

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
THE METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT OF DECATUR TOWNSHIP  
MARION COUNTY, INDIANA**

The Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township School Board convened at 7:04 p.m. in the Board Room of the Administrative Offices of the School Corporation, 5275 Kentucky Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana on February 13, 2024.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Larry Taylor  
Mrs. Estella Vandeventer  
Mr. Dale Henson  
Mr. Chase Lyday  
Mrs. Judith Collins

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

Dr. Stephanie Hofer, Interim Superintendent  
Mr. Kirk Farmer, Chief Financial Officer  
Dr. Kenneth Folks, Director of Operations  
Mr. Michael Nehring, Director of Human Resources  
Mr. Tony Burchett, Interim Assistant Superintendent

**REGULAR MEETING**

**1. OPENING ITEMS**

1.01 Mr. Taylor, Board President, called the regular meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. All five board members were present.

1.02 Students from Blue Academy: Mazeed Amoo, kindergarten; Grayson Brown, kindergarten; Grace Temedekou, 1<sup>st</sup> grade; Kenan Caro, 1<sup>st</sup> grade; Chloe Stansbury, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade; and Kirsten Moreland, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade; showed the highest growth in NWEA from beginning to mid-year and led in the pledge of allegiance.

1.03 The following members of “Hawks for Hofer” shared their comments in support for Dr. Hofer as our next superintendent:

- Amanda Neal – Helped create this group along with Decatur parents, PTO members, parent advisory board members, and community members to speak to why they believe Dr. Hofer should be the next superintendent. Dr. Hofer is resilient, humble, and kind. She has integrity and is personable. She is business-minded, logical, and the most qualified leader for Decatur Township.
- Chrystal Rogers – Has known Dr. Hofer since she was an instructional coach and has raised three children in Decatur Township Schools. She has watched Dr. Hofer improve on her skills and attain the position of assistant superintendent. In her opinion, Dr. Hofer is the perfect candidate and has done a fine job as interim superintendent. She checks all the boxes for success in Decatur Township, our school system, and our students.
- Karen Burrows – Her family chose to come to Decatur Township because her son is autistic and the learning communities gave him more choice and control over his education. They've had many troubles, even at Decatur, but this last year her son has excelled and succeeded because of the way the community is intertwined with the schools. It is because of Dr. Hofer that the community is so supported by the schools and the schools support the community. Her son was awarded the Abe Lincoln Scholarship

due to the community support and how driven he is to give back. She then read a statement from a teacher-friend about her experiences with and support of Dr. Hofer as superintendent. She closed with a quote by Mandy Hill that embodies Dr. Hofer's spirit, "To make difference in someone's life, you don't have to be brilliant, rich, beautiful, or perfect. You just have to care enough and be there."

- Vicki Lewis – Has lived in Decatur Township for 32 years, has driven a school bus for the township for 22 years, and her children attended school here. Every parent and staff member she knows has tremendous respect for Dr. Hofer, as she is honest, cares tremendously, and handles everything with grace.
- Rhonda Adamson – Expressed her gratitude for the support and leadership provided by Dr. Hofer. As a teacher in Decatur Township for 14 years, she witnessed the transformational impact of Dr. Hofer on our educational community. She has been instrumental in bringing grants to our district, helping equip our math department with valuable resources, being committed to professional development, and hosting Leadership Academy. She has genuine engagement with our community and volunteers with organizations that benefit our students directly. She has witnessed Dr. Hofer's positive interactions at events, which showcase her strong bond between the school and community. She is highly qualified to be our next superintendent.

## **2. DECATUR PROUD**

2.01 Mr. Burchett invited Andy Starnes, Instructional Tech Specialist, to come forward. He stated we were incredibly grateful to have Andy on our team. He plays a vital role in bridging the gap between curriculum and technology, leveraging his valuable experience as a teacher to understand the needs of both educators and students. Day in and day out, Andy is out there helping. He troubleshoots tech issues, leads informative training sessions, and continuously tests new tools and programs to enhance the learning experience. His dedication to the success of our teachers and students is truly amazing. Andy's expertise is invaluable, and his positive attitude and willingness to help make him a pleasure to work with. We're fortunate to have him on our team! Andy's contributions extend far beyond what I've mentioned this evening. We are truly Decatur Proud of his hard work and dedication to our district!

Mr. Starnes expressed his appreciation for the recognition. He stated that Derek Coulombe, Director of Technology, was incredibly helpful and the department consists of a great team. He feels this is Tech Team recognition.

Mr. Burchett invited Alaine Christy, kindergarten teacher, and her student, Ryan Osula, to come up. He stated Blue Academy has two sayings that defined that building's culture: Be the Difference (be the reason why your kids are successful) and We Cause Learning (teachers are expected to provide excellent tier one instruction daily to ensure our students are learning and growing academically, socially and emotionally). He stated Mrs. Christy encapsulated both of those pillars daily in her classroom and was truly changing the lives of her students. She can now add the title "lifesaver" to her resume. On January 18<sup>th</sup> Mrs. Christy's student, Ryan, was choking and he could not breathe. Without hesitation she bravely performed the Heimlich maneuver, dislodging the food from his airway. Due to her calmness and quick thinking she saved Ryan's life. She was not just an amazing educator, but also a hero! He thanked Mrs. Christy for everything she does and is very Decatur Proud of her.

### **3. ACTION ITEMS**

- 3.01 Mr. Henson moved that the minutes for the January 9, 2024 reorganization/regular meeting, January 9, 22, 29, and 30, 2024 executive sessions, and January 9, 2024 Board of Finance meeting be approved. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3.02 Mr. Nehring presented the staff report for approval. Mr. Lyday made a motion to approve the staff report as presented. Mrs. Collins seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3.03 Mr. Farmer presented claims in the amount of \$5,528,716.46 and payrolls in the amount of \$4,078,341.62 for approval. Mr. Henson made a motion that the claims and payrolls be accepted as listed. Mr. Lyday seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3.04 Mr. Farmer asked Board authorization to write off outstanding checks more than two years old. Mrs. Collins made a motion to authorize writing off checks as listed. Mrs. Vandevanter seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3.05 Mr. Burchett presented revised NEOLA Board Policies for first reading. The Board will be asked for approval at the March meeting.
- 3.06 Dr. Hofer recommended that Monday, April 8, 2024 be an eLearning Day due to the total solar eclipse that will pass directly over central Indiana. Mr. Henson made a motion that April 8, 2024 be an eLearning Day as presented. Mr. Lyday seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3.07 Dr. Hofer recommended the Henley and Cardinal Grove neighborhoods be redistricted to Gold Academy. Mrs. Vandevanter made a motion to redistrict the Henley and Cardinal Grove neighborhoods to Gold Academy. Mrs. Collins seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3.08 Dr. Hofer recommended approval of a Resolution in Support of Military Families. Mr. Lyday made a motion to approve the Resolution in Support of Military Families as presented. Mrs. Vandevanter seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### **4. REPORT**

- 4.01 Mr. Farmer presented a financial report for the Education Fund, Referendum Fund, Operations Fund, and Rainy Day Fund.

### **5. OTHER**

- 5.01 No items.

### **6. CLOSING ITEMS**

- 6.01 Dr. Hofer offered congratulations to Terance Smith as Chief of Police for Decatur Township Schools. She was honored to administered the Oath of Office for School Police Chief to Terance Smith and was excited to have him begin.

Dr. Hofer was beyond humbled by the Decatur Patron Comments and stated Decatur Township will always have her heart. She was speechless by their kind words. Our students with the highest NWEA growth did a great job of leading the pledge and she is very Decatur Proud of their growth in NWEA. She has worked with Andy Starnes for nearly 20 years. He

impacts the lives of our students and staff by making them feel comfortable to ask questions, allowing them to perform their duties very effectively. She congratulated Mr. Starnes on his well-deserved recognition. She was so pleased that Ryan Osula was safe and her heart was happy that Mrs. Christy was there to take care of him. She is an everyday hero who jumped in and took care of her student. She will always be grateful to the Board members for their support as she leads in this interim position. She expressed her appreciation to our administrators, teachers, families and community members for their support.

6.02 Mrs. Collins thanked the Blue Academy students for the lovely card and stated the pledge was awesome. She welcomed Chief Smith back to the District. She thanked everyone for attending and thanked them for all they do.

Mr. Lyday stated it was great to see the students at the Board meeting. He appreciated the patron comments and expressed his appreciation for Andy Starnes who is an incredible guy who does so much for so many people. He was proud of Mrs. Christy for saving her student's life. He welcomed Chief Smith back and knows him to be a skilled police officer, an incredible leader of people, and a man of high character and integrity. He is grateful to have him back in our district to lead our incredible police force.

Mr. Henson thanked everyone for attending. He thanked Mr. Allen for having his students from Blue Academy lead the pledge and thanked them for the cards. He thanked Mr. Starnes for his work with our students and staff. He was pleased to hear that Mrs. Christy stepped up to save her student's life. He welcomed Chief Smith back to the District and was pleased to see him return.

Mrs. Vandeventer thanked Mr. Allen for having his students attend the meeting. She was pleased to see the students so proud and do a remarkable job, which made her heart happy. She appreciated Mr. Starnes and how he accepted his recognition on behalf of the entire Technology Department. She had no words to be able to fully express her gratitude to Mrs. Christy. She welcomed back Chief Smith.

Mr. Taylor thanked Mr. Allen and his students. He welcomed Chief Smith back to the District. He expressed appreciation to Mrs. Christy for saving her student's life. He was pleased to help Mrs. Susan Strube, Principal, and West Newton Elementary School with the Purple Star School designation to help our military families.

6.03 Mrs. Vandeventer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Henson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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Mr. Larry Taylor, President

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Mrs. Estella Vandeventer, Vice President

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Mr. Dale Henson, Secretary

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Mr. Chase Lyday, Member

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Mrs. Judith Collins, Member