

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
MARION COUNTY, INDIANA, HELD MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2024**

PRESENT: Zachary Smith Howard, Doris L. Gowan, Kelly L. Foulk, Larry J. Walker, Jill Britt, Chase Huotari, Sharon Kight, Tyler Knight, Fred McWhorter, Jeff Murphy, Kent Pettet, Kaitlin Porter, Lynlie Schoene and Toni Stephenson

The Board of Education of the Franklin Township Community School Corporation, Marion County, Indiana, met in Regular Session at 6:00 P.M. at the Administration Offices, located at 6141 South Franklin Road, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46259, on March 11, 2024. All Board Members and news media had been duly notified and the agenda properly posted.

REGULAR MEETING

President Zachary Howard called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. He also led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

President Howard called for a motion to approve the agenda as written. Mr. Walker made a motion to approve and Mrs. Gowan seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMUNITY

President Howard opened the floor for comments from the community.

1. Derek Sutton, 7050 Stones River Dr., stated that he was excited to learn that Dr. Chase Huotari had been chosen as the new Superintendent of Franklin Township Schools. He shared that his children had Dr. Huotari as their Principal when they attended Franklin Central Junior High and Franklin Central High School. He conveyed that he feels he is a great communicator to both the students and parents and is very involved in the education of every child. Mr. Sutton thanked the Board Members for choosing Dr. Huotari to lead the school district.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

President Howard asked for a motion to approve the following list of Consent Agenda Items. Mrs. Gowan motioned to approve the items and Mrs. Foulk seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

- A. Board Meeting Minutes
 - 1. Regular Board Meeting – February 12, 2024
 - 2. Public Hearing – February 28, 2024
- B. Fund and Expenditure Summary Reports (Exhibit No. 24-23)
- C. Accounts Payable Vouchers and Payroll Claims (Exhibit No. 24-24)
- D. Cancellation of Outstanding Checks (Exhibit No. 24-25)
- E. Personnel Report (Exhibit No. 24-26)
- F. Donations (Exhibit No. 24-27)
- G. Fundraisers (Exhibit No. 24-28)
- H. Surplus Equipment for Disposal (Exhibit No. 24-29)

Mr. Jeff Murphy, Chief People Officer, asked Mrs. Meli Drier, Principal of New Bethel Elementary, to introduce her newly approved Assistant Principal. Mrs. Drier introduced Mr. Steven Webb as the first ever Assistant Principal for New Bethel Elementary. She shared that he has 13 years of experience and is currently Dean of Students at Franklin Central Junior High. She asked Mr. Webb to introduce his family. Mr. Webb introduced his wife and children and thanked them for their support throughout his career. He also thanked Mrs. Catherine Whitson, FCJH Principal for her support and leadership the past few years. He added that he is honored and excited to begin this new chapter in his life and thanked the Board Members for their support as well.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP EDUCATION FOUNDATION REPORT

President Howard asked Ms. Stephanie Rigler, Franklin Township Education Foundation Executive Director, to introduce the newly elected Executive Board Members. She thanked President Howard for the opportunity and introduced the members as follows: Mr. Ryan Donovan, President; Ms. Kim Lyon, Vice President; Ms. Roberta Jagers, Treasurer and Ms. Tara Rabiola, Secretary. There were no questions or comments from the School Board.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

President Howard reported that the 2024 Legislative Short Session ended a few days earlier than the deadline and ISBA is still waiting to get the conference committee reports on the following list of bills: House Bills 1001, 1002, 1120, 1243, 1304, 1380 and Senate Bill 211. He shared that ISBA will be issuing a 2024 Digest of New Laws in the next few weeks with details of the passed legislation so we can begin complying with the new laws on July 1, 2024. There were no questions or comments from the Board Members.

DISCUSS UPCOMING FCHS PHASE 3 TIMELINE & SCOPE

Mr. Fred McWhorter II referred the Board Members to their copies of the Franklin Central High School Phase 3 Construction conceptual renderings and potential timeline that were included in the Board Meeting information and asked FC Principal Jenni Matasovsky to join him in explaining the future project. He stated that Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the high school renovation project are already in progress and Phase 3 of the project will not even begin until 2025. He and Principal Matasovsky gave an overview of the project and shared that they will continue to meet with various FCHS Departments that will be affected by the projects and will continue to gather input prior to the project being finalized. President Howard asked if the Board will be involved in the meetings to discuss the details of the project. Mr. McWhorter assured him that we will have multiple Public Hearings prior to finalizing the project. There were no additional questions from the Board Members. (Exhibit No. 24-30)

ACTION ITEMS

APPROVE K-3 ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE BOUNDARIES

Mr. Fred McWhorter II stated that there has been a lot of speculation regarding the K-3 attendance boundary changes for the upcoming school year because of the opening of New Bethel Elementary in August. He shared the current elementary school enrollments conveying that our goal was to alleviate the overcrowding at Acton, Thompson Crossing and South Creek Elementaries without causing chaos for everyone. Mr. McWhorter explained that the team met several times to determine how best to rebalance the enrollment, create efficient Transportation routes and minimize the impact on our families while allowing for future growth in each of the seven elementary schools. President Howard thanked the team for all of their hard work in creating the proposed plan. Dr. Kent Pettet, Chief Public Relations Officer, stated that following the approval of the plan, parents will receive a text message regarding the adjusted boundaries for the 2024-2025 school year which will include a link for their home address giving them their student's new location for next year. Mr. Jeff Murphy, Chief People Officer, conveyed that tomorrow our elementary teachers will be receiving an application to apply to voluntarily move to a different school as the teaching staffs will need to be adjusted as well. Mr. McWhorter added that there are several moving parts in this process and he is confident that we will be able to complete the task prior to August. He recommended approval of the K-3 Elementary Attendance Boundaries plan as presented. Mr. Walker made a motion to approve the plan and Mrs. Gowan seconded. There being no questions or comments, President Howard called for the vote which passed 4-0. (Exhibit No. 24-31)

APPROVE FCHS PHASE 2A BID

Mr. Fred McWhorter II referred the Board Member to their copies of the FCHS Phase 2A Bid that was included in the meeting documentation and recommended approval. He stated that they were very pleased with the number of bids that were submitted. Mr. McWhorter added that Mr.

Brian Meyer with The Skillman Corporation is in the audience if anyone has any questions. He noted that the bids totaled \$11,703,325 which is \$3.5 million under the estimated cost. Mrs. Foulk made a motion to approve the FCHS Phase 2A Bid and Mrs. Gowan seconded. There being no questions or comments, President Howard called for the vote which carried 4-0. (Exhibit No. 24-32)

APPROVE FCJH SITE IMPROVEMENT BID

Mr. Fred McWhorter II referred the Board Members to their copies of the FCJH Site Improvement Bid information that was included in their packets. He explained that we have been trying to get this project started, but have had several issues with the City of Indianapolis and their requirements and permits for the property. Mr. McWhorter stated that we are finally ready to move forward on the project that should be complete by December 2024. He recommended approval of the FCJH Site Improvement Bid in the amount of \$7,956,877. Mrs. Gowan made a motion to approve. Mrs. Foulk seconded the motion and it passed 4-0. (Exhibit No. 24-33)

APPROVE FCHS TRACK BID

Mr. Fred McWhorter II shared that the FCHS track needs to be replaced as it has to be repaired prior to track events, etc. He stated that the Franklin Central Athletic Department was involved in the project and is very pleased with the proposed changes to the track that will enable better viewing of the athletes while participating in the various track and field events. Mr. McWhorter recommended approval of the FCHS Track Bid in the amount of \$722,379 which includes the base bid and the four alternative bids. Mrs. Foulk motioned to approve and Mrs. Gowan seconded. Mr. Walker asked what the age of the track is. Mr. Rick Hunter, Facilities Director, replied that it is 10 years old and needs to be replaced to address the drainage issues and constant emergency repairs. There being no additional questions, President Howard called for the vote which carried 4-0. (Exhibit No. 24-34)

APPROVE E-RATE CATEGORY 1 BID

Mr. Tyler Knight shared that last week we had a bid opening for the point-to-point Wide-Area Network to connect the New Bethel Elementary School site to our main campus and received three bids. He directed the Board Members to their copies of the bid information and recommended approval of the E-Rate Category 1 Bid to Zayo Group as the lowest responsible and responsive bidder. Mr. Knight added that with the E-Rate program discounts and the state contribution of 10% for special construction, we most likely will only have to pay \$64,975 for the connection. Mr. Walker made a motion to approve the bid and Mrs. Gowan seconded. Mr. Walker asked if Mr. Knight was going to be actively involved in the process. Mr. Knight assured him that he will be very involved as Zayo's engineer has already been in contact with him and the company has been wonderful to work with on past projects. There being no additional questions, President Howard called for the vote. The motion to approve the E-Rate Category 1 Bid carried 4-0. (Exhibit No. 24-35)

APPROVE E-RATE CATEGORY 2 BID

Mr. Tyler Knight referred the Board Members to their copies of the E-Rate Category 2 Bid information which was included in the meeting documentation and recommended approval. He explained that for 2024 we intend to utilize E-Rate reimbursements to cover 80% of the cost of eligible network components for the new construction and renovations detailed in Phase 2A of FCHS, network switching upgrades for the Freshman Academy and to complete network infrastructure replacement at the FT Learning Center. Mr. Knight noted that the lowest responsible and responsive bidder for contracts one and three was People Driven Technologies and contract two was awarded to Sitewise. Mrs. Gowan motioned to approve the E-Rate Category 2 Bid and Mr. Walker seconded. President Howard asked if we approved the internal bid for New Bethel Elementary. Mr. Knight responded that it was included in the bids for the project that took place last year. There being no additional questions, President Howard called for the vote which carried 4-0. (Exhibit No. 24-36)

APPROVE CHROMEBOOK ACCIDENTAL PROTECTION PLAN

Mr. Tyler Knight was excited to be recommending for approval a partnership with Secured Tech Solutions to provide accidental damage protection to our fleet of take-home Chromebooks. He shared that it will cover all eligible devices used by students in grades 4-12 for the next four years or the remaining expected lifespan of the device, whichever is lessor. Mr. Knight stated that our technicians will have access to spare parts which will enable them to perform repairs in a timely manner and the agreement will also provide a buy-back program, parts recycling and disposal, etc. He added that our families will be able to opt-in to purchase personal protection of these devices to avoid student caused accidental damage fees. Mrs. Foulk made a motion to approve the Chromebook Accidental Protection Plan as presented. Mrs. Gowan seconded and the motion passed 4-0. Mr. Knight conveyed that communication regarding the protection plan for family purchase will be shared soon. (Exhibit No. 24-37)

APPROVE FCJH & FCHS FIELD TRIPS

Dr. Chase Huotari recommended approval for the FCJH 8th Grade Band Music students to travel to Kings Island on May 18, 2024 and the FCHS Varsity Winter Guard and Indoor Percussion groups to travel to Dayton, Ohio on April 10-14 and April 17-21, 2024 to compete in the World Championships. Mr. Walker motioned to approve the field trips and Mrs. Gowan seconded. The motion carried 4-0. (Exhibit No. 24-38)

APPROVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM ADOPTION FOR K-6

Dr. Toni Stevenson, Chief Academic Officer for Elementary, and Dr. Lynlie Schoene, Chief Innovation Officer, recommended approval of the 3-year English Language Arts Curriculum Adoption for grades kindergarten through 6th. Dr. Stevenson stated that after reviewing several options they feel that Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) for K-5 and Amplify English Language Arts (ELA) for Grade 6 are the best choices for our students. Mrs. Gowan made a motion to approve and Mrs. Foulk seconded. Mrs. Foulk thanked the Curriculum Team for deciphering the options and receiving input from stakeholders in determining the best solution for our students. President Howard noted that this curriculum change is mandated by new legislation which goes into effect July 1, 2024 and is not state funded. Mr. McWhorter confirmed his statement and commented that this new ELA curriculum will cost us \$1.4 million and we have Senator Freeman to thank for the new law. There being no additional comments, President Howard called for the vote which passed 4-0. (Exhibit No. 24-39)

APPROVE STUDENT HANDBOOKS FOR 2024-2025 FOR ELEMENTARY, INTERMEDIATE, JUNIOR HIGH & HIGH SCHOOL

Dr. Toni Stevenson, Dr. Lynlie Schoene and Dr. Chase Huotari referred the Board Members to their copies of the Student Handbooks for 2024-2025 that were included in the packets and recommended approval. Dr. Huotari stated that over the past two years we have been trying to align all four handbooks with a goal of merging them into one district-wide document for the 2025-2026 school year. He added that there are not many changes this year and we have revised them according to our changes in Board Policies. Mrs. Foulk made a motion to approve the 2024-2025 Handbooks and Mrs. Gowan seconded. President Howard thanked the team for their work in combining the books for next school year as he feels it will be easier for our families. There being no other comments, President Howard called for the vote. The motion to approve the handbooks carried 4-0. (Exhibit No. 24-40)

APPROVE SUPPLEMENTAL PERSONNEL REPORT

Ms. Jill Britt stated that in following the guidelines from the new legislation (SB342) we are asking for the Board's approval of the Supplemental Personnel Report that was included in the meeting documentation. She noted that we have also included a copy of Senate Bill 342 for reference. Mrs. Foulk motioned to approve the report and Mrs. Gowan seconded. There being no questions or comments, President Howard called for the vote. The motion to approve the Supplemental Personnel Report passed 4-0. (Exhibit No. 24-41)

APPOINT NEW SUPERINTENDENT & APPROVE CONTRACT

President Zachary Howard stated that he wanted to share the Superintendent search process with everyone. He conveyed the following: FTCSC Superintendent, Dr. Bruce Hibbard, submitted his letter of intention to retire on August 1, 2024 to the Board Members on October 18, 2023 allowing him to see the opening of New Bethel Elementary School and the completion of current construction projects at Kitley Intermediate, Edgewood Intermediate and Phase I of the FCHS project. The Board took action on Dr. Hibbard's retirement at the October 23, 2023 Board meeting via the Personnel Report. The Board immediately met in Executive Session with the Board Attorney, Mr. Andrew Manna from Church Hittle & Antrim, regarding the Superintendent search process options. The School Board met in Executive Session on November 20, 2023 to discuss the search process and timeline, with the understanding that several local School Corporations have Superintendent vacancies as well. They decided to utilize Mr. Manna, Board Attorney, to facilitate the search process. On December 5, 2023 the Board met in Executive Session for 6.25 hours and heard feedback from each Central Office and supporting departments administrators as well as every principal for the purpose of gathering information regarding the qualities and attributes they would like in the next Superintendent to lead the district. At the next Executive Session, December 18, 2023, the Board decided to post the Superintendent's job opening the next day, December 19, and it was posted for 30 days. A formal announcement regarding Dr. Hibbard's retirement and subsequent Superintendent search was also distributed on December 19. Applicants were instructed to submit a cover letter along with their resume. Once they applied, they were sent a questionnaire concentrating on these five focus areas: 1-Strategic Planning, 2-Transparency, 3-Community Relations, 4-Board Relations & 5-Staff Retention. On Friday, January 19, 2024, the application deadline date, the Board received and reviewed a report from the Franklin Township Education Association (FTEA) which outlined the teachers' thoughts on various qualities they would like in the next Superintendent. The Board received 17 applicants with only 12 of the them returning their answers to the questionnaire prior to the January 19 deadline. The Board met on January 22, 2024 in Executive Session to review all 12 completed applications, then met again on January 30 to interview candidates. The School Board met in Executive Session on February 6 to review the terms of the new Superintendent's contract and per state law, the terms of the contract were published in the IJB and Indy Star on February 16 prior to holding a Public Hearing regarding the contract on Wednesday, February 28, 2024. President Howard stated that the Board Members feel that Dr. Chase Huotari is the best qualified candidate to serve as the next Franklin Township Community School Corporation Superintendent. He shared that Dr. Huotari brings a wealth of experience with him as he has been employed by FTCSC for 19 years in various capacities: Physical Education Teacher and Varsity Baseball coach at FCHS, Assistant Principal/Athletic Director at FT Middle School East, Assistant Principal at FCHS, Principal at FT Middle School East, Principal of FCHS and currently serves as Chief Academic Officer of Secondary Schools. He added that Dr. Huotari is also committed to Franklin Township as he has been a resident over 20 years and has two daughters that attend our schools. He immediately stood out as a candidate during the Superintendent search process and we feel that he will actively engage with our stakeholders and the Board as we work collaboratively to move the district forward in the coming weeks.

President Howard shared that even though Dr. Bruce Hibbard is not in attendance this evening, he wanted to thank him for his 7 years of service to Franklin Township Schools and convey that we will have several opportunities to celebrate his accomplishments prior to his official retirement. He thanked Mr. Andre Manna, School Board Attorney, for working with the Board throughout the search process. President Howard also acknowledged Mr. Fred McWhorter and Mrs. Terri Laker for their assistance during the Superintendent search process.

Mr. Walker made a motion to approve Dr. Chase Huotari as the new Superintendent and to approve the Superintendent's contract which was included in the Board Meeting information. Mrs. Gowan seconded the motion and it passed 4-0. (Exhibit No. 24-42)

President Howard stated that Ms. Dawn Downer apologized for being out of town this evening, but she sent her congratulations to Dr. Huotari and noted that she is excited to work with him and to be a part of the future of Franklin Township Schools.

Dr. Chase Huotari thanked the Board Members for their support as he understands that it took a lot of their time to work through the process and to make a decision. He shared that he began his career with FTCSC in the summer of 2005 begging Mr. Kevin Koers, FCHS Principal, for a

Physical Education job and since then, he has had a lot of help from numerous people to achieve his goals. Dr. Huotari added that in the near future he will be visiting our schools and attending various community meetings to introduce himself and to listen to comments and concerns regarding the future of Franklin Township Community School Corporation.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Dr. Hibbard was not in attendance.

BOARD COMMENTS

Dr. Huotari stated that we need to congratulate FCHS Senior, Ms. Austyn Dykes for being named a State Champion in Gymnastics. He announced that her accomplishments this past weekend were phenomenal. She is State Champion on Bars, State Champion on Beams, State Runner-Up on Floor, State Runner-Up in All Around, and 4th in Vault!

Mr. Walker congratulated Dr. Huotari and stated that he is looking forward to working with him.

President Howard conveyed that with all of the upcoming Spring events it is an exciting time to support our Flashes.

Mrs. Gowan also congratulated Dr. Huotari.


ADJOURNMENT

President Howard adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

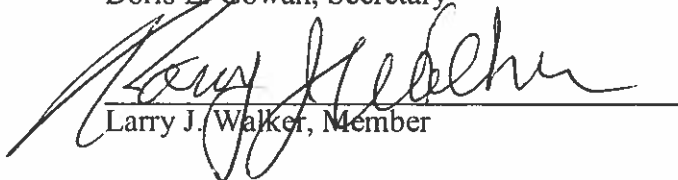
APPROVED



Zachary Smith Howard, President



Doris L. Gowan, Secretary



Larry J. Walker, Member

ABSENT

Dawn A. Downer, Vice President



Kelly L. Foulk, Member