull a fast one.

So, here's what I'm willing to offer to you as the BOE, as a stakeholder, as a parent, and as a faith leader in this community. I'm always willing to talk with anyone who wants to know why questions like these matter to me and my family. I'm willing to share about my journey, my fears, my kids' fears of cis straight kids who bully, misgender, and say God-awful things to my child.

If you are an administrator, parent, teacher, or stakeholder, who wants to talk to me, to hear a voice from the perspective of a transgender parent before making any blanket policies or canceling any trips or changing any forms, making misinformed decisions, you all know me. You all have my email, and I'll be here for the duration this evening. I want to share real stories, not for your political monitoring points. I want to have conversations that can help folks not agree with me but have an understanding. I hope this board will not give in to fear-mongering but will show a willingness to engage in open dialogue, and maybe together, we can create some spaces for larger dialogue in our community. I hope there are other families willing to do likewise. I make myself available to anybody in this space who wants to have a conversation and not take jabs at me, kids like mine, and our family. I just hope we can work together to go to a place to seek understanding rather than living in places of fear and fear-mongering. Thank you.

Dawn Larsen

Thanks. Dawn Larsen. I've got two Darby graduates and a current Memorial seventh-grader. So, first of all, I want to thank you, Mr. Stewart. You have not had an easy task, nor have our other administrators, teachers, or Stacie Raterman. So, a big thank you to all of you.

We've asked our teachers and administrators to do a lot, especially since 2020. They've done it, whether that's becoming technology gurus or herding cats, which is what it's kind of like to try to teach kindergartners over Zoom. Most of the district truly does appreciate everything you do for all of our children. You are truly preparing our kids to be ready for tomorrow, and you're standing up for all kids.

Most of us really appreciate the strong stance against the lawsuit. It's frivolous, and it's a waste of resources and taxpayer money. On that note, I'd like to apologize for the time and effort that's having to be spent to defend this district on that lawsuit.

I'd also like to just take a moment and discuss the Washington, DC, trip. As a current seventh-grader, my child will be able to go next year. It's a great opportunity for our students. Lots of independence and seeing our nation's capital. It's really wonderful. There's a lot of buzz right now about who's rooming with who. Much of that's coming from people that don't have children in the district any longer, or don't have kids that will be going on the DC trip in the next few years. Our administrators have done a great job of meeting in the middle. They're gaining parental approval through required signatures, while still respecting the privacy of all students. It's truly a great example of bipartisanship and meeting in the middle in compromise. It's pretty rare these days in politics and on the school board.

It's been said by some in the media that students can forge signatures. That's not a school board problem, that's a parent problem. Or that you might only know one roommate and not know the others. All of these things could be true, but to me, that means that maybe instead of posting on Facebook groups or harassing our administrators, you should talk and more importantly, listen to your children. Build an open and honest relationship with them. The idea that kids will be forced into rooming with someone that makes them uncomfortable is an extremist dog whistle. Our kids aren't the ones who are uncomfortable. It's the adults. My daughter has straight, bi, trans, and gay friends. I know this because I talk to her. She is comfortable sharing with me. Kids aren't born hating anyone. Kids aren't born being afraid of their peers. They're taught these things. Thank you.

Sarah Myers

Thank you all for letting us speak tonight. I wanted to applaud the district for your openness in trying to accommodate all students on the DC trip, including specifically the trans students. Now, my daughter's in second grade, so this isn't going to be a thing for a little while, but one of our best little friends is in first grade, and he's in the district now. I remember a couple of years ago; they were playing family. She loves to play family. They had a little bell doll. And he said, how come you always get to be mommy? And she said I feel like a girl on the inside, and I look like a girl on the outside, and girls are mommies. And so that's why I play mommy. And he's like; I don't feel like anything. And she said, well, bell, can have two mommies. And he said, oh, okay. And they played on.

His gender expression is not conforming, and it's not about sex. No one's talked to him about sex. It's about wanting to be mommy. It's about feeling pretty in a Mira Bell dress and twirling, liking the twirl and the polish. This same boy is now in first grade in this district. A couple of weeks ago, he went to the bathroom. Some fifth-grade boys were in there and said what are you doing here? You're not a boy. This child just turned seven and has no idea what's going on. He said, yeah, I am. We don't believe you. What? Is he supposed to prove it? That is in this district. A first-grader in this district. That is happening now to these little kids that aren't even close to an eighth-grade trip. I can't imagine what it's like in eighth grade. Imagine my daughter's best friend having to room with boys like that when he expresses like that.

So, I just wanted to applaud you for accommodating all students. Thank you.

Cyndie Sheets

I wanted to bring to your attention three long standing policies for our district. The first policy is KJ, Advertising in Schools – last revised April 17, 2017 – exclusions advertising that concern sexual or reproductive issues, whether or not the advertisement has any explicitly sexual content, advertisements that are misleading, advertisements that are in decent obscene or vulgar.

Policy IB, Academic Freedom – last revised May 11, 2015 – the right to free speech protected by the First Amendment does not extend into the in-class curricular speech of instructors made pursuant to their official duties. Accordingly, the instructor's speech in the classroom may be subject to reasonable controls as to appropriateness.

Policy IGAI/IGAL, Family Life Education/Sex Education – last revised November 8, 2021 – the board believes that the purpose of family life and sex education is to help students acquire factual knowledge, attitudes, and values, which result in behaviors which contribute to the well-being of the individual family and society. Parents have the primary responsibility to assist their child in developing moral values. The school should support and supplement the parents' effort in these areas by offering students factual information and opportunities to discuss concerns, issues, and attitudes. If the district and or school offers additional instruction in venereal disease or sex ed not specified in ORC 3313.6011, all parents or guardians of students must be notified of such instruction.

Topics such as this are no longer exclusive to sexual education class. Such conversations are being offered by staff without parental permission, and this must stop immediately. This is not only in violation of school policy, but also the law. The three policies already in place should be enforced and adhered to. These policies would negate parental concerns and ensure the safety of every single student in our district.

It's time to step up ladies and gentlemen. You were elected to do a job. Your primary responsibility is to ensure our superintendent is doing his job, which he is not. I implore you to put him on a performance improvement plan and to immediately require expectation of policy compliance and enforcement throughout our district. Thank you.

Scott Merillat

Good evening board members. My name is Scott Merillat and I use he/him pronouns. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak on behalf of my son and his friends. And really, this is just because I'm upset.

So, parental rights have limits and our secular public education leaders must denounce the Ohio Pro-Nazi homeschool curriculums in our state. And we must also denounce the extremist parents like those who filed this frivolous lawsuit against our school district. And furthermore, I support our district to file counter lawsuits to recoup any fees and administrative costs. Extremist parents were in an uproar when Brown v. Board of Education demanded Arkansas integrate the school system. And although the topic has shifted from race to gender, the extremism exists today here in Hilliard. Hilliard families have an abundant number of educational opportunities, such as public school, public community charter schools, private schools, parochial/religious schools, vocational schools, educational department sponsored schools, homeschooling, and the school voucher system.

Ohio public education has a secular education where every student receives a high quality education. And Thomas Jefferson professed that a vital requisite of our survival as a free people is in our secular education where every seat in a room is available for every child indifferent to their ancestry, their

biology, their sex, their skin tone, their gender, their family structure, their health impairments, their religious affiliation, or of none. And in Ohio, our educational system permits this student's accommodations are an ongoing dialogue between the student, the teacher, and the guardian. And in our secular education, we have 16,000 students that should not be held hostage in favor of one of the guises of “parental rights” or “religious beliefs.” They need simple accommodations.

Our school district continues to be under attack by several religious extremist groups that have gone nationwide and seek to infiltrate our secular system with the goal to disrupt and ultimately privatize our schools. And tonight, these extremist citizens have garnered new media support to amplify their political agenda and their extreme conservatism. These extremists have advocated for policy changes and demanded that the school board implement these changes. And you have acquiesced to some of these requests. These hypocritical, ignorant extremist parents have no problem consuming products and services from the secular society such as government departments, corporations, and nonprofits that support the LGBTQ community and variations of biological sex and gender and gender expression have always existed since the beginning of time. And I want to thank you for your time.

Sherise Thompson

Hi. I'm Sherise Thompson and I'm speaking to you as an educator. I really went back and forth on whether to talk to you today because over the weekend I sent an email to a parent and it was shared on a social media platform. What ensued was basically attacks on me as a person and as an educator. My name was stated in these comments as an educator in Hilliard, and then some bio comments about me and my character. So, with a target already on my back, apparently, here I go.

Transgender kids walk our hallways every single day. They exist. Their gender is part of their identity. It's part of who they are. I am a black woman, a daughter, a military wife, and a mother. I'm a Christian. I'm an educator. I'm an advocate, a dog, mom, and an American citizen. I'm also a German citizen. This is who I am. This is my identity. And our transgender kids hold their identity near and dear to their hearts. It is part of who they are and their identity even if people don't believe it. They get a right to be who they are.

I have heard the phrase gender dysmorphia. So, I did a deep dive this weekend into what it actually means. It is in the DSM enlisted as a treatment according to the peer review journal, which peer review means that other people in the field read it. It's not just like something.com. A peer review journal on pediatric psychiatry I found in the National Library of Medicine, the treatment for gender dysmorphia is transitioning or supporting the child's gender expression or desire for hormone therapy. Again, the peer review journal said, and I quote, the treatment for gender dysmorphia is transitioning or supporting the children's gender expression or desire for hormone therapy. This is a decision between the child and their parent. No one else gets a voice in that decision.

Another example, even though race is without a doubt of social construct, this is part of my identity and has played out how my life journey has gone. Just like our transgender kids and their identity plays out their journey and right now their journey is in the hallways of Hilliard City Schools. Sorry, I'm a little emotional about this. We are a public school and transgender students and their parents have rights and asked that their kids to be seen, to be respected, to be heard, and to be treated as who they are because they walk our halls in Hilliard City Schools. I ask you to continue to have conversations about our LGBTQIA students and providing safeguards.

I'll email you the rest of it.

Samya (?? Unable to understand the pronunciation of this person's name.)

Good evening. So, I'm here as a Muslim parent and I'm here to thank all of you. I would like to thank you on behalf of myself and the many Muslim parents who have been working with the district along the years to build bridges and do lots of outreach effort. I have seen firsthand how you are trying to do your best. The efforts that you have put into reaching out to those Muslim parents and acknowledging them and accommodating their kids. Efforts that culminated in having Eid, the Muslim holiday, on your school calendar and being the first district in Ohio to actually acknowledge that.

I speak of myself and the many parents who are actually in the room. You can talk to them. Thanking you does not mean that I agree with everything that you do, or that I agree with every book that is there on the library shelves, or that I agree with every idea that is shared by the teachers. However, I don't think that the job of the district to ban books and silence ideas. What I would like the district to do is raise critical thinkers who can stand up for their beliefs, and who can self-advocate for themselves. I would like you to raise students who are purposeful communicators, resilient learners, self-advocates, critical thinkers, and empathetic citizens. By the way, the district did not come up with those values. It was the community who came together – hundreds of staff members, parents, and stakeholders to come up with those values. And I would like the district to implement those. And I would like to thank you for this.

Ammar (?? Again, unable to understand the pronunciation of this person's name.)

Hello. Thank you for allowing me to talk. So, I attended recently, about a week ago, lunch and learn at the CAIR Office, which is the Council on American Islamic Relations. And one of the things that I learned is that somebody nobody comes to these board meetings except to complain. So, I just came here to thank the district for the wonderful job you're doing. I specifically want to thank you for making Eid an official holiday at the Hilliard School District. Thank you and keep up the good work.

Mrs. Crowley stated that concludes our public participation, but she had a statement she wanted to read. Tonight, I would like to make a statement on behalf of myself, not as the board. I know that there are some members of our community that have created a name for themselves by saying things about our schools, our teachers, and our students that are both inaccurate and hateful. I would like to go on record right now to say that the misinformation and mischaracterizations they are spreading are not only misleading, but harmful. Our schools are wonderful, our teachers are incredible, and our students and I stand with all of our students without exception. I feel like our school board has shown these individuals an incredible amount of patience over the last year, and the district administration has spent their valuable time and resources dealing with these issues. It has recently been brought to my attention that some of these individuals have even made a public request to sit down and have a conversation with me. However, at the recommendation of our lawyers, I want to make it clear that I will not be doing that. Once again, I fully support our schools, our staff, our teachers, all of our students in our district in their pursuit to aggressively fight these false claims.

Mr. Perry added a comment about the evaluation process of the superintendent. I'll tell you how I evaluated him – top-notch, the absolute top of the class, five stars, couldn't have done better. I am thrilled with the work that Dave is doing. I'm thrilled that I was part of the team that hired him. You're doing an amazing job, and I respect everything that you're doing.

E CONSENT AGENDA

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

- E1 Approved the following Certified Personnel actions – See attachment to the Minutes.
- E2 Approved the following Classified Personnel actions – See attachment to the Minutes.
- E3 Approved the following trip requests:

- a. Davidson Baseball, Bowling Green, KY – March 30, 2023
- b. Davidson Girls Lacrosse, Orlando, FL – April 1, 2023

Mr. Stewart pointed out that Mrs. Murdoch caught a mistake in item E3(a). It should say Davidson Baseball. So, we'll make sure it's correct in the record.

Mr. Perry congratulated the following retirees:

- Bradley McConkey, science, has been with the district since 1994
- Kimberly Nees, language arts, has been with the district since 2000
- Julie Volbert, family & consumer science, has been with the district since 2001
- Melissa Ropp, bus driver, has been with the district since 2000

Thank all of you for your many years of service.

Mr. Stewart introduced the new Chief Operating Officer, March Dudgeon, just approved in the consent agenda. I feel like we found a unicorn. Unfortunately, that skill set is not in ready supply. Mark has been a senior director doing this work at Columbus State for the past several years. He hit every answer out of the park in the two formal conversations we had with him. In 30 years of doing this work, I don't think I've ever seen anyone come to an interview more prepared and knowledgeable about our district than Mark. So, he will hit the ground running on day one. There's a lot to learn and expose him to, but I'm extremely confident in who he is and who we've hired this evening. So, Mark, do you want to come up?

Mr. Dudgeon thanked Mr. Stewart for the kind words. He thanked the board, Mr. Stewart, and the entire administration team for the opportunity to take on this role. On behalf of our staff, we'll continue to work hard to align our department and work with the district's mission, be outstanding stewards of the hard-earned dollars within the community, and make our learning environments safe, warm, and dry. Thank you.

F ACTION AGENDA

- F1 The Board of Education adopted the following policies:
 - a) BF – Board Policy Development and Adoption
 - b) JFE – Pregnant Students
 - c) KKA – Recruiters in the Schools

d) KMA – Parent/Citizen Organizations

G REPORTS / INFORMATION / EXHIBIT ITEM

G1 Committee Reports

Mrs. Murdoch stated that HEF met on January 25th. They have a lot of great plans for Denim & Diamonds. So, I want to remind everyone the event is on March 3rd. Last I heard, there were fewer than a hundred tickets left, so if you want to go and haven't purchased your tickets yet, please....Mr. Perry said fewer than 20 tickets were available, so buy them quickly....someone from the audience said the tickets were sold out. Mrs. Murdoch added that many things for the silent auction would be cool, such as the wine and bourbon pool. And hopefully, like last year, the silent auction will be open to people who do not have tickets. So, be on the lookout for that too. So you can participate even if you missed out on the tickets.

Mrs. Crowley attended the ISPTO meeting and a Q&A with the superintendent. She thanked ISPTO for all of the wonderful things that they have made happen with the holiday parties and conference dinners and everything that they do that keeps our teachers fed and happy. They do incredible work.

Mr. Vorst reported that the superintendent's advisory committee had its first meeting of the year on the 24th of January. For those who don't know, this committee is where staff members can submit questions for Mr. Stewart, who answers them. Usually, twenty-five to 30 people attend. We had six questions, including team teaching, discussion transitioning from middle school to junior high, the portrait of a graduate, and a couple of other topics.

Mr. Perry said that they've been working on reestablishing our communications committee. I believe that meeting will be set for some time in March, and we'll release that information shortly.

Mrs. Long stated that the finance committee is meeting on February 16. The policy committee will be meeting on February 23rd. As chair, we wanted to look at some of the feedback from our community. We have added six new members and moved the meetings to Thursday afternoon. Holding the meeting during the workday was a big fallout for our community.

H EXECUTIVE SESSION / ADJOURNMENT

H1 The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.