

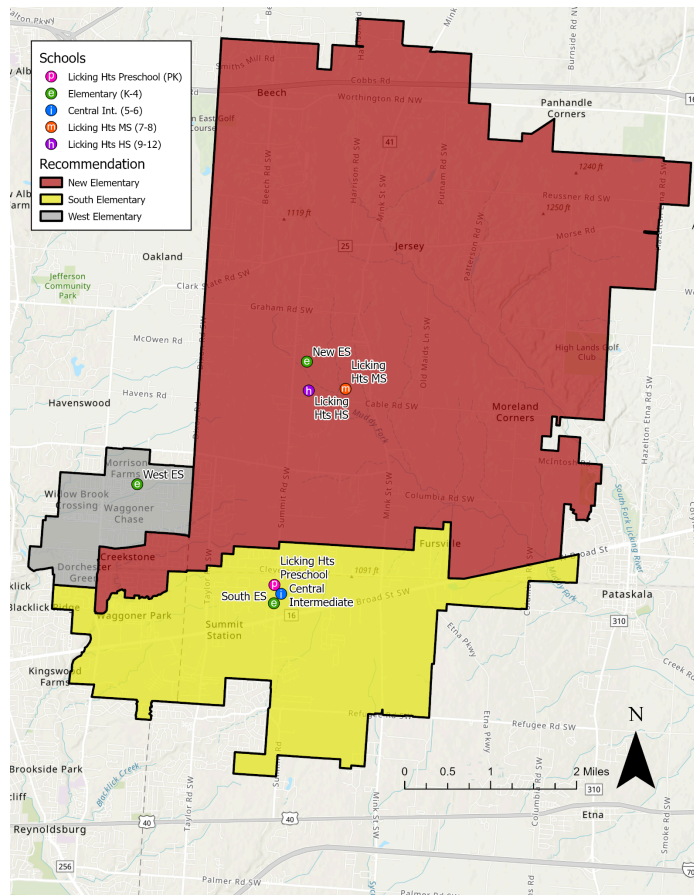


February Regular Board of Education meeting

# LICKING HEIGHTS LOCAL SCHOOLS

Regular BOE Meeting / February 20, 2024 / 6:30 PM / LH MIDDLE SCHOOL

- All Board members were present.
- There were no additions or deletions to the agenda



## AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

### District presentations

- High school student representative Michael Landry provided an update since fellow representative Ezra Bobo was at Senior Night for basketball. Last week, students in the ELL program completed OELPA testing, and the ACT is around the corner for all students. There was a FAFSA workshop last week for students interested in college.



Boys basketball won the LCL title for the 4th time and will soon begin the tournament trail. Boys wrestling placed 4th at the LCL tournament and multiple individuals placed overall and in their weight classes. Sectionals for boys wrestling are happening Feb. 24.

There was a Chinese New Year celebration with Reynoldsburg students on Feb. 10, and freshmen received their required suicide prevention training last week. Finally, Diaspora is happening March 1 and 2 in the high school auditorium.

- Central Intermediate Principal Sandra Phillips and Assistant Principal Kate Bigley presented about their school. Their school currently has 837 5th and 6th grade students with 15 homerooms for each of the grades (30 homerooms total). This year, they developed a new schedule for students that properly transitions them between elementary and middle school levels. The administration is very thankful for the academic support and guidance of district personnel Tom Holdren, Assistant Superintendent, and Micca Conley, PreK-6 Curriculum Director.

Central has very ambitious state testing goals this year: they want 75% of students scoring proficient for ELA and 65% scoring proficient or above for math. With the help of Mrs. Conley and Mr. Holdren, they have implemented strong teaching practices for ELA and math to address gaps in learning for students using the curriculum provided by the district. This includes tracking data in 5x5 work plan monitoring, and using student collaboration strategies for classroom learning. They also are using iReady as a means to evaluate gap closing and increases in student progress.

For social-emotional learning and wellness, Central has multiple successful initiatives. This includes Ollie the service dog, specialized counseling groups for students experiencing grief, vaping prevention presentations, partnerships with Mental Health of Licking County, girls' empowerment groups, and the Hornet Helper program where 6th grade students mentor kindergarteners at North Elementary.

Incorporating more family engagement is a major focus of the Central admin team. They also are incorporating the positives of PBIS into regular activities, including rallies and student of the month celebrations.

The Family Literacy and STEAM night in November was a hugely successful community event for Central students, staff, and families. Over 600 people came, and Sophia Souders, a 6th grade student who attended with her mother, shared about her positive experience with the Board. She most enjoyed the book walk.

- Dr. Miller presented the 2024-25 school year calendar created by the staff to the Board. This proposed calendar has many similarities to years past, but adds in a break for students and staff during the middle of October. The calendar includes four days of instruction after the Memorial Day weekend. The Board will vote on the calendar in the coming months; this was just an initial presentation.



- Karen Jackson from Woolpert/Cooperative Strategies presented the official recommendations for the 2024-25 elementary redistricting, along with a district enrollment projection up to 2033 and a housing study. For districts like Licking Heights with a rapidly growing and changing enrollment, she recommends we closely review the projections each year to make sure they are as accurate as possible.

The housing study was completed by looking at where students are living in the district and placing these dwellings into a yield model showing how many students each home yields and how long these homes will yield students. Dwellings considered included apartments, condos, mobile homes, rural residential, subdivided single family, and single-family townsite. Every home in the district was placed into a yield model to get the estimates. The yield model was also applied to all proposed housing developments.

The final recommendation for redistricting was a combination of Options 1 and 3 presented to the community, both of which earned positive feedback from community members on redistricting surveys. Features of the new boundaries include:

- Creates a boundary for the new elementary school
- 62% of students attend their geographically closest school
- Moves 47% of the elementary population
- Keeps all neighborhoods together
- Balances future utilizations

Under the new boundaries, South Elementary will be utilized at 66% since all the unfinished housing developments currently in process will all go there. West will be utilized at 81%, and the new school at 81%. It is projected that eventually all schools will have utilization percentages in the low 80s. The student populations were balanced equally with a focus on ELL students and students on free and reduced lunches.

744 students will be moved in total. This includes:

- 65 students from South to West
- 91 from West to South
- 729 students total at the new school

The most important factors for community members during the redistricting process included:

- Boundaries assigning students to nearest schools
- Creating boundaries assigning full neighborhoods to the same schools
- Boundaries to grow with minimal future changes
- Boundaries equitably balancing student populations



## Board committee updates

- The Communications and Community Outreach committee met on Feb. 15 and discussed: the final redistricting plan, the 2024-25 calendar, Lifewise Academy, renaming the elementary schools and developing a district logo for district letterhead, and the plan for the solar eclipse on Mon., April 8.
- The Curriculum Committee met on Feb. 14 and discussed: planning for the district art show, new graduation seals for high school students, new honor cords for graduation, postsecondary partnerships with COTC and Columbus State, coursework students can complete in high school that will make them immediately marketable in the workforce after graduation, new coursework that will support students who need extra attention in a certain subject, and new electives.
- The Policy Committee met on Feb. 5 and discussed reintroducing double early out for qualified senior students at the high school.
- The Finance Committee met on Feb. 2 and discussed: a slight change to the district administrator/supervisor and exempt staff handbooks for IRS regulations, open enrollment policies, change orders for the construction project and the construction timeline, a fundraising program for the athletics department, and purchasing cybersecurity software to protect the district from attacks.

## CONSENT/ACTION ITEMS

1. Resignations were approved.
2. Two contract terminations were recognized, but the Board does not consent to the terminations since both were after the July 10 contract deadline.
3. Classified employment was approved, including two new bus drivers.
4. Certified employment was approved for both 2023-24 and 2024-25.
5. Administrative employment was approved.
6. Unpaid leaves of absence were approved.
7. The substitute list from LRESC was updated and approved.
8. Extra hours were approved for the wrestling coach for all his work to train the girls wrestling team and provide them with opportunities to compete this year.
9. After school tutoring lists and hours were approved.
10. The summer school program for 2024 was approved.
11. The district's annual membership in the Ohio High School Athletic Association was approved.
12. A calamity day was approved for the Solar Eclipse on April 8. While the district did initially intend to have school, per the recommendations of safety professionals we have decided to use a calamity day.



13. A contract with NSS Ohio was approved for a special needs student.
14. Donations were approved. Thank you to our donors for their generosity.
15. The minutes from the Jan. 9 Organizational and Regular Board Meetings were approved.
16. There was a second consent agenda just for resolutions to file complaints against the valuation of real property tax for properties in our district for the year 2023. The district is not receiving their fair share of property taxes from these properties because there is not a fair, even assessment of their valuation.

## ACTION AGENDA/TREASURER RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The January 2024 Financial Report was approved.
2. A fund transfer was approved from the food services fund to the construction fund. This money will be used to purchase the food services equipment for the new elementary school.
3. A new fund was created for workers compensation self-insurance. This will make accounting simpler.
4. Then and now certificates were approved.
5. The Stronger Connections grant application was approved. This grant funds student wellness initiatives in the Pupil Services department.

## ACTION AGENDA/SUPERINTENDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Change orders were approved for financing the boardwalk at the athletic stadium and utility site changes for the new elementary school.
2. The purchase of ThreatDown cybersecurity software was approved.
3. District membership in the Fair School Funding Plan 501c6 was approved.
4. New positions were created and their descriptions were approved for the 2024-25 school year. All positions are part of our five-year plan to improve student pathways and outcomes.

## BOARD COMMENTS

- Mr. Tsikiwa said he was impressed with the Central Intermediate presentation. He is enthusiastic about the SEL groups and support being offered to give students a space to discuss challenges and issues in life outside of school. He also appreciates the ambitious testing goals for math and ELA, and all of the emerging pathways available for students at the high school.



- Mr. Johnson said he is excited about the new courses offered at the high school next year to increase student achievements and provide different pathways directly to the workforce or college. Not a lot of districts are providing students with marketable skills like Licking Heights is. He also loves seeing classes introduced for students who need additional academic support. Mr. Johnson thanked the construction team for their hard work and the teaching and support staff for their service to students.
- Mr. Rader highly praised Central Intermediate's presentation. He liked that it was data-driven but didn't lose touch of the personal details. Mr. Rader thanked the redistricting team for their work, especially their attention to trying to get as many students as possible to the closest school. He thanked all donors and expressed his thanks to the construction team.
- Mrs. Russ thanked the Central Intermediate team for all they are doing to improve student outcomes, especially in math. For redistricting, she thanked Woolpert, LH staff, and the community. Mrs. Russ shared there will be a work session for the Board to review school name options. Finally, she shared that Solo and Ensemble competitions will be happening at the high school this weekend for local middle school musicians, and the high school theatre program will present *The Wedding Singer* on March 14-16.
- Ms. Blumhorst thanked the Central team for all they are doing to improve student achievement and close learning gaps. She thanked the Woolpert team for their redistricting presentation and for making such a data-driven decision on the final boundaries. She looks forward to the return of the summer school program this year and shared how pleased she was to see the youth leagues using the high school for a basketball tournament last weekend. Finally, Ms. Blumhorst advised her fellow Board members to put on their seatbelts—the next few weeks and months will move quickly, but she is excited for this adventure together.

## SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

- Dr. Miller invited Mitch Tom, Director of Pupil Services, to speak about how state DPIA and student wellness and success funds are being used to support student wellness, mental health, and academic success.
- There will be a Board work session on Mon., March 11 at 6 p.m. in the middle school Media Center.

## UPCOMING EVENTS, COMMITTEES, AND MEETINGS

- The next Regular Board Meeting will be on Tues., March 19, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. in the middle school Media Center.



- There will be a special work session on Mon., March 11, 2024 at 6 p.m. at the middle school Media Center.