



MEETING NOTES

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

- A1 The president called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- A2 Members present: Ms. Arnold, Mrs. Crowley, Mr. Perry, and Mr. Vorst. Mrs. Murdoch was absent.
- A3 Pledge of Allegiance

NOTE: *The audio recording of the meeting was difficult to decipher. Therefore, this document may contain many unfinished sentences or incorrect wording.*

B PROGRAMS / PRESENTATIONS

- B1 Brown Elementary students will showcase the 'One School One Book' program. They will feature student, teacher, and parent perspectives on the collective reading experience and integration of the book's themes into Wit and Wisdom curriculum activities.

Mr. Stewart said our first presentation tonight was from our friends at Brown Elementary. They are excited to showcase the One School, One Book program and its ties to all the other work we're doing in the district.

Hi there, I'm Amy Jordan. I'm an intervention teacher here at Brown Elementary. This is our fourth year doing our One School One Book. It started off really small. One year, we had a pancake night, and kids just showed up in their pajamas and read to their teachers in their classrooms. As the years have progressed, we've taken it a little bit further and had a little bit more fun with it.

So, I'll show you why we do the One School, One Book. It obviously increases comprehension because it creates conversation with the families and the teachers at school and in the classrooms. It also increases the joy of reading. Wit and Wisdom, we obviously love that, and we've been doing that this year. But also, the kids get to share some of those strategies that they have learned in their classroom and apply them at home with their families. I put a little quote up there from Wit and Wisdom. It says, Our English curriculum builds confident thinkers, not just capable readers. So we want them to be thinking also about what they're reading, which this One School One Book does.

It also increases our family engagement and community connections. We invite all families to come in the evening. We hire people who are in our community to come and help. The PTO helps support that, but we also have a food truck that's one of our families here at Brown. And then we also did some cotton candy. There was also a local vendor and teacher who came and spun some cotton candy for us that night.

It also connects to the Portrait of a Learner. We were very intentional about making sure that we highlighted the competencies. We normally give stickers that have the competencies on them, and we changed it a little bit to match our book. We did "some kid" instead of "some pig." Every time a teacher saw one of those competencies around the school, we weaved a web of all the competencies into the book with characters. Our Spirit week, if you notice up here, we even used the terms during our spirit week of how the kids should dress.

And then we held a family fair night with the staff. This is Quincy Hultin. She's going to tell us a little bit about how we connected this to the classroom. *(They played an inaudible video.)* She was just talking about a web that they created, and they spread kindness during the class and connected it to the friendship theme of *Charlotte's Web*.

The culmination of the week was a fair night. It was such an exciting night, something that all the families, the teachers, and everybody looked forward to. So, rather than me talking a lot, I'm going to show you a quick video. Hopefully, the sound will be louder on this one. *(Played video)*.

Brown Elementary School 'One School One Book'

Family Fair Night was a big success. Family is definitely the entire school. The book was *Charlotte's Web*, and teachers and staff read it to students. We also had a record-setting book fair. We had a student swap, which was student-created and student-advertised. You should make it to the next elementary student swap. *(Inaudible)* donated clothes, toys, and books. We had a green screen photo booth. We had a cakewalk. We had food trucks and cotton candy. We had a local farm bring their animals.

We had a lot of stuff. We also had Chuck E. Cheese come out. He put a name tag on that said Templeton.

We have a couple of friends here: Scarlett Young, a third grader, and Charlie Hultin, a fifth grader. Quincy was in the video, but she wasn't feeling well, so she couldn't make it tonight. Let's start with you, Charlie. What would you like to say about Family Fair Night?

Charlie: Family Fair Night was where all the families here at Brown could come, and they had a lot of fun. I feel like it just wasn't for kids; I feel like a lot of the adults had fun, too. There was a swap, a cotton candy machine, some food trucks, and a lot of fun activities. I'd say my favorite one was probably the swap because I liked seeing the joy on people's faces when they found something that they didn't have enough money for or something that they had wanted for a long time, and I just found it joyful to see their faces. I feel like it was also helpful for kids or parents who don't have enough money to purchase clothes or shoes for their kids. There was a lot of that stuff there. I also really liked the cotton candy. The cotton candy was very good. It didn't have the normal amount of sugar in it. It was a little bit less sugary. It had dried blueberries in it, which were surprisingly very good. It seemed like the cotton candy was the size of people's heads. We picked the flavors by voting in the IDC. The top flavors were Root Beer, Blueberry, Fruit Punch, Birthday Cake, and Bubble Gum.

Scarlett: My favorite part of Family Fun Night was the same as Charlie's, that everyone could have fun, not just the children, but also the parents. Usually, most of the school comes, and also it's fun for the older kids that are already out of elementary and the younger kids that aren't even in elementary yet. And it's fun for everyone and not just the kids. *(Tell us about your role in the swap.)* I liked the swap because everyone could get something, and you didn't have to put something in the swap to get something out. And I also loved the winter swap because some parents, don't have the time and money to get their children Christmas presents. So it's fun for them to come and get like surprise Christmas presents for their kids.

Mrs. Crowley said that is awesome, and I will be stealing all of that. All those ideas. That's amazing. I love it.

Mr. Vorst asked if we could get a cotton candy machine.

Mr. Stewart said one of the surprises for me that night was that the owner of that cotton candy machine. He's in his forties now, but I taught him in high school. And it was this little reunion that we had. So, I will let him know that the dried blueberries were a big hit. He just started that company here in the last few months.

Ms. Arnold said that speaking of people teaching, the Brown family did a great job, but I have to acknowledge Chuck D'Andrea real quick, just because he taught my son back in second grade, and my son is 26 now. So I feel your age a little bit there, but the amazing things I saw him do back then, he still does today. So, I appreciate all of you.

Mr. Vorst asked if they were going to do that again and, if yes, what their next book would be. Mrs. Miller, the principal, said we'll do it again. We usually let the kids and staff vote on the book, so I don't know.

Mrs. Crowley then asked what books have done so far. Mrs. Miller said So the first year we did...*(inaudible)*...then we did *Ways to make Sunshine*, and last year we did *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*.

B2 Embrace, Empower, Inspire Award Winners: Carrie Racz and Mary Lorenz

Mr. Stewart said we have two Embrace, Empower, and Inspire award winners. Brian Hart, principal at Hilliard City Preschool, and Holly Meister, principal at Scioto Darby Elementary, are here to present them.

Mr. Hart said hi, I'm here with Carrie Racz. She's a preschool special education teacher. She's been with the district for twenty-four years. She was nominated by both a parent and a staff member, another teacher. They were both great recommendations. Carrie is extremely great with all of her families. She works extremely hard. When I think about presenting this award to her, I don't know if she knows how important her role is for staff morale. In the last few years on our school improvement team, she's been extremely dedicated to making sure everybody in our building feels included and does so many great activities to boost them up. She's definitely the leader of our school improvement team. And it's been phenomenal working alongside her with all her wonderful ideas. She's also a very integral part of our professional development in the building. In my first year at Hilliard U, she did an 8-hour presentation. Ever since then, she's led a book talk or some kind of PD that has been just outstanding for all of our staff members. She goes above and beyond the expectations of a teacher. Our building is very blessed and honored to have her.

Mrs. Meister said I get to do something that not very many principals get to do, and that is to stand up and talk about how amazing their secretaries are. Mary has been with us for just three years, but you wouldn't know it. When you walk into our building, she has a welcoming smile for everyone. Another staff member nominated her for this award. I'll read the nomination. So it says Mary makes students and families her primary focus and will go out of her way to help. By the way, I agree with everything I'm about to read to you. But recently, she drove past the home of a family impacted by the recent tornado, and she stopped at the home and assisted the family with the necessary paperwork to make sure they received the support that they needed. She was not asked to do this, of course. But she saw the need and stepped in.

I often leave the office and tell Mary it's time to go home. Her husband is here, and he can attest to it as well. She has adult children who sometimes call and say, Mom, are you still at work? Mary helps to keep

the building running smoothly, and I'm so appreciative of her, so it's my honor to present you with this award.

Mary said I think that everybody would agree; if you knew this family, there's a language barrier. They have four beautiful children in our building. When you saw a photo of their home, immediately they just wanted transportation from the place that they wanted to move into. And someone from the central office said, can you put this in the children's backpack? When I knew that they had to evacuate that day and pack up four kids and all their stuff, but the children were not allowed in the home because it was not safe, I thought, I have to stop by the house and hand-deliver the paperwork. And I was like, he can't even fill the paperwork out. He doesn't understand English well enough to do it. And so I sat there and did it with him. And he only signed it. And his kind little heart, with all the mess he was in, asked if I would like water or something. The family's lovely. I actually would have done anything for them, but stopping by with paperwork was really easy.

B3 Attendance Update – Molly Walker

Mr. Stewart said our last presentation tonight is an attendance update. If you recall, last summer, we looked at different pieces of data, including our state report card. As a group, we identified a couple of areas that we wanted to focus on. One of those was attendance, and another one was the graduation rate.

Even though there was much to celebrate, we identified a couple of areas that we wanted to hone in on. And we talked about developing a plan and reporting back to you in the spring. So, over the next couple of meetings, you will get updates on both of those areas, including an update on the commitment plan as a whole. But tonight, Mrs. Walker is going to update you on a lot of the work that she has done with teams across the district and around our attendance. She has some exciting information to share.

I want to start by thanking Molly for her work. What you see here is a lot of hands, but there was one person really driving that work who stayed very persistent. What you're going to see is a testament to the fact that if you set a goal and remain focused on it, you really can make a difference. And with that, Mrs. Walker.

Mrs. Walker said thank you. I know you're excited. I can sense the excitement in the room. It's attendance time. The first thing I want to point out is that we really have a lot of mind shifts that we want to examine. And the first one that I think we've all experienced, as students, as parents, and as educators, is this idea that there are good absences and bad absences.

So if somebody calls and excuses your absence, that makes it a good absence, and if they don't, then it's considered a bad one because it's unexcused. What we are learning through research and development is that all absences impact students' development, not just academically but socially and mentally, and that they have a big impact no matter how many or what kind of absences they are. So, the first shift, we don't have good and bad absences; we just have absences.

What we really want to do is rethink that attendance focus going beyond truancy because, essentially, before this point, truancy was the only tool we were really using to address attendance, and it was not very effective. Truancy was looking only at excessive unexcused absences. And that was not changing patterns of behavior or getting kids to school. So, we want to focus on both excused and unexcused and really avoid punishment altogether. Because, again, it's not effective in getting people there.

We want to see our students and families as important parts of the solution instead of problems or people who need to be rescued. So, we're really looking at this as a joint effort between families, students, and the school to do what's best for students and try to get them to school because that's important to all aspects of their learning.

There's a new term called chronic absenteeism. It's looking at missing 10%, which is only 18 days of school or more, excused or unexcused. If you think about it, that's missing two weeks of school. So, anyone who misses two weeks or more of school is considered chronically absent. And this matters because having an absence here and there once or twice a month really starts to add up. And the data shows that once we start having a pattern of absences, they just continue to grow over time.

Research tells us that 90 percent of students who missed four days in September went on to be chronically absent during the year. So, getting that pattern of coming to school early is really important. Ninth-grade attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than eighth-grade test scores. And there's actually data that takes us close to sixth-grade attendance, really predicting success later on.

So, if we want kids to graduate high school, one of the factors we really need to take a look at is attendance as early as prior to coming into high school. Last year, 57 percent of Hilliard City School students missed 10 or more days of school. While it's not chronically absent, it is working on getting there very quickly.

So we were just taking a look at what was going on. This is a look from our state report card at our chronic absenteeism overview, starting in 2019, so pre-pandemic, and then coming all the way up to where we were last year. The blue represents the number of kids that were chronically absent. We've peaked there at 2,800 students who missed 18 or more days of school. Last year, we had a slight dip to 2,600, but that dip is not enough to get us to where we need to be by the state of Ohio.

This breaks the data down by level. A couple of surprising things that I noticed: one of our big spikes was actually kindergarten. So that very first year coming in, we knew there were some opportunities there to grow in that first year of attendance and the patterns that we have there. We seem to do a pretty good job of starting to drag that down until we have a transition there from fifth to sixth. Then we have another big jump and then it just continues to rise on the amount of school that kids are missing. You'll see that we have changed at every level from 2017 to 2022. K-5 went from 3% of students being chronically absent to 14%. Middle level went from 3% to 23%, and high school went from 11% to 27%.

So, we've seen real big jumps, and that is not unique to us. That is a state and nationwide pattern that we're seeing. So we know from talking to our own students here in focus groups that our students find a cycle of nonsuccess, which includes not coming to school, that idea of falling behind, that creates anxiety, we start to present behaviors, withdrawn, negative interactions happen, and we just kind of get into this cycle of not being able to be productive and successful here at school. So we're hoping, by getting kids to school, we can help combat some of these factors that are starting the cycle and we can break that pattern.

When we look at the cumulative effect for students who have these patterns year after year, if you take a look at a student's K-12 learning process, if they are missing 5 percent of school, that's 9 days a year, which is the equivalent of missing 6 months of learning during their K-12 experience. Being absent 9%, or 16 days per year, is the equivalent of missing over a year's worth of schooling over their career. Missing

30%, which is 54 days or more a year, is the equivalent of missing almost four years of schooling. This seems unreasonable, but we do have some students hitting this mark. This is why breaking those patterns is important. Once they start down this road, it just snowballs into more and more.

Hopefully, I've convinced you that attendance is an issue. So, what are we doing about it?

So, the first place we looked was to return to Attendance Works. This is a national clearinghouse. If you read an article about it or look at research of any kind, it's very likely that all of that came from Attendance Works. They're the leader in this. So that's where we went to take a look at our playbook of what we wanted to do. They are all evidence based, actionable, they're tiered with multiple levels, comprehensive, and aligned to what we're already doing and the thinking that we're already doing.

You're aware of our three commitment plan commitments that we've been having already. This year, we added a fourth commitment to reduce the number of students who miss ten days or more by five percent. As I said earlier, that 57 percent was our baseline. So, our goal was to drop that to 52 percent this year since it was year one. We talked as a team about if this was an outcome that we were going to meet in May, we had to start working on it in August. We couldn't wait to see what was going to happen. We had to be aggressive and start with that on day one and follow it through.

We took a look at changing that mindset and looking at the whole child, not just academics. Again, academics, of course, are super important, but when students are not coming to school, they miss opportunities to interact with peers, learn how to make friends and problem-solve. If there are anxiety pieces, missing school actually builds on that anxiety. That connection really helps with their mental health. So it really helps in all areas. We really want to make sure we're taking a look at all of those pieces. We want to think proactively versus reactively.

Truancy is really based on waiting until they miss a ton of school and then threatening legal action with the parents. And by the time that happens, we're not very successful at bringing them back to school. So the goal is to keep them from getting to that point so that we don't have to have that. We find that kids don't really want to come back after missing a whole bunch of school. They don't feel successful. They don't know what's going on. They're detached from their peers.

We also find that parents are not super easy or eager to interact with us when we threaten to throw them in jail. They quit answering the phone, quit partnering with us, and they don't trust us, and I don't blame them. It feels icky to know that someone's coming after you for that. So, we really want to change that and look at proactive pieces to help as soon as we possibly can instead of waiting so long to do something.

We have trend data on students who are likely to have issues, the type of student we've been looking for, and the profile we've been looking for, so we can try to get ahead of that. And then, we look at multiple tiers. As I said, prior to this year, really, we just had truancy. We were thrown around, and that was it. We have students with all types of different needs, some very small and some very large. And we need to have multiple tiers in order to meet the different needs of students.

We want to think system-wide, again, about that whole child and working together. So instead of thinking of attendance as being its own isolated problem that we're looking at, we should really pull together all of those pieces. We should check in to see how that fits into that academic piece or other issues that are going on.

So, here are the key practices that we shared with buildings last August. And then I'll show you some of the things that they did with that information. So, the first one is to engage families. We want to focus on empathy, not punishment. So we're truly reaching out to see what we can do, how we can help, and what barriers are you having. We talked with, for example, one elementary team that reached out to a family to say, hey, we want to help. What can we do? An elementary student. Got him an alarm clock. That's all it took. He has missed a good number of days. He had been chronically absent the year before, and what a change in pattern that simple piece made. That's just an example of how we really want to work with families. Again, we're not trying to punish anyone.

Looking at relationships, we've done a lot with student to teacher and know that's really important. However, we also know that the data talks about peer-to-peer, which is also very important. When students feel connected to their peers, to their classmates, they're more likely to come to school and also the inverse is true. When they do not feel connected to others, it's much easier for them to say, I'm just going to stay home.

This next one is already work that's been in the commitment plan that we're working on. We're really looking at engaging, relevant, challenging work. Students want to come when school excites them, and the work that they're doing is meaningful and relevant to their lives. Those are changes we're already working and striving on, and research says that will help get kids to school. We talk about how research around relationships gets kids in the door, and then engagement keeps them here.

Then, restorative discipline. So, this is still about holding kids accountable. Students are still disciplined with this, but we're taking a look at what happens next. Do we discipline a student and make them feel ostracized, unwelcome, and unworthy of coming back to the community? Or do we help them understand the importance of what they've done, hold them accountable for their actions, but also let them see that they can learn from that, we can pull them back in, and they can be a productive part of the community? This is an important one. We don't want students to feel like they get labeled and are unable to get out from underneath that label, because again, that just encourages that spin out, and they can just as easily say, I'll just stay home, nobody cares if I'm coming back or not.

Positive greeting at the door – There's a lot of research about that very first interaction that a student has in the school day. When a student comes to school, if the first thing they hear is, Oh my God, thank God you're here. Here's all the missed work you have. That sends one message versus, we're so excited to see you. We missed your smiling face yesterday. You always have such wonderful things you bring to the community and we missed those yesterday. So glad you're feeling better. This sends a different message.

Some of our families and students have not always gotten those positive messages coming in. So we really wanted to try to be deliberate and welcoming. One of the high schools did a good job of writing positive notes to students before they ever walked in the door. You would think, they're high school students, but we had ninth grade families that were putting those letters on the fridge. They were excited to be welcomed and that someone was looking forward to seeing them on the first day of school.

Incentives are a good piece, but we want to be careful about what those incentives are. This is not the old, at the end of the year we honor the perfect attendance of the student that made it all year. Perfection is not what we're shooting for. When students are sick, they need to stay home. That message never changes. But looking at what type of incentives can we do over a smaller period of time. What can we do as a collective? Some of the buildings have done class wars. Difference between different classrooms or different grade levels. Or if we all meet this benchmark, rewards to take a look at that. Also really

rewarding improvements. We are taking a look at students who maybe didn't start where we wanted them to, but we have made changes to make that happen. Those have proven with research to be productive.

And finally, looking at our early warning systems. We have systems in place that help alert us to students who are on the path to being chronically absent. So, who are those kids? What can we do proactively to take a look at that? And how can we monitor along the way to catch new students who may be starting a new pattern? So it's really again that change in mindset. We really want to think proactively, lead with empathy, and really act system-wide to bring those pieces together so they're not all isolated and people are coming from all different ways when we talk with families and students

Here are some examples of what we've done. One of the things we started was district attendance teams. So periodically, roughly monthly, we would be in touch, either as a big group coming together, or I would go out and support buildings to help us all learn together through the work. During those times, we shared ideas and best practices. We looked at a lot of data proactively to identify students for intervention and support. Again, before they hit the truancy mark.

We looked at attendance dip days and patterns. Are there certain days of the year that had lower attendance than others? How can we help to be proactive or message around that really brainstorm intervention planning? It was new to think of it proactively. What types of plans or support could we put into place at schools to help?

We trained on writing attendance plans for students. We collaborated as a building team, taking time to talk about the processes that they're using, looking at that data, and developing those plans. We had professional development on behavior and family engagement and how we can help message and work with families to enable them to have what they need to be successful in breaking those patterns.

We talked about kindergarten being a big spot. We noticed we had an opportunity. So we started in August by creating information sheets that talked about attendance and how important it is. We know students are more likely to read at grade level by third grade if they have good attendance. So, we had them in different languages so that our EL families could also access the information. The information sheets included things like starting your routine, laying out your clothes the day before, and being excited about going to school the next day. So, just tips and being careful about misconceptions. We were very clear about when you need to stay home. For example, if you have a fever, the doctor says so, but there are times we know when, as adults, we just have one of those days, and we could choose to stay home or we could push through. So, we're trying to help our students and families know when it's okay to push through and come on in. We know that's a life skill. That's an employability piece that we really need to take a look at K-12.

Also, research talks about nudge letters. So you may have gotten a version of this at your house around utilities, where they say, you've used this much gas, your neighbors use this much gas, and an energy-efficient house is using this much gas. They do that because there's research that says it's effective. There's also research on the effectiveness of families in attendance. So essentially, the data is looking at that's not something that we necessarily talk about on the sidelines of a soccer game. My kid's missing this much school; how much school is your kid missing? Parents are not always aware of how their students' attendance stacks up to a typical student. These were intended to help give some perspective to that piece. We sent these out quarterly, giving information on the percentage of absences for your student, the percentage of an average student in your school, and the average of Hilliard City Schools overall.

These are student-generated ideas from Hilliard Station. Students were looking at trying to come up with a campaign for increased student attendance back in October with a dress-up day as the incentive at the end of the month if they made that. Here at Brown, they did a spirit week in February. I love some of these. PJ Day. PJs are when you are right on time. Camo day. We can't see you, but we're glad you're here. What a great way to tie in that attendance initiative and incentivize students to come to school.

As we've gone through this, we've seen some bright spots. We looked at students who had a pattern of 10 or more absences over two or more years. We have seen some dramatic changes in this third year. For example, the first student had 20 absences in 2021-22, 34 absences in 2022-23, and only 4 this year as of the beginning of March. We had a number of students fitting into this pattern. I was curious, so I sent a survey to 270 families that fit into this category just to ask, what's your story? What's going on? How can we help?

Students in that group of 270 families missed an average of 20 days during the 2021-22 school year and 25 absences during the 2022-23 school year. This year, those students have averaged only 3 absences so far. These are dramatic changes in breaking the pattern.

We also asked if they had received the quarterly nudge emails comparing their students' absence rate to others. 89% of those families said that they had seen those emails. We then asked, prior to receiving the nudge email, how did you think your student's data stacked up? 48% said they thought their student's absence data was the same or less than that of other students. So, it lent weight to the fact that sometimes, as parents, we aren't always sure.

I presented to ISPTO in the fall, and I remember one mom coming up to me afterward. She said I had no idea how much school my kid was missing. I told her to go to school; I'm not getting any more of those letters. I think we're all guilty of saying, not understanding that. I know that we've talked a lot about pre-pandemic. There weren't many families working from home. It was harder for kids to stay home. I can't stay home with you; I gotta go to work. But since then, we've seen a higher rise in people working from home and wondered if that played a role.

We also asked if they noticed any regular communication from their principal on the importance of attendance in their communication. Nearly 93% said that they did recognize their principal, so I want to make sure that they get applause for that because that's them having that constant look at what's going on. I remember talking to the principal at Tharp coming back from the holiday break in January. He said I know that some of your kids may be anxious or worried about coming back. It's important to get them back to help with that anxiety. The more you keep them home, the bigger that anxiety will grow. It's things like that that are informative or help to dispel myths.

I found some of these quotes really meaningful regarding the work that's going on in the building. The first one is from a second-grade Beacon parent.

She is amazing. Not many teachers have the communication and impact that this teacher has had on me and my son. She took a heartfelt personal interest in him and I felt I needed to show up for her the way she does for him. I want what's best for my son and I want him to succeed. She allowed me the space to help him do that.

A sixth-grade Station parent said one of the reasons why they were successful is that they addressed my children's needs on an individual basis, made a plan for him that included me, got to know him, and made him feel special.

And even high school parents said some good things. This is a ninth-grade Darby High School parent.

Our student has sensory processing problems. She becomes overstimulated. We regularly provide her rest time when at events, family functions, etc. Lunch is hard for her at times. She has a teacher after lunch and he occasionally lets her come to his class early to eat and for quiet study time. She said she uses this time to decompress, privately pray, and do school work. This has absolutely helped her.

I think it's important to notice that not all of this is coming from administrators. On Attendance Works, they talk about how everyone can teach attendance. So, our teachers are also having a large impact.

All right, so you know, there's going to be some data. Again, this is a hard one because we don't know if we've really met the goal until the last bell has rung and everyone has left the school. But we've been taking a look at little pieces along the way to see if we're heading in the right direction. In September 2023, we had an 8 percent reduction in students missing 6 or more days in the month. So, in the month of September from last year to this year, we had an 8 percent reduction in absences.

In October, our truancy referrals were down from 47, the same time last year, to 11. In November, we saw an 11 percent reduction in students missing 6 days or more in the month, with only 22 percent repeating the behavior. So, we had a 78 percent reduction in kids that were missing again and again in that same month.

The first semester, truancy was down 48 percent over the first semester last year. And in semester one, we had a reduction of over 1,200 students who triggered an early warning indicator of hitting six absences or more in one of those months over the previous year. And, as of today, only 39 percent of students have hit that 10 or more days absent for the year.

Remember, last year, it was 57%, so our goal is 52% or less, and we're currently sitting at only 39%. But it's not over yet, so I'm hanging on by a thread, hoping that we can keep them in here for those last two months. Because I'm so proud of the work that our buildings have been doing.

Finally, here I have a visual look by attendance band level. The green would be what Attendance Works says is satisfactory. So, that's nine absences or less. So essentially, a 95 percent attendance rate. Yellow is our at-risk students. So those are students who missed 10 to 17 days. The orange is moderate, with students missing 18 to 36 absences. And the red is severe, with students missing 37 absences or more. I'm so proud of the changes that we've made through the end of March 2024.

Our next steps – we're looking to reflect and refine year one efforts for year two. We want to continue to stay proactive and focus first. I really think that's one that our buildings truly understood. We talk about a lot. If we're really good proactively, we'll never know what impact it truly had because we will have prevented those absences from happening. But I'm really pleased with the work they did. We're going to continue to look at the integration of Attendance Works with our other tiers of intervention. Again, pulling those together keeps those silos from happening. And I think the biggest obstacle that we continue to work with is to continue to communicate a message that we want to engage with families to help them understand this is not about punishment. It's not about perfection. It's truly just about how we can

partner so that students can come to school more so that we can see those successes both academically, socially, and with their students' mental health.

Questions?

Mr. Vorst said great presentation, Molly. It's surprising to me to see that we're back to pre-COVID numbers. That's a great job. You guys have done a good job turning the ship around. That 57 percent number was shocking to me. I feel like my parents would have been brought up on felony charges. Did you really drill down into that data and find any common threads? You briefly mentioned parent work responsibilities. What are those 10 days and 57 percent based on? Are there any commonalities?

Mrs. Walker replied to be honest, it's a wide variety, which is part of what makes this work hard. You can't just say, okay, this one solution is going to work for everyone. You really have to drill down. Some of them are pieces where, essentially, a family could be saying, I need to take a break, like a mental health piece. We've really taken a look at our attendance procedures, how we're counting it, are we being consistent across that, and we've really increased, for example, if you take a mental health day or two, someone's probably going to call and check on you. How is your mental health? What can we do to help? Are there things we can set up at school to help support you with that?

We have some who say my kid's being successful, I'm just not worried about keeping track of missing a day or two. Because, like I said, if you miss two days a month, which doesn't seem that bad, you're going to hit chronic absenteeism. So, part of it is just being aware. I think some of our success has come from starting the conversation with parents. We're finding parents saying how much has my kid missed? What does that look like compared to others?

We do have students who have medical needs, and that's part of our understanding. It's not about punishment. No one's in trouble if they have a medical need, but we might be able to partner with you. If your student has a daily appointment, maybe we can arrange a study hall at the end of the day that won't disrupt those pieces. We really want to partner with families no matter what their reasons are.

Mr. Vorst said for those of you guys that have been in education for decades, have you seen a societal change in the overall attitude of parents or just the general community towards absenteeism?

Mrs. Walker said she thinks the pandemic has had a huge impact. We told families to stay home. We made arrangements for them to be able to do work outside the home. I also think that our students (our customers) are changing. They're demanding more from us. They want more engagement. If you want me to come, then do something that makes me want to come. They're looking for relevance and relationships.

Mr. Stewart added that he thinks it's really two factors. If you remember what happened during the pandemic, we completely slipped on. We really shamed people if they even looked tired. You are doing a disservice, and there was a reason for that, but we needed to come back after the pandemic. Obviously, if you're sick, and again, that's been a theme through all of this that I can't emphasize enough. None of this is about whether or not to send your kid to school if they're not X amount sick. If they're sick, they shouldn't be in school. But I'm just undoing some of that work. I really do think that the rise of people working from home has contributed to that.

The only other thread or theme that I would add to what Molly gave is that I think a lot of the proof was the lack of awareness. These weren't ten days that happened all at once. They happened a day or two

here and there. And as Molly said, when you're standing on the sidelines at a soccer game, you might talk about how your kid's grades were, what activities they're involved in, or what their favorite class is. But nobody ever said, how many days of school did your student miss last year? And I really think that just bringing awareness to it. The data Molly showed you about those 270 families who, a year ago, averaged 27 days of absences. That same 270 families averaged only 3 days of absences this year. I really think a lot of it has to do with Molly and her team and their persistence, but just bringing awareness to it. Like one of the parents said in the quotes, parents want what's best for their kids. And we just needed to bring attention to them, and they've done a wonderful job working with us on that.

Mrs. Walker added that you've done a lot of messaging about students, too. People always say, again, perfection is not the goal. Life happens. So, if you're going to have your tonsils out, that could happen in a year. You're going to miss five days. So it's important leading up to that that you've come every time that you can because you just don't know when a major thing's going to happen. So again, just that awareness of what's going on and when you can go, when you can push through, and when it's appropriate to stay home.

Mr. Perry said thank you for the work that you've done here. Everybody's been saying, which I think always has hit me the strongest, has been the need to partner with parents. This has to be a partnership to make them aware of what's going on. They do want what's best for their own children; of course, they do. Showing them the importance of going to school. We did tell people to stay home, we did tell people to go to school. But when you're at home, it becomes too easy to say, I don't have to do that right now. I'll have a flexible schedule. You can go back into the routine of traditional education and make sure that we don't have this as a punitive measure. I think that's the biggest thing. It's not; why weren't you in school accusatorily? It's really, what can we do to help you get there? Why weren't you in school? Is there something we can do to help you get there? And really welcome them back into the books because nobody wants to come back into a space where they feel like they're being accused of something or they're behind, and it's punishment. They'll never come back. We want to welcome you back into the web community campus. It's not community; it's really this partnership where we're engaging with community tribes to welcome people back. And I really appreciate the mindset on that one.

Mrs. Crowley said wonderful. I loved it. Great work. It's so actionable. It brings awareness, but it's not over the line. It just nudges people in the right direction. Attendance can be overlooked, but it is so important, especially with the new curriculums we have. Kids need to be at school. They need to be attracted, and this is a great way to get them in the door.

Ms. Arnold said just a quick question. As you're drilling into your data and I don't know if you're doing this part too, are you seeing reductions in parents scheduling, say, appointments for students? Are we seeing less of those, like an hour or two absences? Is that factored in?

Mrs. Walker said we definitely have anecdotal pieces that talk about that. I know Driver's Ed is a big point we talk about. We ask people not to schedule Driver's Ed during the school day. And then again, I have heard stories of parents being more mindful of that as they can be, or instead of taking a half day, they're going and coming back. So that we're really minimizing the time they need to be out. Because, again, perfection is definitely not our goal. But being mindful of those pieces is. Thank you.

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 March 2024 Treasurer’s Report.

Mrs. Swearingen said something about cleaning up some timing issues...real estate development...in April.
Mrs. Swearingen’s explanation was difficult to hear due to background noise.

- C4 The Board of Education approved the minutes from the following meetings:
 - a. March 11, 2024 – Regular Meeting
 - b. March 11, 2024 – Meeting Notes
 - c. March 25, 2024 – Work Session Meeting
 - d. March 25, 2024 – 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.

No public participation.

E CONSENT AGENDA

The Board of Education approved the consent agenda, items E1 through E5. 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 contracts for Certified Staff: See attachment to the Minutes.
- E4 Approved contracts for Certified Tutors: See attachment to the Minutes.
- E5 Approved the following trip requests:
 - a. Darby Cross Country, 4-H Training Camp – August 1, 2024
 - b. Darby Football, Wittenberg University – July 28, 2024
 - c. Bradley Girls Basketball, Cedar Point Sports Center – June 13, 2024

- d. Bradley Boys Basketball, Cedar Point Sports Center – June 28, 2024
- e. Davidson Blue Kids on the Block, New York, NY – April 25, 2024
- f. Davidson Hispanic Heritage Students, Chicago, IL – October 18, 2024

Mr. Perry highlighted the retirements. We have Lisa Barber who was my science teacher. We have Daniel Gerdeman, Melissa Headley, Tamara Remington, and Rebecca Sanders. From our classified folks, Monique Phillips and Ralph Williamson. Congratulations.

Mrs. Crowley congratulated the Davidson Blue Kids and wished them the best of luck in New York.

Mr. Stewart reminded the board that in that consent agenda, you approved Whitney Jeckavitch to be the next principal at Norwich Elementary and Chad Bobek as the new athletic director at Bradley High School. We're excited about both of those.

Mrs. Crowley added that Whitney is the principal at my son's school, and everyone loves her at Norwich. We are so happy to have her, and she's awesome.

F ACTION AGENDA

F1 The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Education of the Hilliard City School District, Franklin County, Ohio, that to provide for the current expenses and other expenditures of said Board of Education, during the fiscal year, ending June 30, 2024, the following sums be and the same are hereby set aside and appropriated for the several purposes for which expenditures are to be made and during said fiscal year, as follows:

019	- OTHER GRANT	\$114,689
200	- STUDENT MANAGED ACTIVITY	\$885,500
499	- MISC STATE GRANT	\$55,000
551	- TITLE III	\$288,507

Mrs. Swearingen explained that this was just for some year-end adjustments for an additional grant fund to account for some additional fundraising for those activities.

G REPORTS / INFORMATION / EXHIBIT ITEM

G1 Policies submitted for a first reading

- a. IGBEA-R – Reading Skills Assessments and Intervention (Third Grade Reading Guarantee)
- b. IGD – Cocurricular and Extracurricular Activities
- c. IGDJ – Interscholastic Athletics
- d. KGB – Public Conduct on District Property
- e. KMA – Parent/Citizen Organizations

G2 Committee Reports

Mrs. Crowely said at ISPTO last month we had the pleasure of having Alex Beekman, who was so incredible. He got great reviews from the ISPTO. He's the wellness teacher leader here in Hilliard. And he talked about restorative practices and the science of relationships. I took a full page of notes if anybody

wants to check in with those. And then there was a lot of talk about having him at possibly a parent university because everyone just thought it was so great. The final ISPTO meeting of the year is tomorrow at 6:30 at Davidson High School. There will be a presentation on the Master Facilities Plan, wrapping up the end of the year PTO business and the election of officers.

Ms. Arnold had an update on the facilities. We met last month on March 21st. As always, it was a very thorough review of projects and planning with respect to our facilities from Mike and Mark. We touched briefly on the Master Facilities Plan recommendations final review, in addition to updates on two focused condition assessments for locker rooms and playgrounds. Personally, I am very grateful for the efforts being directed toward addressing our playgrounds, as this has been a critical question for our PTO groups over the years.

We also dove into the variety of capital improvement projects in the works for this fiscal cycle. It includes everything from HVAC, concrete improvements, flooring, paint, the more visible paving and roofing projects, and other things that keep our kids safe, warm, and dry.

While Molly was talking about attendance in multi-tiers, we also had a great conversation about what transportation might look like in the future and about how we can get those kids into school. I encourage the community to review the supporting documents for the meeting to understand the scope of what goes on in keeping the infrastructure of our schools in working order.

Coming up this week is also the PTO booster luncheon, and I'm looking forward to those conversations as always.

Mr. Vorst said that Brian and I attended the city/school board meeting last Friday. Nothing too exciting from the city folks. The Brown Township representative said that they are nearing the end of development. The exciting thing was talking to the fire chief and hearing about their plans now that they got a levy approved. If you know anybody who's looking for a fire job, Norwich Township is rapidly looking for people.

And just in case anyone's wondering, Beth is not here; she's ill. Dave, I think you should send her a nudge letter. (Laughter)

Mr. Perry said that the meeting was really informative. We learned that a lot of education is going to be involved from our end. And I suspect that even folks who are very involved in the community don't always know how it works. I think a lot of education in our community to understand how we operate going forward.

The other committee report I have is on policy. Mike and I worked hard inside the rest of our policy committee to craft the policies we presented. We'll have a more in-depth discussion, but they're pretty much all required policies.

H EXECUTIVE SESSION / ADJOURNMENT

H1 The meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.