

**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 10, 2025**

PRESENT: Zachary Smith Howard, Ryan Donovan, Dawn Downer, Larry J. Walker, Elizabeth Yoder, Dr. Chase Huotari, Dr. Sharon Kight, Tyler Knight, Fred McWhorter II, Jeff Murphy, Kent Pettet, and Dr. Lynlie Schoene.

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 10, 2025. 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. Ms. Dower made a motion to approve and Mrs. Yoder seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMUNITY

President Howard opened the floor for comments from the community. There were no comments.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

President Howard asked for a motion to approve the following list of Consent Agenda Items. Mr. Donovan motioned to approve the items and Mrs. Yoder seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

- A. Board Meeting Minutes (Exhibit No. 25-38)
 - 1. Regular Board Meeting – February 10, 2025
 - 2. Board Work Session - February 26, 2025
- B. Fund and Expenditure Summary Reports (Exhibit No. 25-39)
- C. Accounts Payable Vouchers and Payroll Claims (Exhibit No. 25-40)
- D. Personnel Report (Exhibit 25-41)

CENTRAL NINE REPORT

Ms. Downer reported that Central Nine (C9) held its reorganization meeting on February 13th. She shared that the Technical Honors Society Ceremony is approaching and that she will provide the names of the Franklin Central High School students being recognized. Additionally, Ms. Downer noted that C9 board meetings will now be held at 6:00 p.m. to better accommodate members' schedules.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP EDUCATION FOUNDATION REPORT

Mr. Donovan announced that applications for scholarships offered through the Franklin Township Education Foundation (FTEF) are being accepted until midnight on March 31, 2025. He highlighted that there are five different student scholarships and two teacher scholarships available this year. Mr. Donovan encouraged everyone to visit the FTEF website at MyFTEF.org for more information and to access the application link. (Exhibit No. 25-42)

LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

President Howard noted that the legislative session has entered Week 10 and stated that all bills must pass the second chamber by April 15th to remain active this session. He shared that the Indiana School Boards Association (ISBA) is currently tracking 69 bills, down from 184 earlier in the session. President Howard thanked Dr. Huotari and Mr. McWhorter for reviewing several key bills during the February 26th work session, including HB 1001: State Budget, SB 1: Property Tax Relief, SB 518: School Property Taxes, and SB 287: School Board Matters. He also reported that he represented FTCSC at the ISBA 7th Annual State House Day on February 18th.

President Howard then reviewed the current status of SB 1, SB 518, and SB 287 with the Board, staff, and community members in attendance. He expressed appreciation to Mr. McWhorter for testifying before the House Ways and Means Committee on behalf of FTCSC, specifically addressing the benefits of the Circuit Breaker Waiver for highly residential school corporations. President Howard noted that the legislative session may conclude before the next scheduled School Board meeting on April 28th but assured the Board that he will provide further updates at that time.

ONLINE SCHOOL DISCUSSION

Dr. Kight asked if anyone had any questions regarding the proposed online school that was discussed in the February 26th work session. There were no questions. President Howard said that he is excited to see how it goes.

1ST POLICY READING

Mr. Murphy invited Police Chief Ken Short to provide an overview of the proposed policy updates. Chief Short explained that the department is pursuing accreditation, noting that no other school districts in Indiana—and only a few nationwide—currently hold this designation. He stated that policy updates are necessary to align with the standards of the accrediting organization.

President Howard inquired whether the proposed updates included any significant changes. Chief Short referred the Board to the Friday Notes, which outlined the revisions in detail. President Howard expressed appreciation for the efforts toward accreditation and asked about the timeline for completion. Chief Short indicated that the process is expected to be completed by January 2027.

Mrs. Yoder thanked Chief Short for his commitment to school safety. Mr. Murphy noted that additional policy changes will be presented to the Board for approval in May. (Exhibit No. 25-43)

ACTION ITEMS

APPROVE 2025 -2026 OUT OF DISTRICT TRANSFER CAPACITY & DEADLINE

Mr. Murphy shared a proposal to open district borders for a two-week application period. He said this would be a limited rollout, with no increase in class sizes, and based on current enrollment levels and what individual schools and grade levels can accommodate. Mr. Walker inquired whether the two-week period would serve as a trial for the first year and asked about the long-term plan. Mr. Murphy explained that the process would be evaluated after the initial two weeks and adjusted in future years based on results. He stated the Board would receive updated information annually to review. He added that a decision must be made by March or April each year to allow adequate time for hiring staff. He also said there may be potential to slightly expand the application window in future years.

Mr. Walker raised a concern about families potentially moving into the district for athletic reasons. Dr. Huotari responded that undue influence guidelines still apply in those situations.

President Howard asked about the current ADM (Average Daily Membership) amount, and Mr. McWhorter replied that it is approximately \$6,800 per student. Ms. Downer asked how the district would place a 3rd-grade student previously identified as Gifted & Talented (GT) in another district—specifically, whether the student would be placed in REACH or cluster groups. Dr. Schoene explained that guidelines are in place for such scenarios, and students would be administered the CogAT assessment in the summer, as is standard for move-in students. Ms. Downer emphasized the importance of not overwhelming GT program resources. Dr. Huotari noted that South Creek Elementary is not accepting new students, so any 3rd grader seeking REACH placement there would be denied. Ms. Downer also inquired about high school students entering under the new process. It was clarified by Dr. Huotari that Franklin Central students will receive priority in course selection since they have already completed scheduling. Mrs. Yoder asked whether class sizes were considered when accounting for new transfer students. Mr. Murphy confirmed that class sizes were reviewed and are expected to remain within reasonable limits. He added that the district will continue to analyze the process and make adjustments as needed in future years. (Exhibit No. 25-44)

The motion to approve was made by Mr. Walker and seconded by Mr. Donovan. The motion passed 5/0.

APPROVE FY2025 CATEGORY 2 E-RATE BID

Mr. Knight referred the Board Members to their copies of the E-Rate Category 2 Bid information which was included in the meeting packet and recommended for approval. He stated they are focusing mainly on the needs at the High School. There were no questions. (Exhibit No. 25-45)

The motion to approve was made by Mrs. Yoder and seconded by Mr. Donovan. The motion passed 5/0.

APPROVE PHAXIS CONTRACT

Dr. Kight explained that the Phaxis contract is for a special education teacher at the Junior High. President Howard asked for the term of the contract at which Dr. Kight stated it was the end of the school year. Mr. Donovan asked why the contract shows an overtime rate. Dr. Kight said that she denies overtime for contractors. (Exhibit No. 25-46)

The motion to approve was made by Mr. Donovan and seconded by Mr. Walker. The motion passed 5/0.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Dr. Huotari noted how quickly the year is progressing, acknowledging that it is already spring break and testing season is underway. He recognized Mr. McWhorter and the Business Department for their excellent work following a clean audit, with no federal findings in Title I or Child Nutrition. Dr. Huotari expressed appreciation for the team's efforts. Board member Larry Walker asked if the audit results would be shared with parents. Mr. McWhorter confirmed the

information is currently available on the district's website, and Mr. Walker suggested promoting it more broadly to ensure families are aware.


BOARD COMMENTS

Mrs. Yoder and President Howard hoped everyone had a well deserved Spring Break.

ADJOURNMENT

President Howard adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVED




Zachary Smith Howard, President



Dawn A. Downer, Vice President

Larry J. Walker, Secretary



Ryan Donovan, Member



Elizabeth Yoder, Member