



## BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

March 10, 2025 | Ridgewood Elementary School

# MEETING NOTES

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

- A1 President called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.
- A2 Members present: Ms. Arnold, Mrs. Crowley, Mrs. Murdoch, Mr. Perry, and Mr. Vorst.
- A3 Pledge of Allegiance

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

### B. PROGRAMS / PRESENTATIONS

- B1 At Ridgewood Elementary, students have embraced American Sign Language (ASL) as a way to demonstrate respect, compassion, and a sense of belonging for the Deaf community and culture. Offered as a class, ASL also serves as a collaborative tool in the classroom, helping students become empathetic citizens and purposeful communicators among peers.

*Mr. Stewart:* Okay, Mr. Buchman will introduce our first presentation.

*Mr. Buchman:* Good evening, everyone. Welcome to the Ridgewood Jungle. I'm Kevin Buchman, the principal here at Ridgewood. I'm thrilled to say that we've been very fortunate this year with our foreign language. We're doing American Sign Language (ASL). And so because of that, I'm going to have the teacher, Amy Lexner, and some students share their experiences of what they have been learning.

*Ms. Lexner:* I'm Amy Lexner, a sign language teacher at Ridgewood Elementary. Having ASL at Ridgewood this year has not only provided the students the opportunity to learn a new language that they otherwise would have been a bit unfamiliar with, but it's also opened their eyes to the deaf community and culture surrounding us here in Columbus, Ohio.

ASL has also allowed our students to communicate with some of their peers who may rely on nonverbal communication and visual and other sign languages. I have a few friends with me who would like to share with you some of the skills they've learned in ASL this year and why they have enjoyed learning American Sign Language.

*Student 1:* Hello, nice to meet you. My name is Kensey. I love learning ASL. I've been...(unintelligible)...Ms. Lexman did a great job teaching us.

*Student 2:* Thank you for coming. My name is Abbey...(unintelligible)...

*Student 3:* ...(unintelligible)...

*Ms. Lexner:* I also have a short clip that shows how ASL is utilized throughout Ridgewood Elementary.  
(Played video)

We have talked about the skills we teach that endure for a lifetime. This is something that these young people can use for the rest of their lives. And when you talk about our portrait of a learner and all the competencies that go into that, you can see that this touches on so many of them. All of you did an amazing job.

B2 National Merit Finalists:

| <b>Bradley</b>   | <b>Darby</b>   | <b>Davidson</b> |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Alexander Diaz   | Carson Yoder   | Joshua Lance    |
| Charles Pforsich | Yashvi Pathrai | Leah Pfefferle  |
| Nicholas Woodham |                |                 |

*Mr. Stewart:* Okay, next up, Mr. Woodford will introduce some equally impressive students at the other end of the journey in Hilliard City Schools.

*Mr. Woodford:* I'm so excited to be here today. I'm here to celebrate our seven students who have been recognized as National Merit Finalists by the College Board. To be a finalist, these students had to score in the top 1 percent of the state on the PSAT. They were recognized last spring as being semi-finalists. From there, they had to apply, write an essay, submit their standardized test scores, and send in their transcripts. These seven students are part of the top 15,000 finalists in the U.S.

I couldn't be more proud to introduce them to you. We come before you tonight to celebrate these kids' accomplishments over their 12-year journey. We're going to start with the Bradley students first. I will have each of them say their name, the college they plan to attend, their major, and their lifelong goal in terms of a career, and introduce their family.

The reason why I want to start with Bradley is because we have one young man who is not able to be here. He's performing at a concert downtown at the moment. We've had other students move around other activities, but he was in the middle of that. Nick Woodham is a senior and is going to Northwestern next fall. I wanted to make sure he was recognized.

*Finalist 1:* My name is Alexander Diaz, and I'm here with my mom and dad. I'm going to Ohio State to major in mechanical engineering with a minor in aerospace...(unintelligible)...

*Finalist 2:* I'm Charles Pforsich. I'm here with my parents. The colleges I'm considering are OSU, Dennison, and Baldwin Wallace. I plan to major in English Composition...(unintelligible)...

*Finalist 3:* Hi, my name is Leah Pfefferle. I plan to go to Ohio State and study computer science and theater. I hope to, as my day job, be a programmer by day and then a lighting designer by night. And see where that takes me. And I'm here with my lovely mother.

*Finalist 4:* I'm Josh Lance. I'm here with my parents. I am planning on going to OSU, MIT, Purdue, or Georgia Tech. I plan to major in aerospace engineering.

*Finalist 5:* Hi, my name is Yashvi Pathrai. I'm planning to go to Ohio State or Georgetown to study political...(unintelligible)...on a pre-law track in hopes of being a corporate lawyer. And I'm here with my sister today.

*Finalist 6:* My name is Carson Yoder. I'm here with my mom, Stephanie, and my dad, Michael; my current college plans are to attend the University of Alabama with the goal of becoming a chemical engineer.

*Mr. Stewart:* Congratulations. The phrase “best of the best” is sometimes overused, but in this situation, it's absolutely true.

### B3 K-12 Science Curriculum Revision

*Mr. Stewart:* Okay. As you know, our academic team and their work around curriculum revision is ongoing and is led primarily by Cori Kindl and her team. Next up in that rotation is the K-12 science course of study. Cori, Herb, and Jake will present that to you this evening.

*Mrs. Kindl:* Good evening, everyone. My name is Cori Kindl. I'm the Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the district.

Before we begin our presentation on the science course of study, I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge that this past weekend, we had 55 Hilliard educators – teachers in grades K-6, intervention specialists, EL teachers, teacher leaders, principals, and directors – attend the Ohio Summit on Dyslexia. They collaborated, learned, and further developed themselves in the science of reading and small group instruction and intervention. It was so well attended by Hilliard educators that in the opening remarks, the center gave a shout-out to our teachers. So, thank you so much for all that you do for our students in terms of supporting their reading instruction. And it's just another way in which we try to support our teachers in year two of our English Language Arts Curriculum Revision adoption.



So, shifting back to science. On behalf of our science curriculum revision team, we're excited to present the district's K-12 science course of study for adoption. Jake and Herb are joining me for tonight's presentation. We will provide you with an overview of the science revision process, a synthesis of stakeholder feedback, student data analysis, research and evidence-based practices, a summary of the committee's work, and important considerations as you take the next two weeks before a vote for adoption at the March 24<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

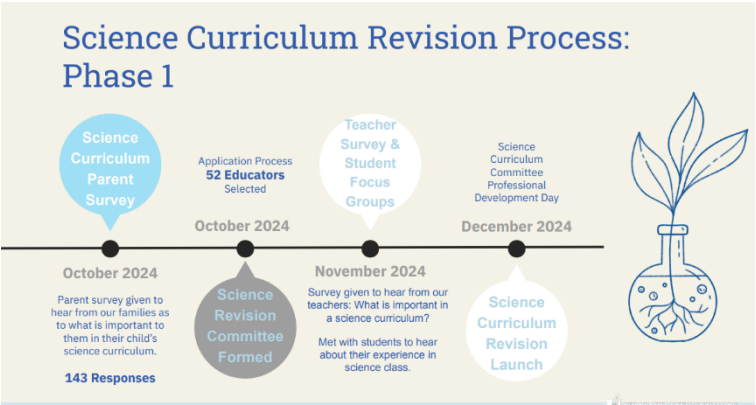
Before we get into that course of study, we'd like to thank the 52 educators who comprised the district's K-12 Science Curriculum Revision Committee. The committee comprised grade-level teachers, secondary science teachers, innovation and discovery specialists, intervention specialists, principals, and directors. I would also be remiss if I didn't thank our wonderful teacher leaders, Roseanne Hetterscheidt and Betsy Long, for their leadership and expertise. These two ladies led our revision teams, provided meaningful professional development, and guided the design of this course of study. I'd also like to thank Tanner Atha, our digital content creator for the district, who visually designed and branded our course of study. Thank you so much, Tanner.

Curriculum revisions occur cyclically to ensure that the most recent Ohio learning standards are taught with fidelity, incorporating current research within science and using evidence-based instructional

strategies and practices to maximize students' knowledge and skills. In addition, resources are evaluated for alignment and intentionality.

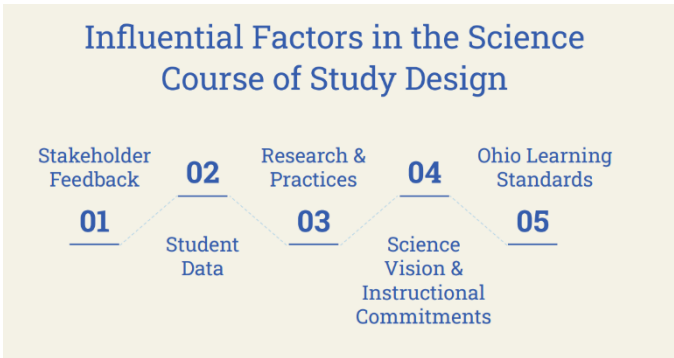
A curriculum revision aims to define and communicate what all students know and should be able to do at each grade level and within each science course to be ready for tomorrow. In addition, our strategic plan curriculum will address several of our objectives throughout the next couple of years. Specifically under goal one, under student learning, objective 1A recommends that we provide all students with access to high-quality, rigorous content within our curriculum and resources. Objective 1D recommends implementing a curriculum for each content area that aligns with current Ohio learning standards, embeds research and evidence-based practices, leverages student interest in real-world applications, responds to student data, and embeds high-quality instructional materials. We have a robust curriculum revision process and seek to do all those things when we go through one.

Our science curriculum revision completed phase one, which began with a parent survey where we asked parents and our families to give us feedback on what's important to them in their child's science curriculum. We had 143 families respond to that. Then, we had an application process in which teachers applied to be a part of the committee, and we selected 52 educators who served on our K-12 science curriculum revision committee.



We also surveyed all science standards teachers and conducted student focus groups. From the teachers, we wanted to hear what was important to them in a science curriculum. And with our students, we wanted to hear about their science experiences in the classroom. That all culminated with the launch of our committee, where we dove into these important considerations and factors when we designed the course of study.

So, we looked at stakeholder feedback, analyzed student data, and investigated what was out there with current research and best practices within science education. That led to us designing a vision for Hilliard City Schools around science education and instructional commitments. And then, of course, embedding Ohio Learning Standards.



*Mr. Higginbotham:* Good evening. As Cory mentioned, one of the first steps we take when working with our committee is to consider what the stakeholders have shared.

Let's first start with parents. Parents provided the committee with many ideas within three main themes. Parents overwhelmingly emphasize the importance of teaching science based on facts, evidence, and the scientific method. They want the students to learn to think critically, analyze information, and involve the community. Many parents desire more hands-on experiments and activities to make science learning

engaging and fun. They believe that practical experiences can foster a deeper understanding of scientific concepts. Some parents want the committee to consider the needs of students with learning differences, such as those with IEPs, and advocate for an inclusive curriculum and resources. And then finally, parents want science education to be relevant to real-world issues and prepare students for future academic and career pursuits. And suggest incorporating topics like technology, engineering, and environmental science into the curriculum.

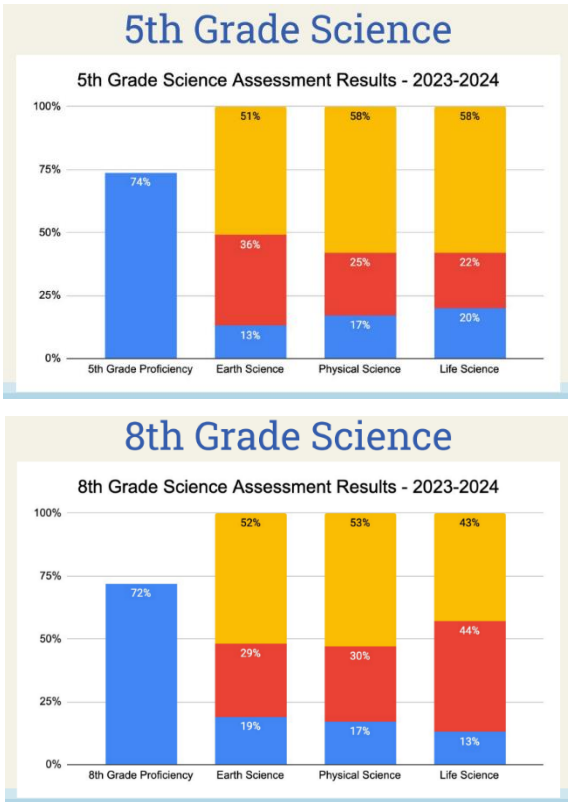
Next, we have our students; we met with various student groups in multiple elementary buildings and all six through 12 buildings. We got a lot of great feedback from them. All student groups generally wanted hands-on experiences, such as experiments, labs, interactive and query-based activities, and small group work opportunities. Like parents, students want science to be related to the real world, implying a desire for practical applications and meaningful context.

Some student groups shared a recognition that sometimes students know a lot about science before studying a unit or a topic and suggested a need to build upon existing knowledge and connect classroom learning to their personal experiences. And then finally, this came mostly from middle school and high school students, but they highlighted a need for more blended learning opportunities; for example, students like using their iPads for timing and taking photos of experiments but prefer taking notes and drawing using paper and pencil. They also shared that they like a variety of learning experiences on a topic rather than lectures and note-taking only.

*Mr. Grantier:* Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to share some of our district's data regarding science achievement and the instructional best practices that are foundational to our revised course of study. Student proficiency in science is summatively assessed in 5th grade, 8th grade, and biology. Across the three domains of earth science, physical science, and life science, the Ohio State tests assess students abilities to design and engineer solutions using science concepts, demonstrate and recall accurate scientific knowledge, and interpret and communicate scientific concepts.

Examining historical trends and strand data can help our team and teachers identify areas of continuous improvement. In 2024, 74 percent of our 5th graders scored proficient or better on the Ohio State Test in Science. The 5th-grade assessment emphasizes life and physical science topics more than earth science. Our student subscores demonstrate higher levels of proficiency in these two domains.

In 2024, 72 percent of our eighth graders scored proficient or better on the Ohio State test in science. This assessment is focused mostly on earth science content. The remainder is divided evenly between physical science and life science. Strand data analysis indicates a significant difference in student proficiency in earth and physical sciences compared to life science at this grade level.



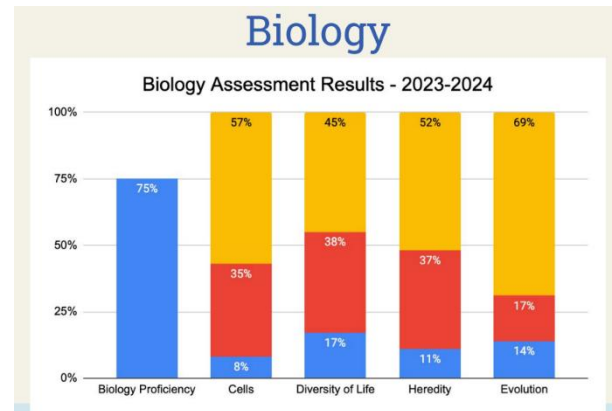
And in 2024, 75 percent of students who took the biology end-of-course assessment scored proficient or better. The biology end-of-course exam assesses students understanding of the strands of cells, diversity of life, heredity, and evolution. The sub-score analysis demonstrates significant differences in achievement across these four areas, with the highest achievement in the strand of evolution.

As we envision science education in the Hilliard City School District, the nature of science and identified science and engineering practices as part of the framework for evidence-based science education remain foundational principles to the design and implementation of evidence-based teaching and learning. Science is meant to be experiential, accessible to all, and relevant to one's interactions with natural phenomena. Science is a way of thinking and knowing. As an investigative process, it includes observing the world around us, identifying scientific questions and testing related hypotheses, gathering accurate and reliable data and evidence, and generating new ideas, theories, and questions for further study. Scientific knowledge is, therefore, logical, predictive, testable, and expansive as new evidence is discovered and shared.

As our teachers step forward into redesigning the science experience, these practices will serve as guideposts for the skills necessary to be competitive and agile in the careers and opportunities of the future, developing the next generation of scientifically literate citizens. Modern science education has evolved beyond traditional lecture-based instruction toward more student-centered approaches that mirror authentic scientific practice. The instructional practices that will guide the next step in our design process include constructivist approaches to teaching and learning focused on natural phenomena and inquiry-based science education.

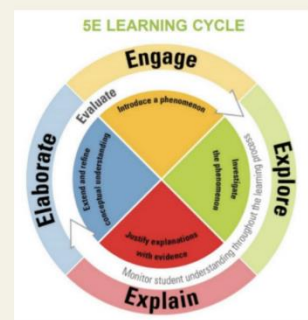
Phenomenon-based learning centers on observable events in the natural world and complex and relevant problems, serving as a connective thread for subsequent learning and investigation. Inquiry-based

education ensures learners explore learning through questioning, investigation, and hands-on, minds-on experiences. It engages students in investigation processes similar to those used by scientists in the field. Explaining phenomena, investigating relevant questions, and designing solutions to problems allow students to build scientific ideas in the context of their application to understanding phenomena in the real world, leading to deeper and more transferable knowledge.



## Instructional Practices

- **Phenomena-based learning** uses real-world phenomena or complex relevant problems as the basis for learning by investigating events that happen around us every day.
- **Inquiry-based science education** encourages learners to explore scientific concepts through questioning, investigation, and hands-on, minds-on experiences.



Students who come to see how scientific ideas can help explain phenomena related to compelling, real-world situations and who can question, investigate, and analyze information learn to appreciate the social relevance of science. In support of these approaches to science learning, Unit and Lesson Design will focus on the 5E Learning Cycle, which guides intentional instructional design by first engaging students with a

phenomenon or relevant problem, allowing students to explore through investigation, providing necessary structures to craft and justify explanations with evidence, and extending and refining conceptual understandings as they connect to the big ideas of science. During this cycle, teachers monitor and evaluate student thinking and provide necessary feedback, support, and scaffolding.

*Mrs. Kindl:* In December, the committee participated in professional development around these important pieces shared with you. They were tasked with developing a vision for science education in our district, and the instructional commitments teachers will implement in their classrooms. Our K-12 Science Curriculum and Revision Committee drafted this vision for science education:

*Hilliard City Schools' Science Vision is for all students to actively engage in meaningful, inquiry-based experiences that build deep scientific knowledge and critical thinking skills. Through authentic problem-solving and collaborative exploration, we foster curiosity, creativity, student agency, and scientific ways of thinking and knowing. Our science education empowers students to understand the world around them, adapt to change, make and investigate claims based on evidence, and become informed citizens who contribute positively to society.*

The K-12 Science Course of Study identifies the science learning standards and establishes a foundation for the planning and developing lessons, resource selections, and instruction. This presentation and the draft of the K-12 science course of study are in your board canvas course. And I'll take a few minutes to go over the important features of this course of study.

Of course, in your table of contents, you'll see our district philosophy/vision statement, science vision and instructional commitments, the Ohio Learning Standards, sample scope and sequence for each grade level and course, and our assessment practices. There is a summary of the evidence-based research and practices that Jake just highlighted for you. And then, in regards to the standards themselves, it communicates what students will know and be able to do by grade level. There are also some special notations of some of the AP courses we offer in science. Those curriculums are determined by the college central board. Our course of study always pairs with our program of studies. So, our program of studies is re-evaluated every year for student interest in science courses, and we're constantly evaluating the electives that we offer in science education.

That is an overview of the committee's work and the considerations that we looked at in terms of stakeholder feedback, student data, evidence, and research-based practices to design that vision for Hilliard City Schools Science Education to step forward in implementing and teaching those standards. I'd be happy to answer any questions that you have.

*Mrs. Crowley:* I have two quick questions. I've served on the Curriculum Committee for Science for Southwestern City Schools and helped the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce write the Ohio Model Curriculum for Grade 3. I know the standards are one thing, but most of the rest of the country follows NGSS. So, when you get into the resource part, do you feel like you'll have trouble finding stuff that matches the curriculum? There's always a mismatch there with materials and kids and books and things. I just wonder, because we've never found a program that marries that need.

*Mrs. Kindl:* That's a great question, Kara. Phase two of our curriculum revision process is the resource selection process. We knew going into this particular content area that we had a choice to make on whether or not, as a local school district, we wanted to stick with and continue to implement the Ohio



learning standards around science or potentially consider the Next-Generation Science Standards (NGSS) that many other states use.

I'm being told by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce that they are considering looking at the NGSS standards. But until they do that, we opted to stick with Ohio because we thought we would have some flexibility regardless of the selected resource. Even though most resources are designed around NGSS standards, there's a difference between the Ohio Learning Standards having content statements and NGSS having skill statements, and we can change the scope and sequence to pair those two together. So, even though they're the Ohio learning standards, we can crosswalk them with NGSS and decide, okay, Ohio says that rocks and minerals are in the sixth grade, right? But we could pick a resource where rocks and minerals are in the 8th grade. We can determine which topics are covered in which grades. So long as by 8th grade, they've been taught all the instructions to take the Ohio OSTs. The other thing is that we still have state tests that measure the Ohio Learning Standards at the grades Ohio's model curriculum suggests they're taught. We have the flexibility but can navigate a resource selection based on that.

*Mrs. Crowley:* Thank you. That's a great answer. My other question is, with all the demands of Wit and Wisdom, Core 95, and the math curriculum, do you expect that teachers at the elementary level will struggle to meet the...I love science; that's my passion, but it's hard to fit in an exploratory type of science when there are many other demands. It's not tested until fifth grade, but we often hear from the fifth-grade teachers that I have to backlog teach all of this because you guys were so focused on ELA and math that it got pushed to the side.

*Mrs. Kindl:* I feel like you were in our curriculum department meetings. Those are the two big issues that we grappled with before we even approached this next course of study – which set of standards would we be best positioned to adopt, and how should we phase in the implementation of a new course of study and resources that come along with it? We've elected to phase in secondary before elementary. Our next steps will be focusing on that 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8th-grade band as we look at resource adoption and determining if we'd like to purchase a resource for middle school. Then we'll move to high school. We will probably start the implementation at elementary the next school year so we can have one more year to get great with our new math and ELA resources and our whole push-in model for special services before we layer on another content area.

*Mrs. Crowley:* Thank you. That's a big ask of our teachers, so I'm glad you guys have thought about that. Great presentation. Thank you, Cori.

*Mrs. Murdoch:* Cori, I love that you included curiosity in the vision and mentioned it a couple of other times. It's a great reminder that whatever we choose, that science is always evolving. And it's a reminder to all of us to continue learning. I love the tie-in with the lifelong learners. Thank you.

*Mr. Vorst:* I love the fact that you mentioned that students will take notes on pen and paper and then iPads to film and marry those two learning methods together. It's great that they can still do the old-school way and incorporate new technology. When you guys met as a committee, was there any one or two science lessons or experiments that the students said, wow, that was really worthwhile and it really stood out...is there anything that comes to mind?

*Mrs. Kindl:* I can't think of an exact answer, but hands-on is the common thread across all K-12. Roseanne did a wonderful job with our teachers on the committee, modeling a lot of experiential learning on our PD



day. The teachers had an opportunity, through different lab scenarios, to apply their science and engineering practices so that they could step forward in the design of their lessons. And really trying to embody and think through what phenomenon-based science education looks like. How can we use a natural phenomenon to teach the standards and build those science and engineering skills? I can't think of one particular lab that students spoke of, but science has a natural tendency where hands-on thinking, collaboration, and experiential learning are critical to their making real-life applications and connecting them to their everyday lives.

*Mrs. Crowley:* Thank you so much, and thank you to all the teachers who served on that committee and went to the dyslexia conference; that's awesome.

#### **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 February 2025 Treasurer's Report.

*Mrs. Swearingen:* Trending according to plan. We're working through any modifications we might need to make to the May forecast. But right now, those are minimal. Obviously, we are monitoring the state budget and those decisions. In March, we will receive the final settlement from the county for our property taxes for this first settlement period. So, I'll update you once those all come in and make sure that those are what we had projected. I don't see any reason why...*(unintelligible)*...

*Mr. Vorst:* Do we modify the forecast based on the state budget, not until the state budget is officially passed?

*Mrs. Swearingen:* We will have to amend the forecast in May. The state requires that. But I am 99 percent sure we will not have a state budget by then. So, we will have to use our best estimates of the governor's proposal and the House and Senate versions at that time. I don't even know that it will officially be in conference committee at that time. We will have to make some assumptions and approve a forecast in May. If the final budget is significantly different than what we approved in May, we can amend that later once we start the fiscal year. But otherwise, it would just be in November when we would approve the first forecast for the following year.

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

Cindy Rieman

My name is Cindy Rieman. Thank you very much for letting me speak to you for a few minutes. I personally have been very invested in Hilliard education since about 1987. First, as a kindergarten room mom, then employed here, I spent about 20 years almost at Ridgewood as a kindergarten teacher and a reading recovery teacher. Then, after I retired, I started a volunteer program, and we were in three of the elementary schools in Hilliard. My two daughters went to Hilliard and got an excellent education. I feel a lot of that is because the community, for the most part, has supported Hilliard schools.

I hear concern about when I read about the voucher system, when I read that our governor is going to give 1 billion dollars to private schools and then take money away from public schools. I feel that this is really wrong and that we need to do everything we can as a school board and as members of the community to try to get them to change their minds about this. I know there is a lawsuit that over 300 districts are participating in, and I would urge you to consider to join that lawsuit.

Even tonight, when I listen to what these little kids are doing at Ridgewood. The National Merit Scholarships. Everything that the science people are doing. That can't be done without resources. One of my youngest grandsons is a first grader at Avery, and he is lucky enough to qualify for the gifted program. So I worry about that because if there's not enough money, we all know what's cut first. It's the programs that are considered non-essential, and that would probably be one of them.

So, I would just urge you to consider joining the other 300 districts to stop the voucher or lessen the money that is going to private schools, which is taking money away from our children in public schools. Thank you.

Linna Jordan

Hello, Linna Jordan. I'm here for a couple of reasons. In the past month or so, I've had a few opportunities personally to be part of some activities and events where we really got to see certified staff, educators, and administrators working together and coming up with solutions and coming up with plans and meeting people that want to be part of Hilliard. And it has been a really positive experience. As part of that, I want to say congratulations to Bill on his new position. And congratulations to the National Merit Finalists that we saw tonight.

What I'm hoping is that this positive experience can move forward and continue forward as we start to see more and more pieces out of the legislature, like the vouchers, like the budget cuts, all the other pieces that impact the day-to-day realities of kiddos in our classrooms. And I'm hoping that we can continue to work together to figure out what's best for kids. So that every single student that comes into our buildings has the best education possible and the best experience possible. And I think that a big piece of that is going to have to be us pushing back on the state a little bit more than we've been used to doing in the past, whether it's joining a voucher lawsuit, whether it's writing to legislators about these budget cuts that are gonna have a serious impact on what we do in this district.

So again, just positive thoughts and hopes.

Debbie Cochran

Hi everybody, I'm Debbie Cochran. Thank you for listening to me today. It is important more than ever that you as our superintendent and treasurer and members of the school board stand up and support all of our students, regardless of race, gender, and socioeconomic status. You are appreciated and I thank you all for your service.

I also want to applaud you for this evening's upcoming resolution calling on the Ohio General Assembly to fully fund the fair school funding plan using current data. Thank you for publicly voicing your concerns about the proposed state education budget.

As you are also aware, a dollar more for private school vouchers is a dollar less in state funding for Hilliard. Because that money for vouchers comes from the same line item in the state budget as state dollars for our district. I'm here again today to ask you to join the Vouchers for Ohio Coalition for this challenging constitutionality of the private school voucher program.

My tax dollars pay for the upkeep and paving of our public streets. My tax dollars do not pay for the upkeep and paving of private roads. I do not want or expect them to. And I do not want or expect my tax dollars to pay tuition to a private school. A private school that is able to discriminate in their admission processes, has no funding transparency, and no accountability measures for their academic instruction. Is that what you want your hard earned tax dollars to be spent?

Did you know that in November, Ohio House members introduced a bill that would have required transparency of voucher funds and it would have provided accountability. Required voucher students to take the same state tests as our students. Conveniently, those provisions were removed in the Substitute House Bill 47 as none of those accountability provisions. We cannot wait for our state lawmakers to make a claim for our case. I'm asking you to act now to create a resolution to join the lawsuit. Nearly half, over half, of all state lawmakers have already joined.

You owe it to our community, the Hilliard community, who support the Lomark schools as much as you do. You owe it to us to stand up and fight for our children. Two dollars a student, that's all. When you were elected to the Hilliard City Schools Board of Education, each student can vote in office to uphold the Constitution of the State of Ohio.

The voucher program is clearly unconstitutional, siphoning away millions of dollars from the Hilliard community. So this is what I'm asking you today. Stand up and support your school students to whom you have pledged to honor and believe in. Ask yourselves, what is stopping you from putting this resolution on the agenda? I'm asking you to stand up for Hilliard City Schools. It's time to stand up.

Maxine Irwin

Hello. Good evening, and thank you for letting me speak today for the Hilliard City Schools School Board. My name is Maxine Irwin. I have been a resident of Hilliard for over 30 years. Both of my children graduated from Hilliard Davidson High School, and they've gone on to earn advanced degrees.

The school portion of my real estate tax increased from 2021 to 2025 by over 42%. This is because of what's been going on with the state funding for schools. The expanded EdChoice is one reason. Plus, the state is throwing another billion dollars to private and religious schools. The money is being used to build new schools and improve their facilities, instead of sending to our public schools. This has to be stopped.

The state values public schools for about \$2,000 each, while for the private vouchers, just for the lower grades, for K-8, it's \$6,000 each. Hilliard has about 1,049 expanded EdChoice students, and they would normally get about \$2 million for those students, but the private schools are getting \$6 million. And these are students that have always gone to private schools. They haven't attended the (*public*) schools. So we're actually losing two million dollars just because of the experiment of the EdChoice program.

The Supreme Court has ruled three times that Ohio illegally funds schools by property tax. And we've seen that in our property tax bill. EdChoice violates the Ohio Constitution in at least two ways. One is by creating a parallel school system that is not open to all schools. And secondly, by illegally sending funds to private schools. And most of them are religious schools, about 90 percent of those are religious schools.

The Vouchers for Ohio lawsuit recognizes this. And that's why that lawsuit was created. I urge Hilliard City Schools to join the Vouchers for Ohio lawsuit. In fact, there's about 300 schools that have joined that lawsuit, and I have a list of all of them right here, if you'd like to see the list. The cost to join the lawsuit is \$2 per student per year. And once the lawsuit is won, Hilliard stands to get millions of dollars in state funds to help. If schools are properly funded, this would bring relief to homeowners in regards to property tax. It would improve the facilities for Hilliard City Schools. And it would help all students and residents of Hilliard. Thank you.

Layan Abu-Romeh

Hi, my name is Layan, and I'm a junior at Hilliard Davidson. I'm here to talk to you about allowing us to paint our senior parking spots next year. Throughout my years in high school, the rising seniors would always bring up the idea of being able to paint senior parking spots. However, their concept never really seemed to stick.

This year, I brought up the idea to one of my fellow classmates, and we began to figure out how we could make it happen. We asked our student council advisors and principals if we could paint the spots next year, but they said that this matter was not in their control. And that we should talk to you guys, the school board, and the superintendent.

So here I am today with many of my fellow Davidson students, and we're here to convince you to let us paint our senior parking spots. So here are just a few reasons why you can allow us to do this. Being able to paint senior parking spots would be a great way to reward seniors for their hard work throughout their time in high school. But currently there are not many perks of being a senior, and this would be a way to change that. In addition, allowing seniors to paint their parking spots would be a very fun way to allow them to express themselves. And it would be a great way to make the senior class as a whole feel more connected and unified.

Numerous high schools around the country allow seniors to paint their parking spots, and one of them is pretty close by, Olentangy Liberty. And we would like our high school to join them. So we know that there's a lot of planning and details that are involved in this decision. As an executive member of Davidson Student Council, I thoroughly discussed this situation with both our advisors and our principals. And they're willing to help implement a plan at Davidson if you guys can approve it.

I also talked to some of our principals who really liked the idea, but they said that it was out of their control, so here we are today. After communicating with our student council advisors and principals, we were able to put together some rules and guidelines that would help implement the system. And then I'm willing to share those with you guys...(*unintelligible*)...

One concern that we've heard from a lot of our principals is that if we have to pay for the parking spots, it wouldn't be fair to everybody because we wouldn't get to park. But I just want to let you guys know, in case that was one of your concerns, that the pay would only be as like an insurance to make sure we get the spot clean for the next year. So, if you don't pay, you still get to park in the student parking lot. It's just going to be a few rows of reserved lots. And that's it. Thank you.

Gemma Pusateri

Hi, my name is Gemma Pusateri and I'm here in support of painting our senior parking spots. We believe painting senior spots will be a good solution to uphold in coming years and...*(unintelligible)*... It would give upperclassmen something to look forward to in the coming years. As a senior, we don't really have a lot of traditions to look forward to, like senior tag...*(unintelligible)*...but not a lot of stuff for seniors on our own. It would be a good way to round out our last year of high school. I think that it's a great way to express ourselves. And express just the stuff that we believe we're supposed to have in our lives. And there are really a lot of thoughts and interests.

Lily Glover

Hi, my name is Lily Glover, and I'm here speaking about painting the senior parking spots. I can say...*(unintelligible)*...it's a great opportunity to express yourself and give us the opportunity for all of the work that we have because there is really not a lot of...*(unintelligible)*...for seniors. And it'll give us the opportunity to maybe park closer to the school because we are seniors and we have to be able to park. And I do know seniors who probably have to go all the way to the back stadium lot. And that's a hard walk, especially if you're a senior. It's unfair because there are sophomores who park closer...*(unintelligible)*...

Julian Ramirez

Hi, my name is Julian Ramirez. I'm a junior at Hilliard Davidson, and I'm here to speak about letting seniors paint their parking spots. I believe life is too short and serious. High school is only a very small part of it. So why not have a little fun and let the seniors enjoy something that would bring the school together and create a new tradition?

Reese Ralston

Hi, I'm Reese Ralston, and I'm a junior at Hilliard Davidson. I'm an executive member of student council at Davidson, and recently, this year especially, we noticed a decline in school spirit at Davidson. Especially from our advisor, lately, we've been trying to come up with ideas to increase that school spirit because it is so important to have a sense of community at your high school. And we believe, as students, that painting those senior parking spots would raise our school spirit because seniors would have something to look forward to and also express themselves in a way that we can't do...*(unintelligible)*... Also, we got approval from our school resource officer and he said that he would love for us to be able to have this opportunity.

Kristina Renner

Good evening. Hi, I'm Kristina Renner. I'm a parent of a 5<sup>th</sup>-grade student from Hoffman Trails and an 8th-grade student at Heritage Middle School. What if I told you right now we are closing doors on some of our brightest students? That we're taking away a pathway for math that has helped them thrive for years. We're replacing it with an impossible choice. Either they fall behind in potential or take on an overwhelming, unrealistic workload in high school. I'm here tonight because I'm deeply concerned about the district's decision to eliminate the 6th-grade online math course that reduces the number of math courses from 3 to 2. A decision that will limit opportunities for high-performing math students and force them into an unsustainable pathway later on in high school.

For years, the online 6<sup>th</sup>-grade math course has allowed advanced students to progress at a manageable pace, setting them up for success in higher-level math. Without it, students who want to take Calculus BC in high school will now be required to take Algebra and Geometry at the same time in 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade. No other high-performing district in Central Ohio is forcing students to take a prerequisite course and a next-level course simultaneously. These courses are designed to be taken in a sequence, and compressing them will place unnecessary academic pressure on our students, hurting their comprehension, their GPA, and their confidence in math.

Even more concerning is the lack of transparency. Parents weren't informed about the elimination of the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade online course until January. Many of us supported the levy in November and were unaware that the first change would be cutting a proven and effective math pathway for our top students. If the goal is to reduce the curriculum compaction, forcing students to double up on two difficult high school math courses at the same time is not the solution. A better approach would be to allow acceleration earlier in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade, as other higher-performing districts are doing right now.

Another option is to reinstate the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade online course, which has been successful for many years. If concerns existed about the rigor, the district should require students to use Khan Academy, a free online resource that would provide even a more rigorous 6<sup>th</sup>-grade math curriculum than the previously run district course.

I urge the board to reinstate the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade online math course. There's still time to correct this before students begin summer coursework that typically starts in April of their 5<sup>th</sup>-grade year. Please listen to the parents and students who have benefited from this pathway, including my 8<sup>th</sup>-grade daughter, who is a top student because of this pathway. Please keep this opportunity for all of those students who are waiting for it. Let's prioritize what's best for our students. Thank you.

#### **E. CONSENT AGENDA**

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

- E1 Approved the following Certified Personnel actions – See attachment to the Minutes.
- E2 Approved the following Classified Personnel actions – See attachment to the Minutes.
- E3 Approved the following trip requests:
  - a. Bradley Shades of Blue, New York City, NY – April 24, 2025
  - b. Heritage, Memorial, Weaver, Washington DC – October 13, 2025
  - c. Bradley Varsity Baseball, Ft. Walton Beach, FL – March 29, 2025

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

#### Certified Personnel Retirements:

- Linda Bennett has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/25/2000.
- Lori Dhiraprasiddhi has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/28/1997.

- Stephanie Finneran has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/31/2001.

Classified Personnel Retirements:

- Kim Leppert has been with Hilliard City Schools since 01/04/1993.
- Homer Logan has been with Hilliard City Schools since 02/21/2002.
- Brenda Ribble has been with Hilliard City Schools since 10/10/2005.
- Toni Wilson has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/28/2002.

*Mr. Stewart:* As part of the consent agenda, you hired Mr. Bill Warfield as the next assistant superintendent. We are certainly sad to see Jill Abraham go, and we wish her the best. We're also very excited about what Bill brings to the team.

*Mr. Warfield:* Thank you. I want to thank everybody who was a part of this process. I am really excited to begin and continue the amazing work of this academic team. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

**F. ACTION AGENDA**

F1 The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT WITH GARLAND/DBS, INC. FOR THE BRADLEY HIGH SCHOOL ROOF RECOAT – PHASE II BASED UPON O.R.C. 167.081 FOR CONTRACTS PROCURED THROUGH A REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the selection of Garland/DBS, Inc. (“Garland”) for the Bradley High School Roof Recoat Project – Phase II (“Project”) in accordance with O.R.C. 167.081 and authorize the negotiation and execution of an agreement for the Project.

**Rationale:**

1. The District has identified a need for the Project.
2. O.R.C. 167.081 allows a school district to participate in a construction contract of a Regional Council of Governments (a “COG”) without the need to engage in competitive bidding. Specifically, O.R.C. 167.081 states that a regional council may enter into a contract that establishes a unit price for, and provides upon a per unit basis, materials, labor, services, overhead, profit, and associated expenses for the repair, enlargement, improvement, or demolition of a building or structure if the contract is awarded pursuant to a competitive bidding procedure of a multistate consortium of which the council is a member. A school district that is a council member may participate in the awarded contract.
3. The Board is a member of the Equalis Group (“Equalis”). Equalis is a Regional Council of Governments that has awarded Garland a contract pursuant to a competitive bidding procedure. Accordingly, the Board may participate in that contract as an exception to competitive bidding.
4. Garland has provided a proposal for the Project in the total amount of \$1,022,804 (the “Contract Sum”), which is based against unit pricing provided under Equalis Contract # COG-2133.
5. The Superintendent recommends the Board select Garland for the Project and authorize the Superintendent, Treasurer, and Board President to negotiate and execute an agreement in an amount not-to-exceed the Contract Sum.



6. The Superintendent also requests authority for the Superintendent and Treasurer to enter change orders on behalf of the Board in a total amount not to exceed 10% of the Contract Sum. Change orders in excess of that aggregate amount will be brought to the Board for its approval.

The Board of Education resolves as follows:

1. Based upon the information provided and exercising the authority granted in O.R.C. 167.081, the Board approves the selection of Garland without the need to engage in competitive bidding.
2. The Board authorizes the Superintendent, Treasurer, and Board President, working with legal counsel, to negotiate and execute an agreement with Garland in an amount not-to-exceed the Contract Sum.
3. The Board grants authority for the Superintendent and Treasurer to enter change orders on behalf of the Board in a total amount not to exceed 10% of the Contract Sum. Change orders in excess of that aggregate amount will be brought to the Board for its approval.
4. The Board also authorizes the Superintendent, Treasurer, and Chief Operating Officer to execute any other documents consistent with the intent of this resolution.

*Mr. Dudgeon:* As you may recall, we did one of three phases on the Bradley roofing project last summer. This is phase two. This project will be carried out through the regional council of government...(unintelligible)...upon approval of this resolution, we will award the contract to Garland...(unintelligible)...

- F2 The Board of Education adopted the following policies:
- a. AFC-2 (Also GCN-2) – Evaluation of Professional and Certificated Staff
  - b. BDC – Executive Sessions
  - c. GCB-2-R – Professional and Certificated Staff Contracts and Compensation Plans
  - d. IGBI – English Learners
  - e. IKEB-R – Acceleration
  - f. IKF-Graduation Requirements
  - g. JHCC – Communicable Diseases

*Mrs. Murdoch:* Was the change that we discussed at the last meeting incorporated?

*Mr. Perry:* No, it was not.

*Mr. McDonough:* We talked about it a few weeks ago, and it's the same practice we have in place for our teachers...(unintelligible)...

*Mr. Stewart:* All evaluations are public records. All a board member would have to do is make a public record request.

- F3 The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO FULLY FUND THE FAIR SCHOOL FUNDING PLAN USING CURRENT DATA

WHEREAS, every child in Ohio deserves access to a fully funded, high-quality public education that provides the necessary resources for academic success and future opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the Fair School Funding Plan (FSFP) was created to establish a predictable and equitable system that accurately calculates the cost of educating students based on real needs and district capacity; and

WHEREAS, the effectiveness of the FSFP is undermined when outdated data, including old salary figures and property valuations, is used instead of up-to-date and relevant financial and demographic information; and

WHEREAS, incomplete funding of the FSFP leaves school districts struggling to meet rising operational costs and burdening communities with a disproportionate local share; and

WHEREAS, securing full and updated funding for public schools is essential to ensuring that districts can recruit and retain quality educators, provide necessary student services, and maintain safe, modern learning environments; and

WHEREAS, Ohio's long-term economic strength and workforce development rely on a strong, well-supported public education system that prepares students for higher education, employment, and civic engagement;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Hilliard City School Board of Education strongly urges the Ohio General Assembly to fully implement and fund the Fair School Funding Plan in the next state budget, ensuring that calculations are based on the most current and accurate financial and demographic data available; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Ohio General Assembly adopt a funding mechanism that accounts for inflation, enrollment shifts, and economic changes to prevent continued underfunding of public schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be shared with the Governor of Ohio, members of the Ohio General Assembly, the Ohio Department of Education, and other key stakeholders to advocate for immediate and necessary action in support of Ohio's public schools.

*Mr. Vorst:* So, we've gotten a couple of emails that, Board President, I think some of you guys know her, she's from Westerville? Is that right?

*Mrs. Crowley:* Yeah.

*Mr. Vorst:* Is this something that they passed?

*Mrs. Crowley:* I believe that they are still working on their resolution. I do not believe they've passed anything yet. But Bexley City Schools has passed theirs. Columbus City Schools passed theirs. Worthington and Westerville are working on theirs. So, I know of a few, but I believe many districts around Central Ohio are passing something similar. We do have a copy of the ones from Bexley and Columbus City if you'd like to see those?

*Mr. Vorst:* Okay, is this a template?

*Mrs. Crowley:* No, theirs are very much different than ours.

*Mr. Vorst:* Okay did you personally write this?

*Mrs. Crowley:* I got some help from Anthony Caldwell, and Kelly helped me. Anthony Caldwell was on the board in Southwestern City Schools, so he's a friend of mine.

*Mr. Vorst:* Okay. The third paragraph discusses including old salary data and property valuations...and I'm wrapping my mind around many of these terms. Melissa was kind enough to send us an update and share the details of what that consists of. Now, there are property valuations in the updated inputs, right?

*Mrs. Swearingen:* In the Governor's proposal, yes. My understanding is that the intent of this is calling on the General Assembly, so on the House and the Senate, when they implement their plans, to include updated property evaluations and income information in addition to the updated salary figures, which are not currently incorporated in the Governor's proposal.

*Mrs. Crowley:* That's correct. Thank you, Melissa.

*Mr. Vorst:* All right. Thanks for clarifying.

*Mrs. Murdoch:* I was also a little confused by that because I thought the governor did include updated property valuations. I knew he did not include the other updates. So, my interpretation is that what we were asking for is to include those cost-basis updates. Is that a correct evaluation? Exactly what the ask is?

*Mrs. Crowley:* Yeah, we're asking that the House and Senate include all the updates so that it uses all current data when the budget passes.

*Mrs. Murdoch:* I think it's worth having a really in-depth conversation about this because as we heard in public participation, this is really important stuff. Melissa, I think when we talked, you said that even if they just update the cost basis, that basically kicks the can down the road a year, and then in another year, unless they also address the guarantees and stop the reduction in the guarantees, we're going to be in the same position a year from now. Is that kind of a fair situation?

*Mrs. Swearingen:* Yes. Currently the governor's proposal is phasing in the budget. So, currently, it's at 66%. It makes those final two steps to phase in and updates the property values and income figures. It does not update the base cost, which was updated during the 22 budget by about four to five percent.

Our November forecast projected the continued phase-in of the budget. It also included updating those base cost percentages by four percent. So without that 4%, we would be less than where we would be. However, the biggest impact on us is that there is a guarantee under the 2020 budget that we would not receive less funding than we had in 2020. And that guarantee is being reduced by 5 percent annually in 2026 and 2027.

And because the base cost is not being updated, we are being forced under that guarantee a year earlier than we would have been. So we would be going under the guarantee in 26 and taking a 5 percent reduction in our funding. So, throughout the current forecast, that's about twelve and a half million dollars. If the base costs were updated, and all of that remained as in the proposal, it would be about eleven million dollars. It's the guarantee part that's hurting us more than anything. I think that falls into

the second bullet point here about the predictable formula, its predictability, knowing that you are receiving a reasonably close amount to what you received the previous year.

I know that a lot of the concerns were around funding students who are no longer in a district for a district that's significantly lost enrollment. That is not the case here in Hilliard. Our enrollment has not significantly declined. Those property values that have increased and those income levels that have increased are driving that state share down and that local share up in terms of how that's calculated.

*Ms. Arnold:* I want to capture something you just said about the predictable nature. One of the forums I've attended, and I've attended a few on this topic for a while now, is the predictable part. One of the things that struck me in the recent webinar was that we must prepare a five-year forecast. We base our decision-making and the levy on that. Yet, our state budget is a two-year cycle. We don't have that predictable nature because they're constantly playing with this formula.

Where the inputs are not being updated, the last time the inputs were updated correctly was in fiscal year 24, where we did see a spike, which effectively is property tax relief. Without those corrected inputs, the share of state funding drops to 32.5%, significantly lower than even when DeRolph was decided in 1997. We need a formula. We have a formula. We need the formula to be fully implemented, not just fully funded, but fully implemented. And that's where this resolution stands: making sure that it's predictable and that we're using the correct inputs so that we can do what we need to do with these kiddos that come in here.

*Mrs. Murdoch:* I agree, and that's why I think the language we put in here really matters, and, rather than say fully fund the fair school, I believe we need to be more specific and include the guarantees and all the inputs and things that we want them to do. I want the call to action to be very crisp as to what we're asking the legislature for here, and I didn't get some of that as written. So, I'm wondering about some edits to include things about the guarantee and the predictability. Maybe take out some of the things that can be construed as maybe a little....incomplete funding isn't exactly what's happening. They are funding it; they're just not using all the inputs into the formula that we would ask them to use. Again, I want to be very crisp in our wording and make sure that we ask for exactly what we want.

*Mrs. Crowley:* I hear that. I spent a lot of time working on this resolution with Anthony and Kelly. I was very careful with the wording that I chose. Taking some things out, adding some things in here and there. I hear what you're saying. I mean I talked to you. I told the board about two weeks ago that I was interested in doing this. I sent it to everybody before it came out on the agenda. I think I sent it on Wednesday. And I asked anybody with issues with the language or anything to please contact me. I didn't hear from anyone. So, it's a surprise that you have an issue with the language here at the table. I wish you had come to me and talked to me about that so we could have gone through it together and added some things that maybe you wanted some clarification about.

*Mrs. Murdoch:* Yeah, well, it's about....talking to....I called the representative's office last week that introduced this bill, had a conversation, and wanted to understand all the details they were looking at to understand what we would need to ask for to be where we want to be. And that's what takes time.

*Mrs. Crowley:* And if you did that last week, did you have the opportunity to do that before today?

*Mrs. Murdoch:* I did it Friday. Then, I had additional questions that I touched base on with Melissa. Based on that conversation, I believe she forwarded an email yesterday, and then we had a conversation again today.

*Mrs. Crowley:* Do you have an additional version that you're looking for?

*Mrs. Murdoch:* Not an additional version so much as.....one of the things that I learned is that it appears as if a resolution as such, that the call to action that we have will not be received in the manner that I thought it would be. And that's again talking to a representative's office; they take personal testimony, and they take it much more seriously. And so I would, if nothing else, like to add a clause to the end about authorizing you as the president to speak on behalf of the board to attend upcoming meetings of the committees and to testify and advocate for us in person.

*Mrs. Crowley:* I'm not sure that is a possibility with my work schedule since I am a teacher. But I'm sure that's possible for somebody with a little more flexibility in their job.

*Mrs. Murdoch:* And this is a discussion, so I want to make sure we get the most out of this. I'm concerned about where we sit right now. I don't think this is the strongest foot we can put forward. And so I'd like to make sure we put our strongest foot forward, and, yes, this would be like a last paragraph.

*Mrs. Crowley:* So, the clause you want to put in there has nothing to do with the guarantees or anything...(unintelligible)...the state house.

*Mrs. Murdoch:* There are other things that I would like to tweak in here. But if no one has the appetite to tweak any of that wording, it is less important than this.

*Ms. Arnold:* To build upon your comment that it's personal is much more well received. Comparing the Bexley resolution with the Columbus resolution and ours, I think the only substantive change would be adding what our revenue loss is. Looking at Columbus's, that's the only thing that's truly personal relative to this, and the same with Bexley. So, we could add an additional line and I do borrow Bex's language: whereas the revenue lost to the Hilliard City Schools over the two-year biennium is projected by – I'm assuming ours is from the Legislative Service Committee as well, or they use the Legislative Service Commission, they use the LLC on theirs, or...

*Mrs. Swearingen:* Yes, that would be in the simulation numbers, which is less than what we are projecting for our forecast because our forecast did have the base cost piece in there, but I do have those figures...

*Ms. Arnold:* So, we could add the additional revenue loss to the Hilliard City Schools over the two-year biennium, which is projected by whatever source we want to use on this. And that's roughly \$5.7 million based on some of the numbers you sent us.

*Mrs. Swearingen:* Based on that simulation, it is \$4 million.

*Mr. Vorst:* I'll just add that I think, in the end, we all want the same thing. We just went through this. We all know the risk of funding issues, and we had difficult conversations about what would happen if we weren't successful back in November. I think we all want the same thing, so I hope we can all keep our eye on the ball.

I had a conversation yesterday with an old friend who is a member of the Ohio State House. She's a representative. And I asked her what moved the needle regarding advocating for your district and funding. I told her that we had a resolution. She said frankly, a lot of the things that end up becoming letter-writing campaigns don't always land very hard and that the best thing you can do is to have your superintendent – sorry, she doesn't know you, Dave, but she called you out – have your superintendent or a designee contact the people in leadership in those committees who hold those cards and say, hey, we have funding issues because.....

Kelly and I just learned a couple of weeks ago that 40 percent of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Wow, I didn't realize it was that big of an issue. How many EL teachers have we hired in the last two years? A lot. So, we have unique funding needs that not necessarily everybody else has. Those kinds of personal impacts. And every school is impacted in its own way. But, those kinds of personal impacts are the best way to get the attention of the people holding the purse strings. And unfortunately, the state of Ohio can't print money. I think a lot of our problems might go away. Although, we'll trade that for some different ones.

But I think we all want the same thing. I hope that we can find a way to make this work so that it has an impact. As I said, we all want full funding and implementation of the plan. It's good that we're thinking this out loud and in real time. It's good that we're having discussions like this to figure out what our best foot forward is. I respect that you guys put a lot of time into this, and it's well done. I don't think any of you guys are lawyers, but it looks like a lawyer wrote it. And that's a compliment.

*Mrs. Crowley:* A teacher wrote it. That's also a compliment.

*Mr. Stewart:* This has nothing to do with resolution, but to reassure you that I interact with our legislators about issues like this. So as this process moves forward, regardless of the resolution, that does and will happen.

*Mr. Vorst:* Yeah, and you've told us that before. We appreciate and respect that. You know our state rep and state senator's name a lot better than most members of the public. And you've told us before that you have good, regular conversations with them.

*Mrs. Crowley:* I'm not saying that anybody cannot go and testify and do all of those things. Those personal connections, I think, matter a lot. This is just one piece of that puzzle to get the ball rolling. I think it makes a statement that this is something that we care about. I think it's important to our taxpayers that they know that we care about the money they're giving us, and I think it's time that we call out our legislators and say, listen, we want the money that you promised us.

*Mr. Vorst:* Do you agree to add something in this that says that all of us would contact our state representative?

*Mrs. Crowley:* I think people can just do that. I don't think that it needs to be a directive in here. I don't want to let this become a micromanaging thing. I hope that you care about it enough that you would reach out, but I don't think it needs to be part of the resolution as it stands.

Is there any other discussion?

*Mr. Perry:* So one thing I noticed about...thank you for having this and for having copies for us. One thing I noticed is that it says directed to speak and then to attend any upcoming meeting. May I just read this into the record since I don't think the public had an opportunity to read it? It says:

*Be it further resolved that the president of the Hilliard City School Board of Education is directed to speak on behalf of the entire Hilliard City Schools Board of Education and to attend any upcoming meeting of either the Education Committee or the Finance Committee of the Ohio House of Representatives that considers HB 96 entitled to make state operating appropriations for fiscal year 2026 and 2027 in order to provide direct testimony to the Ohio House of Representatives about the impact of House Bill 96 on the Hilliard City School District.*

One thing I noticed is it says directed to speak which would imply that they have to go to all of them. And permitted may be better. And then also, because of the president's schedule or their designee, so if they designated the vice president, or treasurer, or superintendent, that they are permitted to go if they feel that's advantageous to our district. It would be a little bit better than taking care of everything, and I don't think that's possible.

*Mrs. Murdoch:* Those edits are fine. I want to make a motion to submit this resolution as amended for consideration with the amendments that Brian just added in.

*Mr. Vorst:* I'll second.

*Mrs. Crowley:* I'm not sure why this needs to be part of this resolution.

*Mrs. Murdoch:* I feel passionately that it gives the resolution some teeth. I can imagine as is it's just going into a pile of paper somewhere, never being read, never being considered. This feels much more actionable in my mind.

*Mr. Perry:* If the amendment would be included tonight, it's permissive at that point where you....if you choose to speak or designate someone to speak, you can. It's not required, but allows you to...(unintelligible)...

*Mr. Vorst:* I think part of the benefit of having somebody who goes there and speaks is they can share those personal stories about our unique funding issues. I think that lands a lot better with legislators. I wish it weren't true, but I have the same feeling, especially after the conversation I had yesterday. It's great that we do this here, but does it actually turn into a funding solution 10 miles down the road...(unintelligible)...

*Mrs. Crowley:* So, if you feel so strongly about this, are you hoping you could become the designee to go down and speak about it? Or is that something you're still directing me to do?

*Mrs. Murdoch:* I have already contacted Representative Brian Stewart, the bill sponsor of the Finance Chair Committee. Senator Jerry Cirino, who's the Senate Finance Chair Committee. Representative Sarah Fowler Arthur, who's the House Education Committee Chair. I need to contact Senator Andrew Brenner, who's next on my list and is the State Education Committee Chair. My representative is Christine Coakley, and my Senator is William Moore. So those are the actions I've taken so far, the actions I'm going to continue to take. And based on testimony, honestly, there was written proponent testimony submitted by the Fordham Institute that I spoke to Brian Stewart's office about, and their support already. That was



given last week. The education committee took testimony last week. So yes, I am willing to do a lot and I think everyone at this table is willing to do a lot to push this forward.

Mrs. Crowley: So, the motion is to add this to the resolution. The motion was by Mrs. Murdoch and the second was by Mr. Vorst.

Mrs. Swearingen: That is just to amend to add the language. And then we'll have to have another motion and second to approve it with the amendment.

Mrs. Crowley: No

Ms. Arnold: No

Mrs. Murdoch: Yes

Mr. Perry: Yes

Mr. Vorst: Yes

*Mr. Perry:* I think it may have failed because this was amended after the agenda was set....*(unintelligible conversation)*....

*Mrs. Swearingen:* It does not indicate that means a supermajority since it was not actually amending the agenda. If we were amending the agenda to add an item to the agenda...but since this is amending an existing agenda item, it requires only a majority vote.

*Mrs. Crowley:* So now we'll vote on the resolution with the change of the Hilliard City School Board of Education president or their designee, and the word directed changed to permitted. Correct?

*Mrs. Swearingen:* Yes. Correct. And we first need a motion and a second.

*Ms. Arnold:* Motion to approve the amended resolution. Seconded by Mrs. Crowley.

The motion passed 5-0.

F4 The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

#### Settlement Agreement

This Settlement Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into as of the date of the last signature affixed below between the Hilliard City School District Board of Education ("Board") and the Hilliard Education Association ("HEA").

WHEREAS, the Board and HEA are parties to a Negotiated Contract having a term of July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2024, with an extension through June 30, 2025 ("CBA"); and

WHEREAS, the parties have met and discussed issues arising from the practices of certain institutions of higher education and their offerings of online credits; and

WHEREAS, the parties have reviewed the coursework and credits offered by said institutions of higher education and how those credits have been used for purposes of placement and advancement on the salary schedule; and

WHEREAS, at this time, the Board and the HEA, in order to avoid the expense and delay associated with recovery of funds and potential disputes, wish to fully and finally resolve any and all claims, issues, and concerns with bargaining unit members and credit they have received for purposes of salary schedule placement, and more specifically, credit from Idaho State University, Dominican University of California, University of the Pacific, and any other out of state University offering professional development courses that are graduate level, non-degree credits representing 0.5 or fewer semester credit hours, as defined in Paragraph 4 below; NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual promises and agreements set forth herein, the parties agree as follows:

1. Effective February 1, 2025, the Board will no longer accept credit or classes/courses from Idaho State University, Dominican University of California, University of the Pacific, and any other out of state University offering professional development courses that are graduate level, non-degree credits representing 0.5 or fewer semester credit hours, as defined in Paragraph 4 below, for purposes of advancement/placement on the salary schedule.
2. Bargaining unit members who have already registered and paid for class/courses with Idaho State University, Dominican University of California, University of the Pacific, or any other out of state University offering professional development courses that are graduate level, non-degree credits representing 0.5 or fewer semester credit hours, as defined in paragraph 4 below, for the Spring semester of 2025 must provide Human Resources proof of enrollment dated prior to February 1, 2025, which shall include the date of enrollment and payment with identified course numbers, to have any such classes or courses approved for salary schedule advancement and/or tuition reimbursement. The approval will be for one half (1/2) credit hour for every one (1) credit hour earned.
3. Bargaining unit members who have advanced across the salary schedule effective on or before January 30, 2025, shall retain their salary schedule placement.
4. Effective as of February 1, 2025, for purposes of placement and advancement on the salary schedule, and regardless of the granting institution, one (1) semester credit hour shall be defined as being equivalent to thirty (30) contact or clock hours and shall be credited accordingly. Except as noted above in paragraph 2, partial credit hours will not be given for fewer than thirty (30) contact or clock hours. When submitting the application for salary advancement, the bargaining unit member must provide proof that the education institution grants one (1) semester credit hour for thirty (30) contact or clock hours.
5. HEA, on behalf of itself and the employees governed by the CBA, agrees to waive any right to file a grievance or an unfair labor practice charge with the State Employment Relations Board complaining of the facts and events that gave rise to this Agreement.
6. This Agreement sets forth the entire agreement between the parties with respect to the terms set forth herein and supersedes all prior and contemporaneous agreements and understandings, express or implied, oral, or written with respect to the terms set forth herein. Should any term of this Agreement conflict with any provision of the CBA, the terms of this Agreement shall prevail. This Agreement may be modified, altered, or amended only by written agreement of the parties.

F5 The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS, This Board of Education in accordance with the provisions of law has previously adopted a Tax Budget for the next succeeding fiscal year commencing July 1, 2025; and

WHEREAS, The Budget Commission of Franklin County, Ohio, has certified its action thereon to this Board together with an estimate by the County Auditor of the rate of each tax necessary to be levied by this Board, and what part thereof is without, and what part within, the ten mill tax limitation; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the Board of Education of the HILLIARD CITY School District, Franklin County, Ohio, that the amounts and rates, as determined by the Budget Commission in its certification, be and the same are hereby accepted: and be it further RESOLVED, That there be and is hereby levied on the tax duplicate of said School District the rate of each tax necessary to be levied within and without the ten mill limitation for tax year 2025 (collection year 2026) as follows:

| SCHEDULE A   |  |   |  |                                      |
|--|--|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| SUMMARY OF AMOUNTS REQUIRED FROM GENERAL PROPERTY TAX APPROVED BY THE<br>BUDGET COMMISSION, AND COUNTY AUDITOR'S ESTIMATED TAX RATES |  |   |  |                                      |
| <i>FUND</i>  | <i>Amount to be<br/>Derived from<br/>Levies Outside<br/>10 Mill<br/>Limitation</i> | <i>Amount Approved<br/>by Budget<br/>Commission<br/>Inside 10 Mill<br/>Limitation</i> | <i>County Auditor's<br/>Estimate of Full Tax<br/>Rate to be Levied</i> |                                      |
|  |  |   | <i>Inside<br/>10 Mill<br/>Limit</i>                                    | <i>Outside<br/>10 Mill<br/>Limit</i> |
| <i>General Fund</i>  | <i>\$178,519,349.65</i>  | <i>\$20,865,956.64</i>  | <i>4.45</i>  | <i>87.40</i>                         |
| <i>Bond Retirement</i>   | <i>\$18,718,590.52</i>   |   |  | <i>4.00</i>                          |
| <i>Permanent Improvement<br/>Classroom Facilities</i>  | <i>\$5,556,722.29</i>  |   |  | <i>2.00</i>                          |
| <i>TOTAL</i>   | <i>\$202,794,662.46</i>  | <i>\$20,865,956.64</i>  | <i>4.45</i>  | <i>93.40</i>                         |

and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Treasurer of this Board be and is hereby directed to certify a copy of this Resolution to the County Auditor of said County.

**G. REPORTS / INFORMATION / EXHIBIT ITEM**

**G1 Committee Reports**

*Ms. Arnold:* Two committee reports. First, we had the PTO booster lunch last week. Yeah, last week. The group was presented with the information updates on the master facilities plan, including the new location for the new preschool at Norwich-Britton and some of what we're calling the second-tier projects as part of the playgrounds, and we had some great discussions with that group. As always, they asked great questions. They were excited to see the playgrounds part of it.

Then, the second update is our D E.I. Committee. As Zach alluded to, we discussed our economic disadvantage is approaching 40%. And that has been trending that way for the past 20 years and does not show any indication of change. We have 80 students who are homeless within our district. And the challenges that we face with those students are transportation and ensuring they have food and clothing. Then, we also discussed the tour of Hilliard that some of our staff took to get a better sense of what's out there for our students and their families regarding various shopping experiences in our diverse communities. There was also a discussion about the professional development of brain science and

trauma-informed care that our teachers participated in so that they're able to help all students in our capacity.

*Mrs. Crowley:* I have one report. I had ISPTO, and Alex Beekman gave a wonderful presentation about managing behaviors. I learned a lot as a teacher, as a parent, and even for my own self. I thought it was wonderful. He does a wonderful job, and it's always a packed house. And it was that night as well. Our next meeting is Tuesday, March 18th at 6:30 at Tolles, and then we'll end the year with the famous bus tour on April 15th, leaving from the district office. If anybody is interested in running for one of the ISPTO board seats, they will be holding elections soon.

*Mr. Perry:* The policy committee is set for April 17th.

#### **H. EXECUTIVE SESSION / ADJOURNMENT**

H1 The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.