

MINUTES OF BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES MEETING

December 13, 2021

The Board of School Trustees met in regular session on Monday, December 13, 2021, at the Education Support Center. The following members were present: Mrs. Elaine Murphy, President; Mrs. Jenny Higbie, Vice-President; Mrs. Elizabeth Galligan, Secretary; Mr. Joseph L. Brown, Member; Mrs. Donna Corbett, Member; Mrs. Rebecca Gardenour, Member; and Mrs. Lee Ann Wiseheart, Member. Also present were the following administrators: Dr. Brad Snyder, Superintendent; and Mr. Bill Briscoe, Assistant to the Superintendent for Administration and Operations.

**A. CALL TO ORDER:**

Mrs. Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**B. RECITE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Mrs. Murphy asked everyone to join in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. RECOGNITIONS:**

**Recognize State Qualifying Cross Country Runners from FCHS and NAHS;**

Boys Cross Country runners from NAHS and Boys and Girls Cross Country runner from FCHS were recognized for qualifying for the State finals. Each student was introduced and presented with a certificate.

**D. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA: (Note: Any Board Member may remove any item for further discussion)**

- Approval of Minutes of the November 8, 2021, Regular Session and November 22, 2021, Work Session;
- Approval of Claims;
- Approval of Payroll;
- Approval of Monthly Transfer from Education Fund to Operations Fund and Transfer from Operations Fund to Secured School Safety Fund;
- Approval of Staffing Report;
- Acceptance of Donations to New Albany High School Scholarship Funds;
- Approval of Property Casualty Insurance Renewal;
- Approval of Three Resolutions – Operations Fund to Rainy Day Fund, Education Fund to Operations Fund, and Education Fund to Future Benefits Fund;
- Approval of Temporary Construction Easement at Prosser;
- Approval of Field Trip Requests from NAHS and FCHS;
- Approval of Memorandum of Agreement Between Jackson County Schneck Hospital and Prosser.

Board members have received information regarding each item on the consent agenda; however, any member may request that any item be removed from the consent agenda and discussed separately. With no one requesting to remove any items, Mrs. Galligan made a motion to approve all items on the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Higbie and carried unanimously following a roll call vote.

- Minutes of the November 8, 2021, Regular Session and November 22, 2021, Work Session as presented.
- Claims beginning check #25959 through and including #26323, EFT #12585 through and including #12715, and payrolls of 11-19-21 and 12-3-21 in the total amount of \$12,481,704.63 as presented.
- Payroll of 11-19-21 in the amount of \$2,941,092.10 and payroll of 12-3-21 in the amount of \$3,143,373.08 as presented.
- Monthly Transfer from Education Fund to Operations Fund and Transfer from Operations Fund to Secured School Safety Fund as presented.
- Staffing Report as presented.
- Acceptance of Donations to New Albany High School Scholarship Funds as presented.
- Property Casualty Insurance Renewal as presented.
- Three Resolutions – Operations Fund to Rainy Day Fund, Education Fund to Operations Fund, and Education Fund to Future Benefits Fund as presented.
- Temporary Construction Easement at Prosser as presented.
- Field Trip Requests from NAHS and FCHS as presented.
- Memorandum of Agreement Between Jackson County Schneck Hospital and Prosser as presented.

Mr. Mitch Corwin was introduced as the new Assistant Director of Transportation. Mr. Corwin is replacing Mr. Rick Cathcart who is retiring after being with the district for ten years. Mr. Corwin thanked the Administration and Board for the opportunity. He has worked for the district for the past four years and is looking forward to his new role.

**E. ACTION ITEMS:**

**Consider Administrative Raises:**

Dr. Snyder commented that all teacher, administrator, etc. salaries are a function of State dollars, not local property tax. Therefore, when the State “treats us well, it gives us an opportunity to treat employees well.” In the last couple of meetings, there was a settlement with the Teacher’s Association, with the classified staff, and with the bus drivers. Tonight, he is recommending the last employee group, to his knowledge, to any consideration from the Board and that is the Administrative Team. He recommended a 3% salary improvement in the first year and a 2% improvement in the second year. He shared information and comparison data with the Board over the past couple of weeks.

Mrs. Galligan made a motion to approve the administrative raises as presented and recommended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brown. Discussion followed.

Mrs. Corbett asked if the Superintendent’s salary is included in this recommendation because he also has a separate contract. Dr. Snyder said, in the contract given to him by the Board, he has a “base” amount and that would be subject to this recommendation.

Mrs. Gardenour asked if this raise for the Superintendent is in regard to the evaluation he had this past July. Dr. Snyder said, much like the Administrative Team, their terms are from July 1 to June 30. Therefore, when he says 3% in the first year, it refers to July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 and the 2% refers to July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

Mrs. Gardenour asked if this is retroactive to July 1, 2021 and Dr. Snyder said yes. The teachers get their retroactive check on Friday, December 17<sup>th</sup> and, if approved, the administrators will receive their retroactive payment in January or February.

Mrs. Gardenour stated the Superintendent’s base pay is currently \$176,000 plus \$25,000 in a 403(b) plus \$6,000 for car allowance plus a technology allowance. Dr. Snyder said the amount for the 403(b) is \$20,000, not \$25,000. The three additional components are not subject to the raise. Mrs. Gardenour commented the salary survey the Board received from Dr. Snyder references a peer group with 15 other school corporations many of which are in the Indianapolis area. When those school districts are taken out of the equation, our school administrators are “pretty much on par with the other schools.” Nothing against our administrators, she understands they work very hard and do a wonderful job; however, she wishes the data the Board received was better. Dr. Snyder explained that, in regard to the peer groups, they looked at peers who have the same number of students as us and took the seven who have smaller than us and seven who have larger than us.

Mrs. Wiseheart said, in the information sent to the Board, there was emphasis on the NAFC Schools remaining competitive with our administrator salaries and she believes we are. She voted yes in supporting the stipend for the administrators and all employees recently because she understands what they have endured beyond what the average school year would look like. In regard to the competitive salaries, NAFC administrators are paid a minimum of \$10,000 to \$20,000 more than the State average based on the information given to them. The Superintendent’s salary is \$44,000 more than the State average for a Superintendent. Based on this information, she feels we already are competitive. However, if there are areas in the administrative level that we are not competitive, she would prefer addressing those through attrition rather than continuing to give raises throughout. She cannot in good conscience, vote for a raise that is “one size fits all” because she knows there are administrators that do differently.

Mrs. Wiseheart asked that it be noted in the record that Dr. Snyder stated this is the last employee group to address. It really isn’t. The School Board has never asked for a raise, nor is she suggesting that tonight, and they are a part of this School Corporation. They are not asking for a raise and they have done more in the last year also.

Mrs. Galligan commented there are things everyone wishes was different, but overall, she is happy they are following suit with what was done with other employee groups. Sometimes we under-estimate the impact of good leadership on student achievement. We all want good teachers, but great principals are essential as well. She is pleased the district is in the financial position to offer the same raises as given to other groups.

Mrs. Murphy thanked the administrators who were present tonight and thanked them for what they do. Mrs. Gardenour thanked the State Legislature and the Governor for giving school districts the money to be able to do this.

Following the discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion to approve the administrative raises passed with 6 votes in favor and 1 vote against. Mrs. Higbie, Mrs. Galligan, Mr. Brown, Mrs. Corbett, Mrs. Gardenour, and Mrs. Murphy voted in favor. Mrs. Wiseheart voted against.

**Consider Energy Savings Contract Bid Award;**

Mr. Wiseheart recommended Board approval of the project scope as recommended by the Facilities Review Committee and authorize entering into a contract with Performance Services, Inc. The project scope includes replacing the HVAC systems at Georgetown Elementary, Floyds Knobs Elementary, and Fairmont Elementary. The systems at these three buildings were last replaced over 20 years ago, between 1996-1999. The total cost of the project is \$10,849,614 which will be paid for with a combination of ESSER and Operations funds.

Mrs. Gardenour asked if Performance Services will be doing the HVAC work or do they bid out the projects. Mr. Wiseheart said they bid out the components. They contacted over 80 contractors and the low bids were taken on each component.

Upon motion by Mrs. Higbie, second by Mrs. Corbett, approval was given to award the Energy Savings Contract Bid to Performance Services, Inc. as presented. The motion carried unanimously following a roll call vote.

**Consider Resolution to Eliminate Policy 7530.01 “Wireless Communication Devices Allowance”;**

Dr. Snyder said Administration will be revising various technology policies and the cell phone allowance is part of that current policy. The School Corporation had previously established the wireless communication allowance for certain employees who must obtain a wireless communication device as a condition of their employment. The employees identified have received an allowance of \$60 per month (\$720 a year). The reimbursement process is very demanding and laborious. Dr. Snyder feels the current policy has outlived the underlying purpose of the original policy due to changes, across the years, as cell phone technology has increased in availability and decreased in cost. Therefore, he is recommending the elimination of the policy while keeping current employees free from financial harm and implement a simpler and more efficient mechanism for remuneration. His recommendation is to eliminate future wireless cellular device stipends for new hires, replace the existing allowance for all current classified positions with a grandfathered annual stipend of \$720 per year, and replace the existing allowance for administrative personnel by increasing pay on a one-time basis of \$720 per year. The recommended changes would be effective beginning January 1, 2022.

Mrs. Gardenour commented this policy goes back to when employees were required to have a pager and those days are over. Everyone has a cell phone and many use them for school-related issues. She feels eliminating this policy totally would be a way to save \$65,000-\$75,000 a year and, over time would add up and help with raising teacher pay.

Mrs. Wiseheart said, in the information presented to them, this recommendation is being made not to save money but to make it less cumbersome on those who have to deal with the accountability of the policy. She asked if there are any changes, regarding the laws, since employees are being reimbursed for using their personal phone. For example, what is the law regarding an employee’s phone being confiscated by the school corporation or law enforcement for probable cause if they feel there is communication on the phone worthy of investigation involving school corporation matters? Dr. Snyder replied that he doesn’t believe it matters if there is an allowance. At the end of the day, there are two ways the school corporation can ask an employee for permission to look at their device or they can ask a judge to make that happen. Mr. Street added, if approved, this policy is no longer there so he believes it actually takes the concern away. But, they will follow-up and get the legal interpretation.

Mrs. Corbett asked if a stipend could be given to the salaried personnel also so that it is not part of the base pay each year (and the employee receives raises based on the base pay.) Dr. Snyder said the administration can do that if the Board chooses. This recommendation was being made to become more efficient.

Following this discussion, Mrs. Higbie made a motion to approve the resolution to eliminate Policy 7530.01 “Wireless Communication Devices Allowance” as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Murphy. Mrs. Corbett asked if the Board could vote on an option to make the \$720 a stipend for the administrative personnel rather than adding to their base pay. Mrs. Murphy said the Board will need to vote on the motion that is on the floor first. Following a roll call vote, the motion carried with four votes in favor and three votes against. Mrs. Higbie, Mrs. Galligan, Mr. Brown, and Mrs. Murphy voted in favor. Mrs. Corbett, Mrs. Gardenour, and Mrs. Wiseheart voted against.

**Appoint Technical Review Committee and Design Criteria Developer for NAHS Natatorium Design-Build Project;**

Mr. Wiseheart recommended the Board enter into a progressive design-build process for the renovation of the NAHS natatorium. This requires the appointment of a Design Criteria Developer and the appointment of a Technical Review Committee. He recommended Dan Rawlins of the Rawlins Group to serve as the Design Criteria Developer and recommended the following individuals serve on the Technical Review Committee: Dan Rawlins, Dennis Cooper, Bill Wiseheart, Mike Rothrock, and BJ McAlister. He hopes to begin the process immediately and have the project completed by October 2022.

Mrs. Galligan asked if it would be beneficial to have a swim coach on the Committee. Mr. Wiseheart said the Committee will receive input from the swim teachers and coaches to be sure everything needed is received.

Upon motion by Mrs. Galligan, second by Mr. Brown, approval was given to the appointments as presented and recommended. The motion unanimously carried following a roll call vote.

**F. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**Receive Public Comments for the “Return to In-Person Instruction Plan”;**

Dr. Snyder said, as a result of receiving ESSER funding, it is a federal requirement to receive public comments regarding our Return to In-Person Instruction Plan every six months. Our Plan is updated regularly as needed and is posted on the Corporation’s website. We are following the Indiana Department of Health color code system. When the County is in Orange or Red, students and staff are required to wear masks. The Plan also describes our contact tracing procedures.

Mrs. Murphy opened the floor to any member of the public who wished to comment on the Return to In-Person Instruction Plan. With no one coming forward, she proceeded to the next agenda item.

**First Reading of Revised Policy 8651 “Non-School Use of Corporation Vehicles;**

Mr. Briscoe presented the revised policy for a first reading and will bring back next month for approval. Basically, the policy is expanded to cover all corporation vehicles, not just school buses. Additionally, all drivers are required to have a valid driver’s license and must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age, have been a licensed driver for at least three (3) years and comply with school driver training, guidelines, and policies. Employees will be subject to a Bureau of Motor Vehicles check on an annual basis.

**Discuss Demographic Study Update;**

Dr. Snyder shared that in the fall of 2019, a demographic study was completed that has proven very helpful in providing the Board and Corporation leadership information on student mobility, student capacity, student growth, etc. He remains concerned, especially in the county schools, with our ability to seat students given the residential growth, particularly in the Georgetown community. Additionally, in the last couple of years, we are seeing more apartment developments being added in the city of New Albany. Therefore, he suggested doing a three-year follow-up using the spring semester of this school year to do “the grunt work.” Then, in the fall of 2022, once we have the final student count, we can use that data and have a completed report available in November or December 2022. Davis Demographics is the company the Corporation worked with in 2019 and he is recommending they be used again. They have given a quote of \$17,000 to do this update.

Mrs. Higbie commented, from her perspective, the Corporation purchased land “on the hill” and are going to be tasked with formulating a plan that is sustainable and the plan needs to be based on accurate, current numbers. Therefore, she supports having the demographic study updated.

Following the information presented by Dr. Snyder, Mrs. Gardenour made a motion to proceed with the demographic study update as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Higbie and carried unanimously following a roll call vote.

**Discuss 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Recess;**

Mrs. Gardenour commented she brought this topic up for discussion at a Board meeting in July 2018 and a parent shared that her 5<sup>th</sup> grader at that time was struggling with not having recess. At that time, she asked the Administration to “look into” the issue and see if there is any way the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade could get some recess during the school day. She asked for follow-up information tonight.

Dr. Griffin said, at that time, the three middle school principals shared their concerns with a built-in, mandated recess. They shared the newly adopted Wellness Policy gave teachers some autonomy to allow for physical activity and movement that could be integrated across the curriculum throughout the school day. He feels we currently give teachers that autonomy to provide for physical movement, whether it is inside the classroom or outside. We do not specifically call it recess, but we do have that ability for teachers to stop and have “brain break” or physical activity break during the school day. We do have a limited school day – 6 hours and 15 minutes, not counting lunch. Administrators agree with the importance of movement and physical activity, but now and in the next few years to come, we are going to be “tackling” significant learning loss which are foundational skills students are going to need academically.

Mrs. Higbie said she currently has a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student and she asked him about this. He said they do go outside every day after lunch. At Scribner, they also have “Fun Fridays” where they go outside in the garden area or the tennis courts. In inclement

weather, they get time to play inside. She asked if the Minds in Motion program they have seen in the elementary schools is taking place in the middle schools as well. Dr. Griffin said that program is not built in to the middle school curriculum; however, teachers are aware of it and some of them use it for “brain breaks.”

Mrs. Gardenour said she understands the reluctance of the Administration. However, she has lots of research regarding “good ol’ recess” where it is “unstructured.” The research shows that, especially in schools with high poverty, their scores went up when students were provided recess time. She feels it is important to keep this “on the front burner” and keep discussing.

**G. MISCELLANEOUS:**

Mrs. Gardenour shared the Indiana School Boards Association’s Board of Directors recently met to appoint a replacement for Mr. Bill Wilson, who recently resigned from the Board of Directors. The ISBA Board chose to appoint Mrs. Lee Ann Wiseheart to their Board of Directors.

Mrs. Murphy commented she is grateful for all the people here and all we have and asked that we keep our neighbors to the south of us in Kentucky in our thoughts and prayers as they go through the devastation caused by the recent storms.

**H. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:**

Pursuant to Policy 0167.3, the School Board recognizes the value of public comment on matters of educational importance. Oral complaints regarding specific students and/or personnel will not be heard. School employees must contact their immediate supervisor on specific complaints relating to the terms and status of their employment prior to addressing the Board. To permit orderly public expression, the Board shall provide a forty-five (45) minute period for participation. Each statement made by a participant will be limited to three (3) minutes. Participants will not be granted additional time yielded from other participants. Any person wishing to speak must complete an online form found at [www.nafcs.org](http://www.nafcs.org). All speakers must sign up no later than 9:00 a.m. on the day of the Board meeting.

Mrs. Mary Jo Gohmann addressed the Board regarding parental rights in regard to health and well-being of their children. Parents have the right to make decisions regarding vaccination and immunization for their child. They do not want Indiana to enact vaccine mandates on children as California has done. The fatality rate for children from COVID-19 nationwide is 0.0003%. So, accordingly, children are not warranted to be vaccinated for COVID-19. Pursuant to the CDC, the COVID-19 vaccine will not prevent infection or transmission of the COVID-19 virus, nor will it prevent serious injury, hospitalization, or death any longer. Therefore, the vaccine is no longer the best tool for prevention or transmission. It is now a medical treatment, at best. The risks of taking the vaccine strongly and significantly outweigh the benefits.

**I. ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further business to be brought before the Board, Mrs. Galligan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Schindler, Recording Secretary