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# MEETING NOTES

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

- A1 President called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- A2 Members present: Ms. Arnold, Mrs. Byler, Mrs. Crowley, Mr. Moog, and Mr. Perry.
- A3 Pledge of Allegiance

**NOTE:** *Portions of the meeting's audio recording were difficult to decipher; therefore, this document may contain several incomplete sentences or inaccuracies. Additionally, some of the participants' names may be misspelled.*

## **B PROGRAMS / PRESENTATIONS**

- B1 EL teachers and students will discuss how they set personal goals and achieve success through the program.

*Mr. Stewart:* First of all, thank you to everybody who came to the groundbreaking for Beacon Elementary School. Our first presentation tonight is with Mr. Sparks, the principal here at Beacon. He'll introduce some special guests.

*Mr. Sparks:* Hi. Welcome everybody. Thank you for being here, and especially to the board. Thanks for letting us host you one last time in this building. As we just broke ground on our new building, we can't wait to host you there soon. I'm going to get right to some of our amazing teachers and students. So if Ms. Lepper can join me up here. And then Elise, Amber, Edwin, and Brianna, if you could come up at this time. We're here today to talk to you about the amazing work our EL teachers are doing to help our students learn English and empower them to set their own goals, so they know exactly where they are in this journey of learning English. We wanted them to share that process with you and explain how they set goals to grow as learners, especially in English. So, I already introduced Ms. Lepper. Our EL team also has Mrs. McPeek and Mrs. Hay, who are here with us. We have to share Mrs. Hay, but we're so happy she's with us for half the day.

We have about 104 of our roughly 500 students receiving EL services in some form – some very intense and some on a monitoring system to make sure that they continue to grow. And OELPA is how we track that growth. It's the Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment. And really, we start in November and look at their past scores and how they were doing. We share those with students, with families, and then we have kids set a goal. They set a goal with their teacher and share it with their family so everyone knows their ultimate goal as learners. And then in December, there is a lot of practice. In January, they take a practice test to see what this assessment is going to be like. And really, what's helpful about that is it gives students a chance to see where they're at and to get amazing feedback from both their classroom teacher and their EL teacher. In February and March, right about now, they take the test. We don't get afraid of the test. We know it's a great example of where we are on this journey as English learners. And then in May, we get our scores back and celebrate the growth of these amazing students.

So I'm going to turn it over to Ms. Lepper and the students.

*Ms. Lepper:* What the board sees on the screen is the paper that most of these children are holding in front of them, and that is new this year. We look at each of the four domains on the OELPA, an official state assessment, which is just as important as math, reading, or science. It's a unique test because it assesses skills like listening and speaking, which no other students ever had to do. So it's got some focused learning there. They go on scores are entering, which is how they begin as learners. And then we hope to get them up to four or five to show that they're data-proficient in English. So once they've identified their strengths and areas for growth, they choose a strategy to help them succeed in those areas. And so we have a wide variety of strategies, depending on what each student needs to do to improve their domains.

At this point, we will have our students share their strengths, areas for growth, and one thing they like about Beacon. So we can start with Elise.

- 1) Hi. I'm Elise. My strengths are listening and writing. My area of growth is listening...(unintelligible)...
- 2) My name is Amber. My strength is listening. My area of growth is writing. One thing I like about Beacon is that every morning, kids and teachers would smile at me, and it makes me happy every day.
- 3) Brianna could not be here, but I'll share what she wrote. Brianna said my strength is listening. My area for growth is speaking. Something that she likes about Beacon is that she can learn here. And also, I like to make new friends and play at recess.
- 4) Hello. My name is Edwin. My strength is listening, and my area of growth is speaking. One thing I like is that every single teacher...(unintelligible)...

Mr. Stewart: I want to commend all three of you. It's hard to stand in front of a bunch of adults that you don't know, but you all did an amazing job. So, thank you very much. Moms and Dads, feel free to leave so you can get your student home for dinner, homework, or whatever.

*Ms. Lepper:* Maybe one more slide. We focus on that student-led purpose, having them set their own goals. But with two of our three staff members new this year, we also felt it was important to provide staff professional development to help them understand. I took a very small picture here. This is part of my master's capstone project, which analyzed their performance across four domains over time. The state has some guidelines for the expected growth we see. A green number indicates they met their growth goal; red means they didn't; yellow means they grew but not quite enough. It was a really eye-opening experience for me and the staff to go over those goals specifically during a staff meeting. We appreciate Mr. Sparks giving us the time to dig into those things and even look at some sample OELPA questions.

Thank you for our new building. It is sometimes tricky to squeeze everybody in, so we are really looking forward to some room. And on an EL note, we thank you for your investment in the EL Elevate program. We'll be moving forward with using that next year, so we can continue that kind of professional development for our staff and across the district. So thank you for that investment.

B2 Embrace, Empower, Inspire Award Winners: Kayla Zelina and Rick Sherburn

*Mr. Stewart:* For our next presentation, Mr. Ragland from Davidson High School will introduce one of our Embrace, Empower, Inspire Award winners. While they're coming up, Rick Sherburn, the other winner, is a bus driver for us. If you were at the kindergarten first-time rider event, he's the one who taught Mike

McDonough and me how to drive a bus. Both he and his wife are bus drivers, but they also live an hour and a half away. So, they opted not to be here tonight, but we want to recognize him as well.

*Mr. Ragland:* Good evening. I'm here to introduce Miss Kayla Zelina, one of our English nine teachers. Friday, we surprised and bombarded her classroom with the Embrace, Empower, Inspire Award. Her nomination reads as follows:

I think Miss Zelina is the best example of embrace, empower, and inspire because she cares so much for every single person and student that walks into her classroom, always treating each person with kindness, patience, and real understanding. She never gets mad. Even when she's upset, she never shows it and instead chooses to stay positive and uplifting. No matter what kind of day it is, she brings bright, happy energy. It instantly makes the room feel better. She has a way of making everyone around her feel valued and supported. I can speak for so many students when I say that she is truly there for everyone. Regardless of who you are or what you're going through, you don't have to have or have had Miss Zelina as a teacher, and she would be there for you. I know I can go to Miss Zelina with anything and trust that she will actually care about what I'm saying. She takes time to listen, to help, to reassure. She never gets annoyed or frustrated, even when someone asks a million questions. She answers every single one with patience and kindness. She shows every day what it means to put her students first, and she inspires all of us.

What was written about Miss Zelina is true. Congratulations. Thank you for everything you do for our students at Davidson. We appreciate you.

*Mr. Stewart:* If you could have seen her student's genuine reaction when we surprised her with that award, you would know that every word read was true. Congratulations.

## 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 January 2026 Treasurer's Report.
- C4 The Board of Education approved the minutes from the following meetings:
  - a. January 12, 2026 – Organizational Meeting
  - b. January 12, 2026 – Organizational Meeting Notes
  - c. January 12, 2026 – Regular Meeting
  - d. January 12, 2026 – Meeting Notes
  - e. January 28, 2026 – Special Meeting

## 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.

Debbie Cochran

My name is Debbie Cochran, and I would like to thank each of you for your service to the children of our community. Your work is so important, and it's appreciated.

As many of you know, I served in the Hilliard City School District for over 33 years. During those years, I had the unique privilege of serving as an administrator or a teacher at every one of our schools and at the district level. I know firsthand what an awesome educational community we have here. Hilliard Schools are progressive and innovative with district initiatives such as Standard Bearer, the Hilliard Way, R Factor, Portrait of a Learner, and Ready for Tomorrow. Our school district, our staff, and our students have always strived to be better today than yesterday and better tomorrow than today.

One of the common threads that runs through every initiative Hillard Schools has undertaken has been to be kind, to stand up to bullies, and to support our friends and neighbors. See something, say something. Last week, some of Ohio State's legislators began some bullying of their own. They introduced legislation that attempts to intimidate school districts from joining the Vouchers Hurt Ohio lawsuit. They know they have underfunded every public school in Ohio, and they know they are providing billions of our tax dollars to private religious schools. It's unconstitutional. They know it, and you know it.

It is time to stand up to the State House bullies who think you are inattentive and will remain silent. It is time to stand up to the bullies who want you to be inactive, passive, and complicit. It is time to be the model and example of positive behavior we expect of our students. Step up and join Vouchers Hurt Ohio Lawsuit. Take a stand against the injustice that is being done to our children. Help us understand. What are you waiting for? 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. Davidson Theatre/Drama Club, Chillicothe, OH – April 10, 2026

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

Certificated Personnel Retirements:

- Wendy Cushnie has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/28/1997.
- Wendy Fry has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/29/1994.
- Patricia Gast has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/26/2002.

- Margaret Limbacher has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/25/2000.
- Diana McCreary has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/29/1996.
- Juliana Rolon has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/20/1993.
- Suzanne Sutliff has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/18/2006.

Classified Personnel Retirements:

- Brenda Eckard has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/30/1999.
- Dorothy Sullivan has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/31/1999.

**F ACTION AGENDA**

F1 The Board of Education authorized the Chief Operating Officer to utilize the below listed network for district purchases and services, including, but not limited to, supplies, contracted services, building improvements, and construction needs, in addition to the list approved at the January 12, 2026 board meeting:

1. Equalis Group

F2 The Board of Education authorized the Chief Operations Officer to accept into inventory all items donated from various educational and community groups or individuals as noted on the attached listing, per HCS Board Policy KH, Public Gifts to the District.

*Ms. Arnold:* Just a thank-you. There are quite a few instrument donations here that will come in very handy for all our music groups across all our buildings, so very appreciative.

F3 The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

**AWARDING CONTRACT FOR THE BAND TOWER REPLACEMENTS PROJECT STEINER BUILDERS, LLC.**

The Chief Operating Officer (“COO”) recommends the Board of Education award a contract to Steiner Builders, LLC. (“Contractor”) for the Band Tower Replacements Project (the “Project”).

**Background:**

1. The Board has identified a need for the Project.
2. In compliance with applicable law, the COO and Treasurer solicited bids for the Project based upon design documents prepared by Schorr Architects, Inc. (“Architect”).
3. Four bids were received for the Project. Bids were opened and read aloud on January 29, 2026, with the apparent low bid submitted by Contractor in the amount of \$389,072 (the “Low Bid”).
4. After review of Contractor’s bid submission and a scope review meeting with Contractor, the Architect recommends the contract for the Project be awarded to Contractor as the lowest responsible bidder. The COO and Treasurer concur with the recommendation and request authority to negotiate and sign an agreement with Contractor in an amount not-to-exceed the Low Bid.
5. Additionally, to avoid Project delays, the COO and Treasurer request authority to enter into change orders on behalf of the Board in a total amount not to exceed 10% of the Low Bid. Change orders in excess of that amount, individually or in the aggregate, will be brought to the Board for its approval.

The Board resolves as follows:

1. Based on the information provided, the Board selects Contractor as the lowest responsible bidder.
2. The Board authorizes the COO and Treasurer to negotiate and sign an agreement for the Project with Contractor in an amount not-to-exceed the Low Bid, and to sign any associated documents consistent with the intent of this resolution.
3. The Board also authorizes the COO and Treasurer to enter into change orders on behalf of the Board in a total amount not to exceed 10% of the Low Bid. Change orders in excess of that amount, individually or in the aggregate, will be brought to the Board for its approval.
4. No property interest in the Project will be created until all required documents have been submitted by Contractor and the agreement is executed by the designated Board representatives.

*Mr. Dudgeon:* So, just to provide a little bit of context to this one. This is one of our first performing arts projects under the master facilities plan. We're excited to get this one underway. Construction will begin in March and be completed in June.

F4 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, 2026 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	\$213,310
401	- AUXILIARY SERVICES	\$1,441,973
499	- MISC STATE GRANT	\$222,712
516	- TITLE VI-B IDEA	\$4,245,487
572	- TITLE I	\$3,197,729
584	- TITLE IV-A	\$258,248
590	- TITLE II-A	\$564,942
599	- MISC FEDERAL GRANT	\$99,706

*Mrs. Swearingen:* These are all grant funds. The changes and appropriations are either due to reallocation by the State or to additional grant funds awarded in the last month.

## G REPORTS / INFORMATION / EXHIBIT ITEM

G1 Policies submitted for a second reading

- a. DLC – Expense Reimbursements
- b. DLC-R – Expense Reimbursements
- c. EBDE – Procurement and Administration of Overdose Reversal Drugs (***new policy***)
- d. JEC – School Admission

*Mr. Stewart:* We have no action on this item, but this is the second reading of the policies listed on your agenda. Unless there are any questions or points of information.

*Mrs. Crowley:* Kelly or Brian, do you have anything to share from policy?

*Ms. Arnold:* Yeah, all of them are required policies with additional input from Melissa on expense reimbursements. The auditor or the attorney general made some recommendations, and Melissa was already on top of them before we received them from the OSBA.

## G2 Committee Reports

*Mrs. Crowley:* I have two. I have a curriculum committee report from December, I forgot to report on it at the January meeting because I was so excited about the swearing-in process. I had forgotten the paper, so I'll touch on that. We did not meet this month due to the snow days.

The curriculum committee, which this month included me, Mr. Warfield, and Cori Kindl, met in December to review updates from the district's annual curriculum revision cycle. I heard updates from programs at different stages, including third-year implementations such as math and ELA, first-year programming such as preschool and science, and upcoming work in areas like social studies. We also discussed the comprehensive audit of electives and the middle school schedule adjustments, including increased math minutes in the addition of the win period. Overall, the updates reflected a phased, multi-year approach with continued focus on intervention, advanced learning opportunities, a strong curriculum implementation, and support for our diverse learners. Like we heard tonight, this curriculum committee continues to impress me with the scope, intentionality, and care behind their work. And we will meet again later this month.

Sarah and I had the opportunity to visit the Hub this month for ISPTO to learn more about the district and its extended learning opportunities. We heard directly from the Hub principal, Stacy Carter; the ILC Principal, Craig Vroom; and the Director of Innovation, Extended Learning, Mark Tremayne, about pathway programming and how these experiences build student interest through exposure and hands-on learning. These programs focus on career exploration, innovation, and meaningful student experiences. I continue to be impressed by this committee, its programs, its teachers, and its principals. Our next program committee meeting will be on Tuesday, February 17th, at 6:30 at Tharp, where we will be learning about the gifted program.

*Mrs. Byler:* I would just add that we enjoyed walking through the Hub, and they really allowed us to tour it and see all the classrooms. As someone whose student enjoyed the Hub so very much that he misses it this year, I just wanted to say that. It's such an asset to our district, and we're so thankful to have it and the programs it offers.

*Mrs. Crowley:* I also got to see the next-gen room that my son is in, and then I told him he is signing up for beta. I was so impressed by that room.

*Ms. Arnold:* Make sure you check your emails for the OSBA updates. The Central Region Spring conference is coming up on March 18th. If you're interested in attending, please let Christina know.

*Mr. Perry:* Not really a committee report, but something I had the privilege to be part of and want to share with the board. I was happy to be able to speak to the students in this classroom. I do this every year with former president Mark Abate. We have a great time. So, I absolutely love doing that for the future teachers who hopefully will be in our district.

**H EXECUTIVE SESSION / ADJOURNMENT**

- H1 At 6:55 p.m., the Board of Education caucused to executive session to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official.