



November Regular Board of Education meeting

LICKING HEIGHTS LOCAL SCHOOLS

November 21, 2023 / 5:00 PM / LH MIDDLE SCHOOL

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

AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS



District presentations

- High school student representatives Ezra Bobo and Michael Landry provided an update. Sophomores went to C-TEC last week to get hands-on experience with the programs and decide if they wanted to go there for their junior and senior years. Juniors received their PSAT scores, and the Theatre Club presented four successful performances of *Grease*.

The high school had their annual Veterans Day ceremony on Nov. 8, which included the unveiling of an Honor Wall for veteran alumni. The first blood drive of the school year happened. Winter sports like basketball, wrestling, and swimming are underway with practices and scrimmages. Interact is looking for volunteers for the annual Pataskala Rotary Cookie Walk in town.



- Mrs. Brandi Wade, Principal of North Elementary, and Mr. Aaron Davis, Assistant Principal, presented an update from the Kindergarten. This year, there are 375 kindergarten students in the building. According to iReady fall diagnostics, 20% of students were at or above the benchmark for kindergarten readiness when the year started. By focusing on Heggerty and Foundations, the team plans to raise this metric by the end of the 2023-24 school year. Last year, 83% of students ended the year at or above benchmark in 2022-23, so it is possible. Mrs. Wade and Mr. Davis explained some ways they are making this possible for students.

Academic work plans were created to focus on the specific needs of students. These plans focus on small group time, differentiated instruction, independent instruction, and the development of fine/small motor skills. Instruction differentiation is particularly focused on differentiating based on the needs of a student and their background (ELL, SPED, etc).

WIN (What I Need) Time is a major part of this instruction. WIN Time consists of 30 minute time blocks where students can get support from teachers, Title specialists, meet with smaller targeted skills groups, and more. Students are selected for extra help from Title teachers or specialists based on their iReady data. Small group stations focus on content, and there is always one station that has a fine-motor focus. Student voice, choice, and collaboration is key in determining the stations. Teachers enjoy building relationships with students during WIN Time, and specials teachers often come in to work with students who have skills they'd like to grow. This includes art, PE, and music.

Beyond academics, Mrs. Wade and Mr. Davis are coordinating special activities for students to enrich their education. This includes trimester awards, monthly PBIS incentives, Hornet Helpers, Touch a Truck events for Fire Safety Month, Calm Corners, Lunch Bunch, Student of the Month lunch tables, Stay in the Game activities, and more. Mr. Davis is working closely with Mrs. Deb Welch, the school counselor at North, to support good behaviors and understand the root of student behaviors.

- Treasurer Todd Griffith presented a department update and updates to the district's Five Year Forecast. The Fair School Funding Plan has been very good for Licking Heights.

In the Licking Heights district, there is currently an inverse relationship between tax rate and property tax valuation, with large valuation jumps happening every three years. As property values go up, tax rates fall, but this doesn't mean district residents will not see increases.

The Fair School Funding plan is fantastic for the district, and we hope to see its continued phasing in. Mr. Griffith explained that with local and state revenue for the



district, Licking Heights should be funded 50/50 with the state. Hopefully, the district will receive this fair funding moving forward.

Licking Heights is unique because Ohio is rapidly losing students out of the public education system—however, our district enrollment continues to grow. This includes increases in EL and SPED populations, which makes per-pupil costs higher. As of this school year, Licking Heights has the 4th highest ELL student population in the state.

Overall, the district is in a solid position, even with the increase of higher-need students. We will continue our advocacy for equity in public school funding and the continued phase-in for the Fair School Funding Plan.

Board committee updates

- The Finance Committee met Nov. 15 to discuss moving funds and making transfers to cover construction costs. They also discussed how absolutely imperative it is for fair school funding to continue at the state level for Licking Heights and all public districts in Ohio.
- The next Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting will be Tues., Dec. 5.
- LPDC met on Tues., Nov. 21.

CONSENT/ACTION ITEMS

1. Resignations were approved.
2. The board acknowledged a teacher's termination of contract after July 10 without board approval. The contract is terminated and the employee has resigned, but the board does not consent to the termination since it is not legally or ethically in line with ODE (now DEW) standards.
3. Classified employment of two new Transportation Assistants was approved.
4. Three new certified staff members were approved, including retire-rehire Annette Karas. Welcome back.
5. Jhuma Acharya was approved as the new Family Support and DEI Coordinator. Mr. Acharya is a district parent and highly involved in the Licking Heights community. Jocelyn Cosgrave was approved as the new Director of Human Resources.
6. Supplemental employees were approved.
7. Staff were approved for bus duty and after school detention monitoring.
8. Additional days were approved for Mrs. Cosgrave so she can onboard with Kim Henderson and Kim Bratz in December.
9. Staff were approved for Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI) training.
10. After school tutoring was approved for high school teachers.



11. An unpaid leave of absence was approved for two different staff members.
12. The list of students deemed impractical to transport was approved.
13. The substitute teacher list with the Licking County ESC was approved.
14. An update was approved for the exempt and administrator/staff handbooks.
15. A revised job description for the Director of Human Resources was approved.
16. A suspension was overturned for a Licking Heights student.
17. The minutes from the Oct. 30 Regular Board Meeting were approved.
18. Donations were approved. Thank you for your generosity.
19. The consent agenda was approved.

ACTION AGENDA/TREASURER RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The October 2023 Financial Report was approved.
2. The Five Year Forecast was approved.
3. Appropriations were amended for FY23.
4. A fund transfer was approved from the General Fund to the Capital Project Fund.

ACTION AGENDA/SUPERINTENDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The purchase of competitive retail natural gas from Meta Solutions was approved.
2. The purchase of three 81-passenger school buses with money from the general funds was approved.
3. The purchase of exterior lighting with LOEB Electric was approved. This is financed through Ohio's K-12 School Safety Grant.
4. The Design Phase Review of the new elementary school was approved by OFCC.
5. A second reading took place of a replacement policy regarding procurement and use of Narcan in emergency situations and of a new policy regarding care of students with active seizure disorders.
6. A second reading took place of 16 revised policies.
7. The date for the 2024 Organizational Meeting will be Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. in the Middle School Media Center.
8. The President Pro Tempore for the Jan. 9 Organizational Meeting will be Tiffany Blumhorst.

BOARD COMMENTS



- Mr. Johnson expressed sympathy for Tuscarawas Valley schools and appreciated the district staff wearing red and black in solidarity on Nov. 21. He wished everyone a happy break.
- Mr. Rader echoed sympathy for TV and gave a shout out to the kindergarten staff and students. He also thanked donors.
- Mrs. Russ shared how impressed she was by the North Elementary staff and also congratulated the high school on an excellent fall musical production. She thanked Mr. Koons for giving her a tour of the construction site before the board meeting and expressed her excitement for all the progress.
- Ms. Blumhorst echoed everything said by her fellow board members and thanked Mr. Griffith for his hard work on the Five Year Forecast.
- Mr. Bagley said he always enjoys seeing presentations and following how decisions made at board level impact students and staff every day. He thanked Mr. Griffith for his hard work and wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving!

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

- Dr. Miller shared how thrilled he is to work with the district Leadership Team and is appreciative of how they go to the end of the world for the district. He requested that board members look at proposed meeting dates for 2024 and evaluate the next steps of the superintendent feedback system. Finally, he thanked Mr. Johnson for bringing doughnuts to the District Office team on Nov. 21.

UPCOMING EVENTS, COMMITTEES, AND MEETINGS

- The Buildings and Grounds Committee will meet on Tues., Dec. 5 at 6:00 p.m. in the District Office Conference Room.
- The next regular Board of Education meeting will be held on Thursday, December 14, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the Licking Heights Middle School Media Center.
- The 2024 Organizational Meeting will be Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. in the Licking Heights Middle School Media Center. Board members must arrive at 6 p.m. for headshots and group photos.